

considered simply as children they were more than usually trying, mischievous, and noisy. Their fathers considered it an insult to a child to strike him and these imps practiced the most excruciating tortures on adults with impunity. They yelled, shrieked, exploded things, and made their neighborhood avoided of all but new-comers.

In delivering the Fourth to the small boy we give him up to almost certain accident, we make the day hideous, we jeopardize whole cities and actually lose by fire from smouldering fire crackers, every year, millions of dollars worth of value in buildings. The mayor of this city in consequence of continued dry weather issued a proclamation directed at the small boy and forbidding him to set off fire crackers and fire works, but after the rain he withdrew the prohibition and the day in Lincoln was the usual nerve-racking, explosive torment. If there is anything which can make us lose affection for the signers of the document of independence it is the celebration of the Declaration by young America. It is an undignified way of celebrating so glorious a birth. There is no connection between the anniversary and the manner of celebrating it. The Christmas rejoicings do typify a birthday, and the gifts and spirit of giving a great thankfulness. But the celebration of our national birthday is trivial, cheap, vulgar and irrelevant. No wonder the boys know nothing about the day they celebrate; there is no connection between the horrid noises they are encouraged to make by fatuous parents, and the occasion they commemorate. If the mayor had persisted in his prohibition the mothers and fathers might have taught their offspring something about the document and the man who wrote it and the men who signed it. As it was, nobody's voice could be heard above the din made by the spoiling little boys, and another dreadful insult to our country was added to those we have heaped upon it.

Failure.

The happy man, humanly speaking, is the man who succeeds in what he undertakes. The miserable man, one who tries all his life to accomplish something and fails. The opinions of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, Mr. Bird Coler, comptroller of the city of New York, and our own Chancellor Andrews of the State university, are collated in a recent number of the Saturday Evening Post by Mr. Coler, who says that "The young man who cannot go to college need not lie awake nights worrying, especially if he is planning for a business career. Instead of being handicapped by the absence of a university training, he will find that the handicap is with the other man. The college graduate has five or six years to make up when he finally goes to work. To overcome this drawback requires an extraordinary mental equipment and few men in this world are extraordinary." Mr. Carnegie says that "A college education unfits, rather than fits men for affairs." Chancellor Andrews' opinion is so closely descriptive of the literary work of college graduates that I quote it in full: "Young people end their studies with flabby minds unable to analyze keenly or to generalize truthfully or far. This comes out clearly when they come to write. The bad quality of the written work done by fresh college graduates is notorious, not to mention commencement orations and theses, usually the most arid and awkward compositions imaginable. Young doctors of philosophy, brilliant spec-

ialists in their chosen lines, not seldom compose altogether wretchedly. Wry grammar and a shocking choice of words are not their worst faults. It is the higher traits of rhetoric which suffer most. The report, newspaper article, essay, treatise, or whatever the writing is, lacks unity, continuity and progress. The discussion is begun with points that ought to come later; arguments, if any, are not arrayed, but hopelessly fumbled. The author says what he does not mean, often contradicts himself, and not seldom without giving the reader any clear idea of the view which he would like to present. These are the results of general mental confusion. The department of rhetoric is never wholly, and hardly ever mainly, responsible for them. The trouble is that the whole mental training has been defective. . . . These ill features of college education are closely connected with those classical studies which, in most of our colleges, still remain the centre and pivot of curriculum. The antiquarian and the devotee of the science and history of religion may have some use for a book like Ovid's Metamorphoses, but the majority of us have none; on the contrary, we suffer net loss by every moment we devote to such reading."

Dancing.

Crime is sin, but sin is not crime. Crime is punishable by law and law sometimes punishes it if the prisoner at the bar chance not to be a woman or a rich man. But the sin that is not a crime is amenable to law. Sin concerns only the sinner, broadly speaking, although no one can injure himself without affecting the whole body of society. There are times and circumstances when it is a virtue to lie, but the lie will be ineffectual unless the one who tells it has established a reputation for truth-telling. Every man must settle with himself what is right for him and what is wrong for him. It is certain that his code will not coincide with his neighbor's, and yet both may be upright. There can be no dispute about what the law calls crime, and that is fortunate, because there are a sufficient number of occasions when a man battles with himself, blinded by trying to find out if what he wants to do is wrong. After too long a self-examination conscience wobbles like the needle drawn from its loyalty to the pole by the iron on board the ship. Then the man, like the ship, drifts out of his course. The statutes are unaffected by sophistry or desire; and if they denominate certain conduct criminal, it is an undebatable rock from which self-examination may leap where it will and return with certainty.

There are amusements, like dancing, cards and the theatre, which some hold harmless and others denounce as vicious. Every recreation which tends to increase the attractions of the social group is beneficial. Crime isolates. Vice slinks about in small groups or couples. The largeness of an assembly of people come together to dance, for instance, enforces the adoption of general rules and a rigid convention.

