

The Firebrand

OF THE CONQUEST OF IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION.



An Exponent of Anarchist-Communism: Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone Constitutes Liberty; that in the Absence of Monopoly Price and Competition Cannot Exist, and that Communism is an Inevitable Consequence.

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THE FIREBRAND

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Anarchy.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal; absolute individual liberty.—Century Dictionary.

Whited Sepulchers.

The preacher prayed in a woeful 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 shylock thief of the helpless poor,
The priest never uttered a word!

And he told of the harlot, steeped in sin,
And the ramseller's awful doom;
And said if they didn't cease to increase
Hell would run short of room;
But the pirates that have stolen the earth,
And their brother's blood have shed—
The parson smiled as he winked at them,
And never a word he said!

Lord help the preacher and help the church,
When the morning sun shall rise,
And cast the veil that has hidden the sham
Away from the peoples eyes!
And the big thief then, in the best front pew,
And the man with the blood-stained hand,
Shall stand alone in the daylight clear
In sight of all the land.

—Tichenor.

Crime and Punishment.

THE fear of crime and the question of punishment are two bugbears that stand in the pathway of a good many individuals, when they contemplate the proposition of setting men free from State interference. The same bugbear frightened the conservatives when skepticism began to question the correctness of christian dogmas. 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 by the to 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 beclouded by ignorance and besotted by superstition may be so terrified by vivid descriptions of eternal tortures as to quake at the thought of committing crime, or may be restrained from some acts by fear of punishment, but as knowledge sheds its light abroad all restraint by fear vanishes. Bright minds are not horrified 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

enquire 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 enquire why men commit crime, in fact they seldom even stop to enquire what crime is, or 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 crime.

But let us enquire into the cause of crime and the right of punishment.

Has any one the right to punish another? If so where do they 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 know of none save the "might makes right" argument.

Many acts are called crimes, and defined as such 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 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 enquire for a few minutes 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 outgrowth of jealousy, which in turn is due to legal marriage, and superstitious beliefs in regard to sex matters. Children are badly born because their parents have not had opportunities to develop what was in them, nor to gain the requisite knowledge to become the parents of healthy and intelligent children. Then, too, heredity is not the only factor to be considered. All persons act as 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 cultivate the artistic, to foster fraternity, and to enjoy the society of their fellows. All this has a degrading and stultifying effect upon the people. All around they see others, human beings like themselves, who have not only the comforts they crave for and are denied, but also such luxuries as they have never dared to dream of possessing. Is it any wonder that so many say to themselves: "It don't matter how you get it, the only thing to live for is to get money!"

Nothing can 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.

HENRY ADDIS.

Saladin and His Book.

COMRADE LOVERIDGE charges me with "misrepresentation" in the following respects. I quote his words:

"Julian" in his contributed chapter has sought to say about the Talmud (1). Julian is a "Lord of the Masora" (2) and his chapter relates to ancient Hebrew writing and touches on nothing else.

Saladin gives all the information as to the "Lord's Prayer" being paralleled in early Jewish prayers that Prof. Gotthell gives (3) and, also, makes mention of Maimonides (4). He simply quotes Rev. John Gregorie as well as other learned Talmudists (5). Also, Saladin gives all the information that Byington's cyclopedia gives as to the reaction of the two Talmuds (6).

Comrade Byington has, apparently, forgotten my contention that "The Lord's Prayer" is not the Lord's prayer at all (7), and that all which Jesus is reported as saying in the four Gospels—all of any ethical value—was said as well if not better centuries before Jesus was born (8).

Let me reply as briefly as I can:

1.—The "misrepresentation" here arose from my misunderstanding a statement in Loveridge's former article. I perceive my error and beg pardon. So far as I see, it has no bearing on the subject under discussion. I was not trying to show anything about either Julian or Saladin personally, but to show that Loveridge's quotation, of whose accuracy he had been so confident, was a gross forgery. This I notice, he does not now deny.

