

THE DANCING QUESTION AT THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

A Statement from Rev. Mr. Allen.
 Monmouth, Or., Feb. 20.—To the Editor of The Journal: I have been asked to answer an article on "Dancing Takes Merely Slander," which appeared in The Journal of February 11. The author of the article does the same thing which he condemns in the writers of the former articles, in that he withholds his name. The people here seem to be unanimous in thinking that no one in the school would have been so untruthful as to deny the things which are there denied, and that there is only one man who could have written the piece. While I am not the author of either of the articles in the Telegram, I have spoken on the subject and am partially responsible for the first publication.

In answer to the denials above referred to, I wish to say that the following facts can be substantiated here by reliable testimony. The school advertised in its catalogue issued June 15, 1903, that "profanity, gambling, the use of intoxicating liquors, visiting saloons, attending public balls at any time or private dancing parties, except at the end of terms, carrying concealed weapons, smoking cigarettes and all other practices in violation of good morals or injurious to the best interests of the student, are distinctly prohibited, and will be dealt with by the faculty as the individual case may demand."

About the last of November, 1903, a proposition to establish a regular twice-a-month dance in the school buildings, which proposition had been "laid on the table" in a meeting of the board of school regents some three years before, was discussed in the faculty meeting. It was favored by the president, but opposed from principle by three of the teachers. The question was reported as "lost for ten weeks."

The dance will make their church even more popular with the school. They are exercising why does the catalogue class it with "practices in violation of good morals and injurious to the students?" If the present faculty favor dancing why did they advertise last summer to the patrons and prospective students that dancing would be "distinctly prohibited?" If they disapprove of it why do they ignore their printed obligations? If the patrons of this school and the patrons of the public schools of the state want the teachers of the state to be good dancers, where is the injury to the school or the injustice to the president from the advertisement that the students here are getting good training in that art? If they do not want it why should it be done here without their knowledge?

President Ressler's Statement.
 State Normal School, President's Office, Monmouth, Or., Feb. 18.—To the Editor of The Journal—With your kind permission I shall make use of some of your valuable space to comment on the letter published last night in the Telegram over the name Arthur Allen, concerning the question of dancing at the State Normal school. I feel that an apology is due the public for taking any official notice of the matter, whatever, and its with the greatest reluctance that I gratify the vanity of the writer of this and other items referred to in his communication, by making any reply. My excuse for making the following statement is that the general public is unacquainted with the real facts in the case or with the motive behind this newspaper agitation. All informed as to these matters place no reliance at all upon the wild statements of chronic soreheads and kickers who are never happy except when "minding other people's business."

The article published on February 5, with the headlines "To Dance or Not to Dance," is one series of misstatements from beginning to end. At the time of this writing, there was no agitation or excitement in the school or in the town on the question of dancing. No doubt there was some talk about the subject in certain quarters, as there always is concerning other amusements including football, basketball and the like. But there was no "all-absorbing" or "warm" discussion of the matter, no reference being made to it in the local press, and very little interest aroused among nine tenths of the citizens of Monmouth. The president of the school is not a "warm champion of dancing," does not "permit students to attend public dances," has never advocated in the faculty or elsewhere "giving dances twice a month at the school," nor said to any one at any time that he "had faith in the ultimate adoption of such a plan." The rules of the school permit the attendance of students at private dancing parties once a term, and it is probable that the reasonable request of the students who dance, that they might hold term dances in the gymnasium with chaperons selected from the faculty, is the basis for the bugaboo constructed by the writer of the sensational article of February 5. This respectable petition was discussed in faculty meeting and the decision unanimously referred to the president. After an investigation of my jurisdiction in the affair, I discovered that the board of regents had legislated on the matter some years ago and that it was entirely out of my hands. I therefore informed the students concerned that their request must be denied, and the matter was dropped.

That students will occasionally disobey rules laid down for their government is nothing new. The proper method of procedure for good friends of the school, who know of these infractions of discipline, is to come to the authorities with definite facts upon which action can be based, and not "rush into print." The faculty feel perfectly competent to deal with all matters of discipline connected with the school.

