Whited Sepulchers.

The preacher prayed in a woolen tone, For the thief in the felon's cell. And told of his punishment here on earth, And his endless days in hell; But the thief that sat in the best front pew That he might be seen and heard— Of the abyss, dead in the brazen door, The priest never uttered a word.

And he told of the harlot, steeped in sin, And the criminal, and the thief, and the drunk. And they that did not fear the Lord, And the robber in the street and the room. And they that did not fear the Lord, And the thief that went through the town.

But the harlot with her head bowed, And the criminal, and the thief, and the drunk. And they that did not fear the Lord, And the robber in the street and the room. And they that did not fear the Lord, And the thief that went through the town.

Rudolph Born.

Crime and Punishment.

The fear of crime and the question of punishment are two bugbears that stand in the pathway of a good many people, when they contemplate the proposition of setting men free from State interference. The same bugbear frightened the conservatives when skepticisms began to question the correctness of Christian dogmae. Not longer than twenty years ago men stood in the pulpit and boldly asserted that without the fear of hell to restrain them, men would rush head-long into all manner of crime and vice, and pitiable indeed would be the world. To-day such assertions are received by all intelligent persons with a smile of derision. It is now known that the fear of hell is but a poor preventive of crime. But true to the history of mental evolution, most minds have transferred their faith in the fear of hell, as a preventive of crime, to the fear of punishment here and now. One is as foundationless as the other.

Minds beleagued by ignorance and besotted by superstition may be assuaged by vivid descriptions of eternal torments as to quell at the thought of committing crime, or may be restrained from some acts of fear of punishment, but as knowledge sheds its light abroad all restraint by fear vanishes. Bright lights are forever betrayed by threats of hell and are always ready to take chances on evading the law and thus escape punishment, if they desire to do that which the law prohibits.

To deal with the question of crime, with any hope of solving the problem, it is necessary to inquire into the cause of crime. Those who depend on the fear of hell believe in the depravity of the human race; in the myth of the "fall of man," by the sin of Adam. The upholders of the State of punishment to prevent crime, may deny a belief in this fallacy, but their attitude shows that the idea still dominates their thoughts. They never inquire why men commit crime, in fact they seldom even stop to examine why it is that certain actions, and what effect punishment has on the one punished. All they want is to retaliate, to practice revenge, and to set an example to other erring ones hoping thereby to deter them from committing crimes.

But let us inquire into the cause of crime and the right of punishment. Has any one the right to punish another? If so, where do you get the right? If individuals have no right to punish others, what right has the State? If the State has a right to punish from whence comes that right? I deny the right of the State, or of an association of individuals to punish anyone. I call for any argument that can be brought forward to substantiate the right of punishment, and of none save the "might-makes-right" argument.

Many acts are declared crimes, and defined by law, that I will not admit are crimes. I deny that it is criminal for anyone to take possession of any unused natural opportunity and use it. I cannot call it a crime for anyone to take that which they did not need for their own use, or the use of those dependent upon them, when such taking is necessary to support the life of the one doing the taking or those dependent upon him or her. There are many other things commonly called crimes, that I will not admit are crimes, but that I will not stop to discuss.

Let us inquire for a few minutes on what is the cause of crime. Most crimes at the present time, that is most all acts classed as criminal, are violations of what is termed property rights. Most of the remainder are the outgrowths of jealousy, which in turn is due to legal marriage, and superstitions. There are also beliefs in regard to sex matters. Unborn children are badly accounted for because their parents have not had opportunities to develop what was in them, nor to gain the requisit knowledge to become the parents of healthy and intelligent children. Then, too, heredity is not the only factor to be considered. All persons are not at their surroundings impel them to. When opportunities are restricted and persons find it difficult to provide the necessities and comfort of life, they have but little time to consider the artistic, to foster fraternity, and to enjoy the society of their fellows. All this has a depressing and stultifying effect upon the people. All around them see others, human beings like themselves, who have not the opportunities they crave for and which they can not gain, and which the luxuries which have they never dared to dream of possessing. Is it any wonder that so many say to themselves: "It doesn't matter how you get it, the only thing to live for is to make money!" Nothing is to be plainer than that the present economic system, the outgrowth of monopoly, which in turn depends on the State for existence is the chief, if not the only breeder of crime. Having driven persons to the commission of crime the State immediately becomes a still greater criminal by punishing its victims for doing that which it has forced them to do. The State denies equality of opportunity, fosters privileged classes, creates monopolies, and commits innumerable crimes against individuals, forces them into crimes and vices of all kinds, and then builds jails, prisons, and erects gallows and electric chairs in order, so it said, to suppress the very crimes and vices of which it is the direct cause.