2.—That is, one of the editors who put the Hebrew Bible into the shape in which it now exists, and drew up the rules for writing it. I ought to be afraid to dispute about Hebrew with so ancient and weighty an authority.

3.—Who said he didn't?

4.—Yes, when I looked at his book I noticed that he charged Jesus with borrowing part of the Lord's Prayer from Maimonides, who was born in the year 1139. Jesus must have been a miracle-worker indeed to do that.

5.—Who is Rev. John Gregorie, anyhow? I can't find him in any cyclopedia I have consulted. All that I know about him is that he is cited as authority for a quotation which proves to be a forgery. Is it on this ground that Comrade Loveridge calls

him a learned Talmudist? If not, what is the ground?

6.—What I said about this was not directed against Loveridge or Saladin, but against Radich, who had raised that point.

7.—I am sure I made especial reference to it in the article Loveridge is now answering.

8.—If I had not noticed this contention, it is because it was too broad to furnish a basis for discussion in anything smaller than a large octavo book. I meet this sweeping dogmatic assertion by a sweeping dogmatic denial. It isn't true. That is all.

I hardly suppose Comrade Loveridge expects an answer to the rest of his article; certainly I can not see what good an answer would do.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

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 his own and the interests of those of whom he is a part, unworthy the social recognition of his fellow-workers and should be shamed as a conscious or unconscious traitor to the interests of his fellow-workers; and be it further Resolved, 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 with no uncertain sound.—[White slave.

This is an excellent sign. When the working-men refuse to fight the State will fall to pieces, and all men become free.

COXEY'S "Sound Money" is extremely unsound in the information it imparts its readers. When did it ever find a Socialist with a greater love for or less detestation of the Silver Ring than he entertains for and of the Gold Ring? If "Sound Money" imagines that, because the Socialists are found in arms against capitalism they therefore will be found in arms for a crew like the Silver Ring, it must be unaware of the fact that the Socialists are no longer caught, however well baited the hook may be.—[The People.

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

On December the 4th we went to the Board of Trade Room and we became aware that the object of the meeting was not to applaud the mayor for doing his duty, but that it was to organize and prepare for the coming city election which is to be held next June, and that everybody in the mean time uses his influence to secure at the election officers who are disgusted because the inquisition of former ages was abolished. It is the desire of these men to secure officers who are willing to subject everybody for the sake of humanity to cruel persecution for differing in opinion from the tyrannical moralist piratical reform methods. Therefore it would be well for the liberal side who believes in humanity and decency in rights to life and liberty and to enjoy the same, to organize and influence everybody to keep their opponents out of office by voting against them. They themselves proved that all inhuman, tyrannical and piratical reform methods were detrimental to good government, for the reason that it had a tendency to demoralize the servants of the city, the encourage blackmail. Everybody's duty, therefore is to prevent the crime by extending the liberty of men.—[Advocate of Common Sense.

Why not abolish your city charter, thus taking from these moralist intermeddlers the police power they depend on to enforce their petty tyrannies? While the police power lasts there is danger of its use for vile purposes. H. A.

ANARCHY is not concerned with this or any other human right—wants no organization, nothing but a free field and a fight, fair or foul, of man to man, with no organized force behind either party to turn the balance of victory. Capitalism is the organization of the forces of society in favor of a class: to destroy this class Anarchy would destroy the organization of society.—[Sojourner, in The Coming Nation.

Such trash as the above in such a paper as the Coming Nation is deplorable. Sojourner, a capitalist, rent and interest taker, has reason to write in such manner, as it is to his interest to cause misunderstanding, and divisions amongst the working men, but the editor should know better. If he does not, let him learn what the Anarchists really propose, and what Anarchy means. Instead of Anarchy wanting a fight, it is opposed to all fighting, and is the only social theory that does stand for the abolition of all force, and the necessity to use force. It proposes that we stand man by man, instead of man against man, in a mighty struggle to overcome the

crudities of nature, and to secure to each and every one the fullest, freest and happiest life that his or her organism can experience. Instead of destroying the organization of society Anarchism would substitute a social system so complete and so fully adapted to human needs—the result of experience and natural selection—that all State organization, or other organizations founded on force, will be unthought of, much less desired.