A few years ago dances were held at Burlington beach pavilion contiguous to Lincoln, where every body was welcome except the notoriously vicious. Large numbers of observers stood around the railing which separated the dancers from the crowd. It was a most favorable opportunity to study dancing and to decide for one's self if it is a sensual dissipation or the natural expression of joyousness and the love of musical movement. It was an excellent opportuni-

ty because the dancers belonged to no one social set. They were restrained from improper conduct by none of the conventions which fix manners in an intimate social coterie. The dancers were acquainted with each other; introductions in an assembly of the kind I refer to are insisted upon much more severely than they are now in society where it is conceded that the mere fact of being present at a ceremonious function is a guarantee of election. There was no doubt in the candid mind of an observer that the dancers were there for dancing and for nothing else. The youths had paid for their tickets which included a certain number of dances, and they intended to get their money's worth. There was no dalliance or sentimental lingering in corners or shadowy places. The young men and women danced as children play games in the school recess with evident determination to get out of their short vacation all the pleasure possible. The intervals between the dances were short although the time was summer, the exercise vigorous, and the dancers themselves warm. The young men desired to fulfill their obligations to each one of their acquaintances, as well as to enjoy an extra dance or two with a favorite. As the dancers whirled past the point of observation there was not one who was not busily occupied in keeping time to the music and in guiding or being guided, without collision by her partner through the kaleidoscopic pavilion. Men and women who work six days in the week take their pleasures seriously and with a kind of conscientious care very touching to an observer with sense or experience enough to know the cause. The graceful, light inebriant manner is not cultivated in feeding an engine with twelve or fifteen tons of coal a day or by running along the tops of slippery cars going around curves at thirty miles an hour. The effect on the expression and bearing of six days' of hard labor cannot be obliterated in a moment, as the engineer washes off the stains of the engine from his face and hands. But the effort to enjoy the society of young women is refining. The brakeman who puts on his most gorgeous and becoming tie and his best clothes and goes out to enjoy a dance within his means, who strives to participate in the innocent functions where he is welcome and which he can afford, is cultivating the social graces and he is kinder and saner for it. In the miscellaneous company of dancers at Burlington beach there was not one whose expression indicated anything but pleasure or an anxious desire to fulfill the duties of the occasion creditably. There are dance halls supported by saloon keepers whose object is to sell liquor and where all sorts of characters are admitted. The places are bad without a redeeming feature, and the police, if they are instructed to do their duty, keep a close watch on them.

Lincoln has no resort or amusement for poor young people who live in small and squalid homes but who, notwithstanding, desire the company of the other sex, long for an opportunity to get acquainted with a number of the young people on their orbit and to enjoy all the privileges of youth, which, somehow, at their birth, and without their consent, were withdrawn from them. Larger and wealthier cities than Lincoln reserve parks in parts of the city inaccessible except occasionally to the very poor, but still patronized by them on holidays. There are blocks in the cheapest and most thickly settled parts of Lincoln which could be purchased by the city at

small expenditure now, on account of the accumulated taxes which will never be paid. A small green spot where the people swarm is better than an enchanted garden full of fountains and singing birds within reach of the poor man and his family of children only at the rate of ten cents a head car fare. A census of one district in New York, a city of parks, revealed the fact that hundreds of children had never been inside one of them. Their parents should have taken them to the parks, but the wretchedly poor do not do what they ought in spite of their unmistakably shocked richer fellow-townsmen.

Even in this prairie town, bounded on every side by unbroken horizon, there is not room enough in the bottoms which will grow more and more crowded as the laboring population increases. Summer recreation in this mountain-less, lake-less and river-less region is a problem which the versatile council should consider, remembering that Satan's tools and victims are the bored young men and women who, having earned a holiday, are denied a place in which to pleasantly spend it.

The Water Supply.

The city water department is in better condition than it has ever been but this is not saying much because under water commissioner Byers the water department was run for the behoof of a few politicians and the receipts never equaled the expenditure. The present commissioner administers the department with more regard to economy, but unnecessary men are still employed and paid higher wages for less labor than private employers are paying, and the present council have just been foiled in an attempt to make the discrepancy still greater. If the water department of this city were in charge of a competent engineer who administered it without regard to politics, and exactly as a private owner would do there is little doubt that the expenses might be greatly reduced. It is idle to compare Mr. Tyler's administration with his predecessor's, for Mr. Byer's is ignorant; he had no conception of his duties to the municipality which hired him, he employed as many men at as high wages as possible thinking thus to increase the patronising power of the office. Comparing the present conduct of the office with the scale of wages and with the managing regime of the gas and traction companies, which each serve the public, it is obvious that the expense might be further reduced.

Mr. Burns' proposition to furnish the city with water at eight cents per thousand gallons is not receiving much consideration for several reasons. Mr. Burns' connection with the water department of Lincoln has not been productive of satisfactory results. He insisted upon digging wells on the Salt creek side of the city and, in consequence, we were obliged for many years to drink salt water or something else when we were thirsty. The unpleasant, unsatisfying taste of the water did very well for a sanitarium, but I fear that it drove many to drink and into drunkards' graves. When a few people finally concluded that the curse should be lifted from this city, Mr. Burns and Mr. Thompson did what they could to defeat the movement, but the city council was composed of vertebrates who refused to yield to the representations of the politicians that fresh water was procurable from a salt basin. Then besides his record Mr. Burns is a water-wizard and we are as much afraid of wizards now as when they went about