

I am one of the current generation known as modern youth. That epithet summarizes a long list of misstatements concerning us that I feel compelled to deny with a vehemence echoed by my contemporaries. "Modern Youth": for all its simplicity is a term meant to imply wild life in the raw, or rah, as it is so frequently punned.

All youth is and has been modern, for youth is the yardstick by which time is measured. Our title with all its implications was coined by a generation which itself was young not so long ago, and which would have been insulted had anyone suggested it was not modern. That generation includes our mothers and fathers. Many of our parents have written articles that have added impetus to the universal discussion of our complete lack of morals.

Facts have been published purporting to prove our immorality. Why not look on these facts in their true light and admit their existence since the beginning of time. Everyone in the Bible is not wicked because that book has told us of so many fast women and lustful men. All of Balzac's and De Maupassant's works are not considered pure imagination, but fiction based on experience. They do not prove the men and women of those days all lascivious. They are a portrayal of but a portion of the people of those days. Always there have been those who were tempted but were strong enough to turn aside that temptation, and those who were strong enough to turn aside that temptation, and those who were tempted and fell. The percentage has not changed radically, but the number of those who will admit temptation, even anonymously, has. We are a frank lot—from the most angelic to the most diabolical.

We are frank, and we are great pretenders. We are the epitome of Shakespeare's "All the World's a Stage." We act with such intensity that many of us lose the true conception of our roles, and sometimes even forget we are acting. It is true, nevertheless, that we are the largest cast ever to play in that most ribald of all Rabelaisian episodes—"Modern Youth."

Many of our lamented weaknesses are blamed on the demon drink. Drinking is an indispensable part of any representative gathering of youth. We all take pride in being able to drink properly (if indeed there is any proper way to drink), but any over-

Accent Off Youth

By "Mac" McKenna

indulgence is severely frowned upon. A continued tendency to become "swacked" on all occasions is rewarded with ostracism. That is the supreme penalty of youth, for not to be one of the gang is an insurmountable tragedy.

We drink, not for the effect on our senses, but for the effect on the world. We have seen since first we were allowed to go to plays and picture shows of our own choosing that liquor has a prominent part in the life of the American elite. We have also read that this is true. Why should we eschew what is done by this elite? We are as good as they. It is, then, the normal thing to drink—the abnormal to abstain.

From the same sources we have acquired a freedom in our association with the opposite sex that has astounded our parents and set them anxiously discussing this situation with their friends. From this discussion have sprung the articles and statistics propounding the shocking truth of our corruption. But we are not immortal. We sin to this extent: a casual manner in mixed company; quite a bit of risqué talk; and a great pretense of sophistry that fizzles into a cautious reserve at the approach of the flame called passion.

Our parties are not the Bacchanalian revels attributed to us. Neither are the reputed orgies of squashing or petting. They are carefree gatherings consisting of numerous spiked jokes (seldom exceeding the little pup named Stokowsky because he was the pianist), and a round of dancing which includes several Harlem-born swing numbers no more harmful than the square dances of yesterday. All this is interspersed with cocktails and highballs taken discreetly. These parties are gradually unravelled out by couples, sometimes two or three to a car, wending their ways slowly homeward.

I will not deny the love-making that takes place then. I will admit it to be

quite general. But I will deny that it is promiscuous. It is what we feel to be the normal result of a deep emotion, but when it is happening it is genuine. I am certain there are, in proportion, no more cars today parked in secluded places than there were buggies in the same seclusion in our parents' days.

Our colleges are constantly labelled nests of passion where contraceptives have as prominent a place in girls' purses as cigarettes. Sexual experience before marriage is supposed to play a prominent part in college life. If one believes all the articles written on this score, to admit having been graduated from an American co-educational college is to admit having been a part, however innocent, of an educational brothel. This is not true. In college all classes of people are mingled. Naturally among them will be those who have no more morals than a cat. Solomon valued a virtuous woman above rubies. That does not mean all the women of his day were harlots, and though many students betray prurient tendencies, college life as a whole is clean and virtue is still valued highly. We denounce these associates of ours who are imprudent; we do not object to others denouncing them; but we do object to being classified with them.

Our colossal pretensions are what has gotten us into hot water. In an attempt to show our worldly wisdom we have forgotten to avoid all appearance of evil. That is from the Bible. We have been told that most of it is just beautiful legend. We pretend to be agnostics. But we revere the Bible, most of us shame-facedly and in private. We honor the churches though we seldom attend. Ask our opinion of religion and you will likely receive the scoffing answer you expect. It will not be the truth.

I am not attempting to make us appear saints. We are not saints, and we are not sinners. We are normal, healthy-minded young people, and we have been maligned by a generation that has forgotten it was normally youthful only recently.

We are as decent a generation as there has ever been. Chastity to us is as sacred as it was to any of our ancestors, and just as prevalent.

We are the same youth that has headed every generation, but a youth which instead of whispering uses a normal tone of voice to wonder and express ideas about its newly begun, illreputed voyage on the sea of life.

We are moral and chaste.

THE BATTALION