In response to the request of a new subscriber for statistical information as to the proportion of the products the laborers are allowed to enjoy, we reprint the following:

"According to the American statistician Carroll D. Wright each workingman produces, annually in

England.....	\$ 790
United States.....	1,888
Italy.....	265

The average wages received are, in

England.....	\$204
United States.....	347
Italy.....	130

This gives us the following picture:

	Production.	Wages	of capital.	Share
England.....	\$ 790	\$204	72.2 pCt.	27.8 pCt.
United States.....	1,888	347	32.2 "	17.8 "
Italy.....	265	130	51 "	49 "

From this we see that the English workingman gets somewhat more than $\frac{1}{4}$ the American a little over 1-6 and the Italian about $\frac{1}{2}$ of what they produce. And it also shows that the wages cannot be regulated by laws as some reformers claim. In the United States are the most laws that are supposed to protect labor, while in Italy are the least, and see the result. No wonder the capitalists accumulate so much wealth by their sweat and hard work." A. I.

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 think 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 on 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 uncalculated announcement, entitled "About the proposed Anarchist Convention," and signed by M. Leontieff, Editor of "Freie Gesellschaft," which cannot be passed unnoticed.

It would seem that, by this time, every professed Anarchist would know at least this much: whatever he does he ought not to cause confusion or disorder in his own ranks, and that if he cannot, or 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 be accused, in a single instance, of having ever deluded anyone, and it would have been perfectly insane of me to get comrades into expense by sending delegates from Chicago, Philadelphia, etc., to a convention that will not, or was not going to take place. My sister, 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, rented the hall, etc., but not to send delegates till they heard from us. Likewise I sent a notice in due time to The Firebrand, "About the Convention," which was published on November 29 which if Leontieff had noted he would have saved himself all the trouble. 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 fact the committee feels disposed to leave it all to 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, which 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 this would 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 where is the need for others mixing in 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. The committee consisting of a single individual had no secretary, etc." Whence does he derive the notion that the committee claimed to have consisted of more than one individual? What is the use for absurd and useless assumptions? And if I had chosen to associate with me another comrade of New Heaven, as in fact I did, and my sister as secretary, who have rendered me invaluable aid, is there any cause for disapproval or unfavorable comment?

Again he says, "When the committee published in your paper of Oct. 7." (which should be Oct. 4) "a general call for a general convention. . . ." This is a 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 ground for it, 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 the full object of the convention, the outline of its 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 presumptive or irrational, and I will produce a few lines from that article, "Proposed Convention," that will show this to be the case. Thus, ". . . a committee has been appointed to arrange and call the next convention, which is due January 1st, 1897," (should read Dec. 25, 1896) "and we thus take the opportunity to propose a general and real convention of all the Anarchists of the United States, to be conducted in the English language. . . . We feel assured that nobody will oppose this measure, yet we do not wish to be presumptive 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, and from that the committee will judge whether to call one or not. . . ."

No call was issued, yet the comrades all over the country were so eager and enthusiastic about it that they took the above as a call for a convention, and sent us many encouraging letters, and some elected delegates to it. From Los Angeles, California, a comrade writes, "What Anarchism in the United States needs at the present moment, is the bringing into closer relationship those who advocate it, and I think the contemplated convention will do that; at least its tendency is that way; therefore I am very much in favor of it." From Portland, Oregon we are informed that the comrades 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 in Anarchistic circles is 'Apathy,' there is a possibility if things go right that I may run up to New York for a day or so about that time, if it is held. . . ." From Philadelphia we heard that they will send a delegate to the convention and that in their opinion "a convention is a necessity." They also sent us addresses of other groups. We have received the "Tribune Libre" of Charleroi, Pa., with a translation of our proposition and a favorable comment thereon; and later a letter from the editor stating that he has had several inquiries concerning the convention, and "being in favor of 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 ignorance of all this, M. Leontieff, asserts that "nobody took any interest in the matter and only adverse opinions were heard." Again he says, "none of the active comrades of New York know anything about the 'General Convention.'" Let us see if that is true. We have written letters to Most, Katz, Rudash, Pope, Bonoff, "Delnicke Listy," and one or two others. Through them we intended it would be spread all through New York. So it was. Most discussed the matter in the "Freiheit," favorable or unfavorable matters not just now, and in this way all the German comrades must have known about it. The "Delnicke Listy" have informed us that they "sympathize" with us "and hope the convention will be a successful one," and that the Bohemian comrades who are in New York will attend it. They also sent us twenty-two addressees 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 West 37th 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 in every way to further the object you have in view."

