

# Morning Astorian

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#### WHEN OUGHT A MAN GO TO HELL?

A day or two ago a Portland woman, who works as a servant, gave her husband \$165 to make the first payment on a lodging house which she hoped to purchase. The husband dropped into Erickson's place and played the fascinating game of "21" until the money was gone. The woman reported the matter to District Attorney Manning and asked him if he could recover it. He phoned to Mr. Erickson, stating the circumstances, and that gentleman replied as follows: "Go to hell."

Just when a man ought to "go to hell" is a question that is mighty hard to answer. Mr. Manning could have replied, "I'll die first," but didn't, so he is evidently of the opinion that he will not "go to hell." At all events he does not purpose "going to hell" until he has instituted suit to recover double the amount of the losing, which is provided for by the law. Before starting on the trip blandly urged by Mr. Erickson, Mr. Manning will cause him to be brought into court to show cause why he should not pay over to the poor woman twice the amount of the sum lost by her loving spouse.

There are times when a man, especially an official, ought not "go to hell." He ought to decline to do so when the interests of the weak and unprotected are at stake—when there is exercise ahead for the strong arm of the law. He ought to steadfastly decline to do so when, in attempting to enforce the provisions of the law, he is urgently invited to take himself hence. That's what officials are for—to remain here on earth and look after the lawbreakers.

In the case in question the person most to blame is the husband who squandered his wife's savings. No one will dispute this. But, the money having been squandered, the matter of the woman's protection arises. The husband might be scolded severely, either by District Attorney Manning, or by Mr. Erickson, but that wouldn't help the woman, who has been illegally deprived of her mite. That mite should be returned to her, and, as he is an essential factor in the administration of the law which will give the woman back her money, Mr. Manning ought to decline to adopt Mr. Erickson's suggestion, which has been inopportune offered.

#### THE HOMES OF THE POOR.

The fact that two and one half million people in New York city live in tenements gives the impression that there is a necessary connection between poverty and tenement house life, for the metropolis contrives to magnify its own conditions to a national scale, says the Saturday Evening Post. But the authoritative book on the subject just prepared by Tenement House Commissioner De Forest, of New York, and Mr. Laurence Veiller, conveys the cheering information that the evil hardly exists in other American cities.

Philadelphia is known everywhere as a city of homes. The tenement system does not exist there, and such bad conditions as there are in the small houses of the poor could be readily remedied. There is no tenement house problem in Chicago. There are slums in Baltimore, but practically no tenements. Tenement houses are "practically unknown in Cleveland."

They are not to be found to any extent in San Francisco, in New Orleans, in Milwaukee, in Detroit, in Louisville, in Minneapolis, in St. Paul, in Providence, in Rochester or in Denver.

Some important cities are fortunate enough to be free, not only from the tenement problem, but even from a housing problem. In Detroit, for instance, "the homes of a majority of the working men and poor people of the city are for the most part thoroughly comfortable, and most of the people live in separate houses."

The only American cities outside of New York that have a really serious tenement problem are Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburg and Hartford. The evil in each case has been the outgrowth of local conditions that can be remedied. In New York these

evils have been attacked so vigorously that the "new law tenement" of today is a more healthful, safe and attractive dwelling than was the average flat of ten years ago.

There used to be certain pernicious superstitions which, originating in New York, spread through the country. One of them was that the poor lived in squalid slums because they did not want anything better. It was no use to give them running water, for they would not use it, nor bathtubs, for they would fill them with coal and ashes. Now it has been proved that decent houses can be kept clean, that bathtubs will be used when they are furnished, and that the desire for civilized quarters is so strong that the houses which promise them have the apartments rented from the plans before they are built.

The slum is not a necessary evil, and the civilization of those cities that tolerate it will be under indictment until it is uprooted.

#### IT DOES NOT PAY.

The Portland Journal makes the holdup business the subject of an interesting text in its issue of Monday. The Journal wants to know if it pays, and offers conclusive proof to show that it does not. Local conditions are cited in support of this view. In Portland 25 holdups occurred between December 1 and January 16. The artists secured the sum total of \$286.55, or \$11.46 for each trick turned. There are usually two men involved in every holdup, so the net proceeds per man were \$5.73.

So far as the financial aspect of the situation is concerned, this is a decidedly poor showing for the most strenuous of all callings. The capital necessary to conduct a holdup business is, we agree, small, but the emoluments are not large. There is no monopoly of the business, and the amount contributed by the citizens of Portland was distributed, no doubt, among a considerable number of thugs. The per capita per thug for the 49 days will thus be seen to be insignificant one.

It is to be presumed from this the holdup business is followed by two classes of men—those who need small amounts and are willing to take long chances to get them, and those with a natural craving for undue excitement. The latter class is small, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that most of the thugs are out for the coin. They certainly might better turn their attention to something else, for the profits are meager for the risks involved. The Journal offers the suggestion that the thugs need have no fear of the police, but points out that the standup man is apt at any time to encounter a civilian who does not fancy the idea of being relieved of his wealth and who might employ a weapon of some sort to the disadvantage of the party of the first part. The holdup artist courts death every time he undertakes a job, and that the business should be so generally followed when the remuneration is so small is one of the surprises of this life.

Much importance is attached, and very properly so to the rapid and enormous growth of the foreign trade in recent years, but, after all, how insignificant this trade is compared with the magnitude of the internal commerce of this country. According to an estimate made by Mr. O. P. Austin, chief of the bureau of statistics, at Washington, the volume of domestic trade of the United States in 1903 reached the total of \$22,000,000,000, a sum greater than the aggregate of our foreign trade for the last ten years and equal to that of the international trade of the world for 1903. Is it to be wondered at that the rest of the world look with hungry eyes on such a market?

At a meeting held at the home of John W. Foster, arrangements have been made for a mass meeting to be held shortly for consideration of an arbitration treaty with Great Britain. Among those who will speak at the meeting are Cardinal Gibbons, Andrew Carnegie, Edward Everett Hale, chaplain of the senate, Clark Howell, Governor Durbin, of Indiana, and Rabbi Hirsch, of Chicago.

The dissatisfaction on the bar dredge Chinook probably arises from the fact that Captain Dunbar has, like Marcus Susman, announced that he is "the captain of the ship." Discipline is necessary to the service, and Captain Dunbar is to be commended for requiring it.

With due consideration for the law on the city statute books, there is no more reason for a man to expectorate on the streets than there would be for him to spit in some one's eye. The law ought to be enforced.

The Albany Herald says that a relative of former Governor Geer is interested in The Astorian. This will probably be news to the former governor and to Mr. Elmore.

Patti is in Seattle, to escape insolent Portland hotel keepers, but she isn't far enough away to escape the funny men on the Portland papers. And such a humor!

Senator Foraker will try to send an anti-Hanna delegation to the national convention. He should consult Tom Johnson before leaving.

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