With all these facts in view it is the height of absurdity to pretend to fear freedom, lest crime should go unpunished, and increase beyond human endurance.
Clippings and Comments.

Resolved by the San Francisco Trades and Labor Alliance That the working men who, by joining the militia of this or any other state, will so far forget their own and the interest of the class to which they belong, as to render the social recognition of his fellow-workers and should be ashamed as a crimes or unconscionable traitors to the interests of his fellow-workers; and he be further Received, That we call upon the organized working men of this and of the United States to voice their convictions of the truth of these declarations, and voice them to the United States, and to the Italian people, and to the Italian Government. This is an excellent sign. When the working-men refuse to fight the State will fall to pieces, and all men become free.

Corey’s “Sound Money” is extremely unsound in the information it imparts and its readers. When fluid it is more fit for the guzzling of the Silver Ring than the elect proportion of the people. It is unnecessary and impracticable that the Socialists are found in arms against the State. The Revolutionaries they therefore will be found in arms for a crew of red revolutionaries, be unaware that the Socialists are no longer a party, however well banded as the Red Republicans.

No longer caught except by the hook dangling by them by the ring in New York composed of De Leon, Saniel, Kuhn et al.

On December 4th we went to the Board of Trade room and became aware that the object of the meeting was not to apply the money for government’s duty, but that it was to organize and prepare for the counter-revolution. These organizations, it is to be held, and that everybody in the money market means his influence to secure at the election issues which they are disfranchised because the proposition of former age was abolished. It is the desire of these men to secure office who are disfranchised for the sake of the state, and to cruel persecution for differing in opinion from the state’s own opinions of the Psalms of David. Therefore it would be well for the liberal side with their talents in humanity and decency in rights to live and liberty and to the liberty of the state, and influence everybody to keep his opponents out of office by voting against them. The state’s own opinion of the Psalms of David.

More about the proposed Convention.

When I sent the final items about the proposed convention, in my last communication to The Firebrand, I did not state, I would need to write more on the subject, but rather intended that we would begin anew and try to make the proper arrangements for a convention to be held at some future date, and at a place most convenient for all comrades throughout the country. But since then I have received the last number of The Firebrand (Dec. 13) containing a startling and called for announcement, entitled “About the proposed Anarchist Convention,” and signed by M. Leonell, Editor of “Freie Gesellschaft,” which can not be passed.”

It would seem that, by this time, every proficient Anarchist would know at least this much: whatever he does he ought not to cause confusion or disorder in the state’s own opinions of the Psalms of David. He does not want to give his aid in some Anarchist enterprise, as the convention, etc., he at least ought not to put any obstacles in its way.

I cannot discuss in a single instance, of having ever deluded anyone, and it would have been perfectly insane of me to get comrade into expense by sending delegations from the Philadelphia Convention, to a convention that will not, or was not going to take a place.

My master, who has been so kind as to act as the secretary and relieve me of a great deal of work, and I have answered all the letters—and they were many—and we informed everyone that the convention would occur only if the New York comrades decided for it, rested the ball, etc., but he had to be held, and from us. Likewise I sent a notice in due time to The Firebrand, “About the Convention,” which was published on November 28 which if Leonell had written he would have been in the right. There I stated, “No definite information can yet be given about the proposed convention for the 1st of January.”