Comrade Bonoff wrote to us on Nov. 9th, and informed us that the Jewish comrades would hold a special meeting that week for the purpose of discussing the convention. Later he wrote to us 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 number and promptness of the responses were surprising, and the results would have been gratifying had not the sluggishness and apathy of the New York Jewish comrades prevented its occurrence.

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 ought to be, —to do everything they can, and everything they wish to do for the movement without causing any unnecessary friction, because it is simply a waste of force. SMIRNOW.

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 Christian Church, gains exemption from taxation of its 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 "observations" regarding the article by William Holmes, "Free Communism,"—also as to State Socialism and, last 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 cause demands plain words and the freest expression of opinion. In my opinion, it is much wiser to write with an ungloved hand. I can, perhaps, explain my meaning without anything sufficiently personal to shock Comrade Addis. Take Byington's "discussion" with me: it never 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 no violation of private conversation to say that I feel absolutely sure that Comrade Byington believes in writing with a bare, ungloved hand.

CLINTON LOVERIDGE.

Comrade Loveridge's logic is amusing. He does not believe in taxation, but he would advocate taxation in order to show up a robber. Why not show 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: That they are twin robbers and deceivers. Let all refuse to pay taxes and the Church is immediately shorn 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.

H. A.

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 went wild with joy over the defeat and capture of S. B. Buckner, at Ft. Donaldson, in 1862, and the cause of their rejoicing was the fact that Buckner was fighting to uphold chattie slavery. Boston was opposed to chattie slavery. In December last S. B. Buckner was feasted and banqueted by the citizens of Boston. He is now championing wage slavery, and cultured Boston is in favor of wage slavery.

H. A.

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 made much stronger and more intense in half the space he occupies now, especially when we take into consideration that he is a linguist 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 faculties.

MR. COHEN, a faithful disciple of B. Tucker, asks in last week's issue "What will be done to a murderer by the Commune?" Now, Mr. Cohen, when you tell 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 anybody, no matter what an individual 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 influenced or caused that murder. To punish a murderer would simply mean to double an invasive act. On the other hand, a true Individualist will not recognize any jury or judges, not even if the jury should consist of semi-gods, such as B. Tucker, Victor Yarros, et al. Such phenomena of submissiveness are only characteristic among "Commercialists and other superstitious people, and that is why I sneer at the so-called "Individualists." You have to find out 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 attavism should occur. A. I.

Why I Want Property.

In making some comments on Mr. Holmes' article entitled "Free Communism," I wish to begin by emphatically approving his preference for the name "Commercialist" rather than "Individualist" or "Philosophical" to express the idea of opposition to Communism. There is every reason why this name is the best.

In the next place, I want to assent to so much of his premises as claim that production is already on the increase and will increase still faster under freedom, 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 part want leave to hold some private property, even in the most perfect and wealthiest society. Understand, I do not say that I shall require to hold all or even most of the products of my labor as private property. I may find it convenient to communize most of them. But I want to be able to hold as my property as much of them as I choose, be it the whole or only one thousandth. Even if I find it best to keep none at all, I still want to feel that I can do so if I want to. But I also feel sure that I shall want actually to exercise my right of property to some extent.