The attitude of the State Normal school remains exactly as it has been for years past. No change has been made nor will be made until the proper authority, the board of regents, sees fit to act. As long as I remain at the head of this institution, I shall undertake to administer its affairs to the best of my ability under the direction of its regents and of no others.

A Citizen's Statement.
 Monmouth, Or., Feb. 18.—To the Editor of The Journal—The citizens of Monmouth were compelled to smile as they read in the Evening Journal of February 12, the absurd article concerning dancing at the Oregon State Normal. The people here can readily accept it as a joke, it being known to have come from Monmouth's "funny man and town fiddler," but lest others should accept the statements therein made as true, they desire to have the facts in the case stated.

The catalogue of the school for the present year says: "Profanity, gambling, the use of intoxicating liquors, visiting saloons, attending public balls at any time, or private dancing parties, except at the end of terms, carrying concealed weapons, smoking cigarettes, and all other practices in violation of good morals or injurious to the best interests of the student, are distinctly prohibited, and will be dealt with by the faculty as the individual case demands."

However, the president of the school does not hesitate to admit that students go to dancing parties whenever they care to do so; that they occasionally give a "students' hop" at the city hall, and that with his knowledge it is advertised on the school bulletin board; that the school is represented in the public balls at Independence as frequently as they occur; that these balls are held during the school term; that the boys and girls of the institution are allowed to dance behind locked doors in the hall over the postoffice, and do so without a chaperon. The students do not hesitate to admit, and visitors verify the statement, that they dance in the chapel, never being interfered with unless by the janitor, and that dancing in the gymnasium is a daily occurrence.

Monmouth is proud of her normal school. It is the nucleus about which her citizens have built. Because of it the majority of her people are able to carry on their industrial pursuits. Can any one fall then to see why she refuses to keep silent when she discovers that young men and women are being brought into her midst under false pretenses, and that those who are so soon to go out as instructors of the boys and girls of the fair state of which she is a part are disqualifying themselves for efficient service by indulging in that which the honorable board of trustees, itself, has classed with "gambling, the use of intoxicating liquors, visiting saloons," and all other practices in violation of good morals and injurious to the best interests of the student?"

A CITIZEN.

chapter are done by Julia Ward Richards, the daughter of the author and namesake of the illustrious grandmother.

Mrs. Richards is noted for her fine literary style, and this, her latest book, will undoubtedly take its place among permanent literature.

"My Doves Year."—While Mr. Phillips is pre-eminently a novelist, yet the intense love of the beautiful in nature displayed in his stories gives evidence of that living "close to nature's heart" through which alone a writer can learn its secrets and make them go throbbing through his books with life and feeling. It is therefore not surprising that his descriptive powers cannot be kept within the bounds of romance whose characters are continually forcing change of view and perspective, and that he has prepared a nature book which is just a chain of "rare, fair days" spent in his beloved Doveshire.

Pastels of witching scenery, framed with wild philosophy to stamp it with distinct individuality. It is one of the best gems from the press of the Macmillan company.

"Cheerful Cats and Other Animals."—Can one sufficiently stretch their imagination into believing the "Cheerful Cat Pictures" the work of a busy Boston business man? This, however, is a fact, but that they would take their place as "lasting literature" was the farthest thing in the world from Mr. J. G. Francis' thoughts when he first began sketching quaint cats doing funny stunts, in his office in the busiest district of the city. Somehow St. Nicholas got hold of them and the cry for more went up. Mr. Francis has added to the original number and they have now been gathered into book form by the Century company. Christmas sales of this unique book were said to be very large and it continues to hold its own as a gift book, and proves quite as attractive to grown people as to children.

"New Fortunes, or How Molly and Her Brother Came to Boulder Gulch."—Is a new story for young readers by Miss Mabel Earle, and just from the press of A. S. Barnes & Co. Miss Earle's popularity as a writer of magazine stories argues well for the sale, as well as the fine quality of this her first long story.

It is largely an outdoor story and the experience of an eastern girl in a western mining camp. It comes in a new juvenile series now being presented by Messrs. A. S. Barnes & Co., to be known as "The East and West Series."