A meeting was held in New York for the purpose of discussing the advisability of a General Convention, but we have not yet heard the result. Much will depend upon the conclusion arrived at this meeting, in the Italian society of what they propose to do. The collective will of the New York comrades. As soon as we learn the opinion reached at this meeting we will at once announce through The Firebrand, we hope will be in a few days, and so there will be ample time for all to get ready, and send delegates, should the decision be favorable.

It seems that they will be plain enough to all who can read English, that they are not to send any delegates until they receive information to that effect. Now we all are more in being and causing disagreeable confusion and misunderstanding.

“IT was a single individual,” he says, “and I do not know of a committee consisting of several persons. I think the committee consisted of a few persons, one of whom had a secretary, etc.” Whether does he derive the notion that the committee claimed to have consisted of more than one individual? What is the use for absurd and unnecessary repetitions? And in his statement, he with me another comrade of New Haven, as in fact I did, and my sister as secretary, who have rendered me invaluable aid, is there any cause for disparagement or unfavorable comment?

Again he says, “When the committees published in your paper of Oct. 7, which should be Oct. 4 “a general call for the general convention, and that I mistake. I did not publish a ‘general call for a general convention,’ but simply a proposition for the same.”

The call I reserved until there would be sufficient time to be made for, and for this reason we sent out many letters of inquiry, and asked for secretaries of groups throughout the country. In the Call I intended to state that the subject of the convention would be, of course, and the several subjects and questions that are, of utmost importance, and that are, in our opinion, the first ones to be discussed. Referring to The Firebrand of Oct. 4, all will see plainly that the committee was not at all presumptuous or irrational, and I will produce a few lines from that article, “Proposed Convention,” that will show this to be the case. Then, “a committee has been appointed to arrange and call the next convention, which is due January 1st, 1887,” (should read Dec. 25, 1886), “and we thus take the opportunity to propose a general convention of all the Anarchists of the United States, to be conducted in the English language.”... We feel assured that the tremendous dignity of the people will not wish to be presumptuous in the way of calling a convention without general consent, and we ask the opinion of all on the matter, to be expressed through The Firebrand, so that the committee will judge whether to call one or not. . . . .

The call was issued, and the comrades all over the country were ordered, and I am about to say that they took the above as a call for a convention, as we sent many encouraging letters, and some elected delegates to it. From Los Angeles, California, a comrade wrote, “We Americans in the United States, in the present moment, is the bringing into closer relationship those who advocate it, and I think the comrade who was present in the convention will do that, at least the tendency is that way therefore I am very much in favor of it.”

From Portland, Oregon we are informed that the comrade there are most likely in favor of a convention and, says the correspondent, “so far as I am concerned if a better understanding can be reached I am strongly in favor.”

From Boston, we are told, “the prevailing spirit here is that an Anarchist circle is ‘Apathy,’ there is a possibility of things going right this year for New York for a day or so about that time, it is held, etc.”

From Philadelphia we heard that they will send a delegation for the proposed convention, and “in favor of a such a move I would be very pleased to receive some information about it.” Even from across the Atlantic, from London, encouragement and cheerful words have come. And in the face of all this, or rather in the face of all this, M. Leonell says that “no body took interest in the matter and only adverse opinions were heard.” Again he says, “none of the comrades present at the meeting on the 1st of January, the ‘General Convention.’

Let us see if that is true. We have written letters to Most, Katz, Rudish, Pope, Bonoff, “Deliniec Lisy,” and one or two others. Through them we intended to send out delegates through New York. So it was. Most them (except the last in the “Freibert,” favorable or unfavorable), from the 1st of January, and in the future, comrades must set about.” The “Deliniec Lisy” have informed us that they “sympathize” with us, “and hope the convention will be a successful one,” and the Bohemian comrade, who is our representative in New York will attend it. They also sent us twenty-two addresses of Bohemian groups throughout the country.

