

What Price the Modern Boy? XIV.

4. Dishonest Statesmen.

The word "statesmen" is used here in the broad sense so common in campaign literature and oratory; perhaps a better term for this broad class would be "peerless statesmen;" they are better known under this ambiguous title.

Dishonesty pervades our civic life. While it is perfectly true that this condition is by no means the monopoly of the United States, the fact that the guilt is shared by others, and that perhaps others are more guilty than we, does not take away the stain or lessen its effect on our social life. Dishonesty is infectious, and the higher the source the deeper the infection.

The league between politics and crime is so familiar to us that we seem to take it for granted. At present we are witnessing an expose of almost unbelievable corruption in the state of Illinois; and indictments of sheriffs, mayors, judges and even governors of states are getting common enough to be pushed to the inside pages of sensational newspapers.

More deep-rooted and more devastating in its effects is the theory of representative government followed so much in practice today that makes the legislator obey not the voice of his conscience but the voice of the unscrupulous lobby. Whatever controversy there may be about the existence of such a thing as a purely penal law, it is certain that the State has the right to make laws binding in conscience if it chooses to exercise that right; and if any law in this country binds in conscience it is the fundamental law of the Constitution. And if the senators who voted for the Eighteenth Amendment did not intend to bind themselves in conscience to its observance, they were guilty of trifling with the most sacred guardian of our rights. The modern boy has much example to make him dishonest.

5. Devilish inventions.

An old Irish pastor who knew much of the ways of the world, and who recently laid aside a body worn out with labors of love for his people, used to say (God rest his soul!): "Pick up the paper on Monday morning and what do you find? Drunkenness, murders, suicides and adulteries. And what does it? The automobile. The people weren't goin' to hell fast enough, so the devil invented the automobile and gasoline and Prestolite to send them there faster. And the telephone is its twin sister."

A kindly old inventor who had conceived his mission in life to be one of benefit to civilization expressed regret during the War that he had ever made a single invention. He found the things that he had given the world for the preservation of humanity had been turned to its destruction.

If modern inventions have contributed to the destruction of human life on a greater scale than ever before, how much more have they contributed to the loss of souls! Take the examples of old Father Dan, quoted above: how much has the automobile offered to the possibilities of sin and crime? Have God and humanity received more service than the devil has from the ever-present flivver?

God gave us the sun, the earth, water, flowers, trees, birds, animals, all the forces of nature. They are as they came from the hand of God. Man has worked with nature and has wrought wonders that are constantly growing more wonderful. But man seems to be blinded by achievement, and his success is turned to his confusion. Industrialism has given us wonderful material prosperity, but souls are harder to save than they were in the days of the cottage industries.

RAYERS: James Brady's father died suddenly yesterday.