In reasoning on this subject, I think first of the effect of a change on my own life. I believe I am altogether right in doing so. In reading "Looking Backward" I noticed that the author put all other trades into the hands of the State in his ideal society, but left his own trade of book-writing under the old conditions. This seemed to me significant. Every man, thought I, knows the conditions of his own trade better than those of any other; and if Mr. Bellamy finds his social ideal unsatisfactory for his trade, this tells more strongly against it than all the rest of his books can tell for it.

Just so, in the present matter, I feel sure that I can not in any other way get so fair an idea of the effect of Communism on people in general as by first applying it in thought to myself in particular.

My chosen life is that of a student, and my chosen work is such as grows out of study—that is, especially, teaching and writing. Whatever other work I may do will be only a side issue in my life, done for the sake of conforming to the requirements of others. Therefore, I shall be quite ready to do this other work in any way, Communistic or otherwise, that will best suit these others. As to the needs of my bodily life, I have no fear that I should be worse fed, clothed or lodged in a Communistic society than now. Therefore this is no objection to Communism so far as I am concerned. For my individual life as a student I need one kind of labor-product—to wit, books; and I do not see how I can get on very well without private property in books.

First and foremost, some of my books bear manuscript notes of my own—comments, references to other

books, notes as to how far the authority cited in the book bears out the statement founded on that authority. No improvement in the process of production will ever make it possible for me to find these notes duplicated anywhere in the world. They may indeed contain nothing of value to mankind in general—though I am conceited enough to think that some of them might enlighten others than myself—but at any rate they have a unique value to me. They have a special relation to my lines of thought, which nobody else's notes could have; and the loss of these notes would be a loss to me that would not probably be equalled by their value to any one else into whose hands they might come. Therefore it is highly important to me that the books containing these notes continue within my reach. But I cannot secure this unless I have a certain amount of control over the books—in other words, a property right in them.

In the next place, I want to use many books which are not of general interest. Although my library is not very large, it contains many books that I cannot find collected in any public or college library I have visited. For instance, I do not know where to find a theological seminary whose library contains all my books relating to the study of the Bible, or even the most important of them. In pursuing studies of my own I develop needs of my own different from those for which the libraries were planned. If the libraries should get the books I want, they would in many cases, in all probability, serve no one but me. Hence the most economical way for all concerned is for me to get together in my own possession the books I most need. I understand, of course, that I could do this under Communism. But then, having gathered such a collection and begun depending on it for my work, I want some guarantee of its permanence. I find this in my ownership. Now I am not stingy with my books. I positively cannot remember having ever refused a request for the loan of a book, except once this fall when some children asked to take a dictionary which they had damaged when they had it before. But when I lend a book I know where it is, and am quite sure that I can have it back if I very much need it, and that 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 to get a book of which there are not fifty copies in the United States—and what there are, are in the hands of men who want them for their own use—I have no assurance that it will remain within 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 everybody can have all they want without their wishes conflicting. Many of my books, as I said just now, are not such as society wants in large quantities. It might not be worth the trouble to print a new edition merely 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 these books the demand exceeds the supply, and, where it is not worth the 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' argument for Communism is based is cancelled, so far as concerns these books.

Neither 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 slight. I paid over \$5 for my Zulu dictionary, 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 this. And even when a book is reprinted there remains the matter of "best editions." When a reprint is made the reprinter usually is careful to have improvements made in the book. Sometimes these improvements make the book better and sometimes they make it worse. Consequently there are some books of which the latest edition is the best, others of which a much older one is best, and others where each of three or four has its advantages. And, naturally, those who use a book are very apt to want the best edition. So, when a book has been reprinted till there are copies enough for everybody, there are still not enough of the best edition for everybody who wants that edition. Consequently the best edition is not yet ready for Communism according to Mr. Holmes' principles. And this will still be true as long as men continue to strive after progress and to make occasional mistakes in doing so. (To be continued.)

Echoes from our Exchanges.