A French comrade in New York says, “I am interested in the Anarchist Convention . . . . and I think that the group ‘La Libre Initiative’ is of the same disposition.” One other, B. F. of W. St.,
writes us, "I was interested to read in The Firebrand of the Convention to be held in New York, as an individual I would be very glad to be present, and assist where I might be useful for you to have in it." Comrade Bond wrote us to the effect of Nov. 9th, and informed us that the Jewish comrades would hold a special meeting that week for the purpose of discussing the proposition. Later let us come to again, saying that the meeting was held and they decided against it, therefore they refuse to rent the hall, etc. The prospects for the convention were thus very good, the final response being 150 registrants. It is always gratifying, and the results would have been gratifying had not the sluggishness and apathy of the New York Jews prevented another greater concern.

Undoubtedly it will now become evident on which side the "utterly false and childish" action lies, but above all things the great aim of all well-meaning Anarchists is to be,—to do everything they can towards making everything they wish to do for the movement without causing any unnecessary friction, because it is simply a waste of force.

Observations.

Neither "Truth Seeker" nor Comrade Addis hit the mark, in my opinion, as to taxation of church property.—I refer to that which has been printed in The Firebrand. Addis is not more opposed to all compulsory taxation than I am. My position is this: If it is shown that the privileged-by-law robber, the Church, gains exemption from the taxation of property to the tune of millions of dollars while all other property is taxed (or, supposed to be), a strong point is made plain to all fair-minded men and women,—and that is that, the Church is a privileged-by-law robber.

I would be glad in a future number to make some "Local Notes," a former column under the name of Commodore Holmes, "Free Communism,"—also as to State Socialism and, last but not least, as to Anarchy vs. Anarchy. Let not the last proposed caption mislead the unthinking.

I wish to say that I think the time has arrived when the demand is made plain in words the freest expression of opinion. I am not too much of a "rash" person to write with an unguarded tongue. I can, perhaps, explain my meaning without anything sufficiently personal to shock Comrade Addis. Take Byington's "discussion" with me: "If you entered my mind that anything I would write would offend him, and, I think it safe to say that he never thought about offending me! I have had the pleasure of personally meeting Comrade Byington and, I think it to violate of private conversation to say that I feel absolutely sure that Comrade Byington believes in writing with a bare, unguarded tongue.

Comrade Lovedge's logic is amusing. He does not believe in taxation, but he would advocate taxing the "privileged by law robber." What anybody needs more than that the Church is the yoke fellow of the State and enjoys privileges, not accorded other institutions, because it does so much to support the State? Those are twin robbers and deceivers. Let all refuse to pay taxes and the Church is immediately storn of its power, other than that voluntary accorded it by the superstitious. Tax the Church and you will only increase the power of the State, by increased revenue, and the burdens of superstitious church goers.

Note and Comment.

Our P.O. Box address will be 94 hereafter, instead of 477. This change was made necessary by the increase of mail we receive. 94 is a larger box than 477.

During the Civil war, the citizens of Boston were wild with joy over the defeat and capture of S. C. R. of the South, and the burning of Richmond. Because of their rejoicing was that the fact that Buckner was fighting to uphold chattel slavery. Boston was opposed to chattel slavery. In December last S. B. Bond was feasted and hanged by the citizens of Boston. He is now championing wage slavery, and cultured Boston is in favor of wage slavery.

Mr. Byington is very anxious to make us believe that he has not much time to spare, but when we receive such lengthy articles of which the first part appears in this issue, I am inclined not to believe him. His arguments could have been much stronger and more intense in half the space he occupies now, even with my consideration that he is a liarist and should be able to express himself precisely in a comparatively short article.

But the so-called individualists seem to be richer in words than reasoning power.

Mr. Cohen, a faithful disciple of B. Tucker, asks in last week's issue: "What will be done to a murderer by the Communists?" Now, Mr. Cohen, when you ask me why a man will commit murder in a free society, then I may be able to tell you what would be done with him. From principle we have no right whatever to punish an individual for an individual, an individudal might do. And I am inclined to think that the "Commune" will not do anything to a murderer, but will seek to remove the cause that induced the individual. If the individual were simply mean to double an invisible act. On the other hand, a true Individualist will not recognize any judge or judges, not even if the judge should consist of some of the worst Yatris, at all. Such phenomena of submissiveness are only characteristic among "Commercialists and other superstitious people, and that is why I savor at the so-called "Individualists" and "Socialists." Yet, Mr. Cohen, what Individualism or freedom really means, and you will see then that it will be of little importance to deal with invasion, if such acts of atavism should occur.

