

THE CORVALLIS GAZETTE

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NOT BACK-SLIDEN.

Dr. Emil G. Hirsh, a Jewish rabbi of Chicago, in a sermon to his congregation last Sunday, declared the world, including this nation, has lapsed or deteriorated in morals. The ultimate result of this would be bloody revolution and a worse condition for America than prevails in Russia.

We care little about Dr. Hirsh's conclusions, but his premise is rather startling. Confining our inquiry to this Nation, is it true that we, as a people, have had a moral back-sliding? To accept this as true it must appear that a greater ratio than ever before of our people are actuated by immoral incentives to thought, purpose and actions.

That crime is on the increase in some localities may be admitted, but that an increasing percentage of our people are criminals or in danger of becoming such is not true. There is no real evidence it is true. Those who think it true are simply misled by the quick and wide publicity now given to the commission of any sort of crime. The telegraph, the telephone, the press transmit and record the commission of crime occurring in the remotest section of the country and the aggregate deceives us into believing crime is on the increase.

For the same reasons we are prone to conclude that civic crimes, corruption, bribery, im-

bezzlement of public moneys and official malfeasance are on the increase. This is not true. We are simply dragging a greater number of such criminals and crimes into the light and exposing them to public view.

The accumulation of immense wealth by immoral methods is confined to the few. Their methods are now made known and meet with public condemnation while those who practice such methods are held up to general execration. Ill-gotten wealth never had so little real influence for good or evil as is now fallen to its lot.

Extravagance, private and public, largely disappears when we compare our present ability to make large expenditures with former inability to do so. The immorality of extravagance is in living beyond one's ability. Living up to one's income is usually unnecessary and very foolish but can scarcely be stigmatized as immoral.

Complete analysis of the whole subject constrains us to believe that never before have the masses of the American people been actuated by so high moral purposes. Never before have they been so earnest and unanimous in their determination that all immorality shall be destroyed. The growth of the temperance reform is alone irrefutable evidence that we are not moral back-sliders.

Clergymen, school-men and all whose occupation and habits keep from association with the masses are easily deceived by the flotsam and jetsam of the conflict. To know how the battle is going we need to know the strength and earnest courage of the firing line.

We are not slipping backward. Like an army, which has long lain quietly in one position, moves forward and onward to

conflict and victory, so our people are marching forward to the conquest of all forms of immorality. There will be no turning back, no compromise, no truce, because never heretofore have so many of our people accepted as eternally true that "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

MOST ACCEPTABLE.

A banquet of commercial organizations was recently held in Chicago. A number of prominent railroad presidents and general managers discussed the question of legislation for the regulation and control of railroads. The presidents of the Rock Island, the Santa Fe, the Illinois Central, the Chicago and Alton and of the Monon railways expressed their views clearly and forcibly. They were agreed on every essential point.

It was freely admitted that the people are determined to effect the control of the roads, and that such control would be beneficial to all concerned.

They agreed that federal control is greatly more efficient and desirable than state control because federal makes the roads responsible to but one controlling power and gives them unity of law and regulation in all the states.

Mr. Ripley, president of the Santa Fe road said his road ran through fourteen states and territories all having different rules and regulations. What was lawful in one state was illegal in another. All this forced his road to operate under tremendous difficulties.

The president of the Illinois Central road said he did not know of any concerted movement on part of the railway companies looking to the federal control, but that the present conditions,

growing out of attempted state control, are almost intolerable he was well aware, and central, or federal control seemed to offer the only solution to the untoward conditions now prevailing.

There is little question that for the greater part attempted railway regulation by the state has worked little if any good for the people and none whatever for the roads. It has done little more than saddle the roads with onerous and vexatious conditions under which they must operate. The Federal government can, as between the people and the railroads, administer equity and compel equity more certainly than any other instrumentality can. For this reason federal control should commend itself to all the people.

Let us not become too greatly impatient. The attempt to control these corporations is of comparatively recent date. Our legislation has been largely tentative, experimental—and necessarily so, but we are rapidly approaching the positive and staple forms of legislation on this vexatious subject.

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