GOSSIP ABOUT SOME CURRENT BOOKS

"The Book of Garden Furniture"—By Charles Tronger, is a rare book and unique in its way. Many books have been written on gardening, the planting, seeding and cultivation, but few have been written on the "furniture" of a garden, a feature which is so prominent a part in making the house surroundings beautiful and tasteful, or grotesque and unsightly. In the opening chapter the author says: "In striving after artistic effects, mere cultivation skill will avail us nothing, if we do not possess that faculty for grouping and arrangement, which is inseparable from the skilled gardener." And again most truthfully says: "It is more than possible to completely spoil an otherwise good effect by the introduction of unsuitable or ugly summer houses, seats, sundials and statuary." To the correcting of this very common tendency toward the disfigurement of yards and gardens, Mr. Tronger has devoted the pages of his book. The work is particularly timely for residents of Oregon, where every one at present is devoting time and thought to the beautifying of their yards, which must of necessity enter largely into the impressions of us, strangers will carry away with them from the fair. It will not be enough to be known as the "Rose City," but there should be such system in the arrangement and settings that it will stamp us as a people of cultivation and taste, as well as of quantity and largeness of display. An artist may have a fine eye for color, distance and effect—all requisites for good work—but it takes education to train this into conformity of perfect work, and in gardening this is just what the author of "Garden Furniture" endeavors to do. One indifferent to the beauties of nature will never create a beautiful garden, even with training, but the lover of nature without education may produce equally as bad work. We have but to look over the yards of our own city and state to realize the truth of this, for some of the summer-houses, seats and statuary are as grotesque, in their way, as the "cast-iron deer in Selma's front yard," which Judge Grant so humorously told us.

The first chapter of Mr. Tronger's book is devoted to the gardens of early times, those following the subjects of arden seats, summer-houses, archways and trellises, pergolas, fences, gates, hedges, sundials and statuary are treated. Something of the grasp upon the subject which the author possesses, may be inferred from the terse remarks with which he opens his chapter on "Gates, Fences and Edgings." He says quite truthfully: "It is generally quite possible to estimate the style of the garden we are about to enter, by a mere glance at the fence or wall which surrounds it, and the gate or door through which we gain admittance. Almost invariably like, encloses like. A staring fence with ugly gates forms the boundary of a garden, where artistic taste is conspicuous by its absence." And of the statuary he says: "The ordinary garden of medium size has little opportunity for the introduction of statuary, and when any doubt exists as to

its being appropriate, it will be better not to risk the possibility of failure. In any case the cheap, nasty casts which seem to be an irresistible bait, to seaside gardeners especially, are worse than useless—they are positive eyesores."

For the construction and placement of garden furniture the author gives rules and lays down principles, the common sense of which appeals to the reader at once. The book contains 35 good illustrations, some of which are bits of some famous gardens, while others are desirable pieces of furniture, with instructions for construction and their proper placement. The book should enjoy an unusually large sale at this time.

John Lane, publisher. J. K. Gill, \$1.

"The American Prisoner."—By Eden Phillips, is a book which should be a record breaker and bring to the author a reputation he deserves, but which has been scantily bestowed upon him with his other works. Like "Children of the Mist" and "Sons of the Morning," the scenes in this are laid in the same wild west country of England, but the plot and conception of "The American Prisoner" is vastly different. It is the story of a century ago, when thousands of French and American prisoners were confined in an enormous stone-walled prison on the west coast of England. A Britisher with an intense hatred for everything American came with his wife and daughter and built a home on the Moor, and of course a romance between the daughter and an American prisoner furnish the motif of the story.

The story is full of thrilling and delightful situations, but not the least charm of the book is found in its powerful and vivid descriptions. In word painting the author has more than ordinary endowments, and sets his story about with such enchanting nature effects that the whole is irresistible to the lover of good, pure fiction.

Mr. Phillips has made an agreeable departure in keeping this book quite free from the heavy dialect with which his other works often become cumbersome and which may account for their not being as largely read as their merit deserves.

The present volume is dedicated to the popular editor of "The Critic," and that princess of book reviewers, Miss Jeannette L. Gilder.

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