Why I Want Property.

In making some comments on Mr. Holmes's article entitled "Free Commonism," I was not entirely convinced by our editor's hasty approving his preferences for the name "Communist" rather than "Individualist" or "Philosophical" to express the idea of opposition to Communism. There is every reason we should be the best.

In the next place, I want to assert to so much of his premises as claim that production is already on the track of progress, because it increases and produces more wealth, and that this increase tends and will tend to give us more and more Communism in practical life. I also agree that we can set no limits to the probable increase of production.

Nevertheless, I, for my heart want to leave a hold some private property, even in the most perfect and wealthiest society. Under no circumstances shall I ever be asked to take a dictionary which they had damaged when they had it before. But when I lend a book I know it is and I am quite sure it is, and I am sure that it is back if I ever feel I need that, and I shall get it back in time anyhow. I want this to continue so. I cannot work to such good advantage if after taking the trouble of bringing a book to hand in the United States—and what are there, are in the hands of men who want them for their own use—I have to be sure that it will remain in my reach. (This will still be true if I do not have to pay for the book.) But to give me any assurance that the book shall stay by me is to give me a certain degree of property in the book.

Then, I have a good deal of doubt about any progress of society making my books so easily attainable that I can have all my thoughts and wishes conflicting. Many of my books, as I said just now, are not such as society wants in large quantities. It might be the worst trouble that I could get any edition to satisfy me and a very few others. Yet the supply already on hand is not enough to satisfy us. Hence it follows that in those books the demand is not enough. Why should there be a trouble of reprinting, will continue to exceed it. But if these facts are allowed to be so, then the whole ground on which Mr. Holmes's argument for Communism is based is cancelled, so far as concerns these books.

The other does it follow, because the demand for these books is so small that they are not worth the trouble of reprinting, that their value to those who use them is not for. I am over 50 years of age and am not yet sorry. Yet, in spite of the high price, the demand for Zulu dictionaries seems to be too small to make it worth anybody's while to reprint it. But that makes me the matter of "best editions." When a reprint is made the renprinter usually is careful to have improvements in the book. Sometimes the reprinter makes the book better and sometimes they make it worse. Consequently there are some books of which the last edition is the best and others in which only a reprint makes the book better.

(To be continued.)
Echoes from our Exchanges.

The Spanish insurrection seems now to be satisfied for a little while. The modern Torquemadas can flatter themselves that they beat the Turks, as far as atrocities in the name of civilization are concerned. The present insurrection of the suffering classes, imposed upon the nation in the name of justice, and equality before the law, 200,000 deep in the bowels of the Montfleur castle, quietly under a dim lantern light they teach the constitution.

The Armenians stood at the last chance of killing some of their aggressors, but this is not the case with the Jewry. They are not ennobled in that dalm and harem, which was purposely built for them to exercise all the imaginable atrocities to satisfy the bloodthirstiness of the capitalistic system. And now the Spanish jesuits are the only ones which try to put the "Chicago justice" in shadow, for which actions, I suppose, they will be heartily con- gratulated by "brothers in profession" this side of the Atlantic.

Here are certain authentic parts, word by word, of the (fiscal) royal attorney: "We have to close the eyes to reason, regardless of any legal dispositions, and in spite of of faulty proofs, we declare that every one of those arrested as figuring in the process, is the author or accomplice of the expulsion.

On the ground of such a declaration is rendered the following sentence: Twenty-eight to death, fifty-nine to imprisonment for life, and, out of the rest of those not cast adrift, it is not to be expected that this is the way governments are fulfilling their promises of the promotion of the welfare and happiness of its citizens.

Russia—they are now over 17,000.