SPAIN. The Spanish inquisition 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 upholders of "law and order" operated in the name of justice, and equality before the law, 200 fathoms deep in the bowels of the Montjuick castle, quietly under a dim lantern light they teach them the constitution.

The Armenians stood at last the chances of killing some of their aggressors, but this is not the case with the victims in Barcelona who are entombed in that dim and darip hole, which was purposely built for them to exercise all the imaginable cruelties to satisfy the bloodthirstiness of the capitalistic system.

As we can see 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 congratulated by all their "brothers in profession" this side of the Atlantic.

Here are some authentic papers, 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 any faulty proofs, we declare that every one of those arrested as figuring in the process, is the author or accomplice of the explosion."

On the ground of such a declaration is rendered the following sentence: Twenty-eight to death, fifty-nine to imprisonment for life, and the rest of them that did not die from the atrocities are exiled. This is the way governments are fulfilling their promises of the promotion of the welfare and happiness of its citizens.

Here are some facts showing how the Spaniards love their "glorious" government. Official reports show 18,000 desertions from the last (96) military enlistment. The cities of Barcelona and La Coruna have furnished the most desertions. Many young men would have left Spain, but could not on account of being too poor. The Spanish workmen don't seem to appreciate the war with Cuba.

BULGARIA. The "Memorial Diplomatique" brings us the news of a bomb explosion in Sofia, in front of the palace of the president of the council, which made quite a heavy destruction. Several persons were arrested, but nothing could be proven.

RUSSIA. The students organized a monster manifestation in Moscow in remembrance of the mangled peasants on the Kodinsky Plains at the occasion of the crowning of the Czar. There were over a thousand arrested, 50 among them are convicted for political crimes and sentenced to hard labor, and over 500 to lighter penalties. All this for having sympathy with the poor victims.

FRANCE. There was held a mass-meeting in Paris at the "Maison du Peuple" to protest against the atrocities committed against the political prisoners in Spain. It was an imposing demonstration of sympathy with the Spanish pioneers for liberty. The meeting was organized by the Anarchists and Independent Socialists.

GERMANY. The longshoremen in Hamburg are still on strike—they are now over 17,000. The bosses try all over the continent to get poor and needy men to work in place of the strikers. There are daily disturbances on the streets in spite of all the military watchfulness. The necessity of a general strike is also felt more and more in Germany, and it is now under discussion among the laborers in their meetings.

A. KLEMENCIC.

Correspondence.

REPORT.

I received for the Berkman's rescue fund:
 From the Bakers' Union No. 27, Pittsburg \$10.00
 " " subscription list No. 82 4.75
 " " Italian comrades in New York, through Emma Goldman 4.50
 Cash on hand from my last report 20.99

Total \$50.24
 H. GORDON, treasurer.

Pittsburg, Jan. 3, 97.

A SHORT DEFINITION.

In your issue of Dec. 6th, L. Emerick gives his definition of "Justice," "Righteousness" or "Right." Allow me to give my definition of injustice, wrong, or sin.

Sin is any word or act which causes any being unnecessary suffering.

This agrees with all Mr. Emerick says, but is more comprehensive, and is more applicable to every act and word of life. D. E. SMITH.
 Santa Ana, Calif.

A PROPOSITION.

I like your idea of the "Want Circles." As soon as I can see the Porterville Comrades I will try to get them interested, and try to form one. I think it would be a good plan to have the Secretary of each "Want Circle" to send a notice to The Firebrand, to the effect that they have formed such an association, also time and place of meeting. You can number them, also publish name and address of Secretary so the different "Circles" can communicate with each other.

W. P. AUSTIN.

Poplar, Cal.

The Letter Box.

W. R. G. & A. M.—You will receive the book "The Old and the New Ideal" after a few days.

J. B. Drill, O.—The book "The Old and the New Ideal" is sent. We think you will enjoy reading it.

C. P. S., Riverside, Cal.—Good, brother. We hope that you will try to get us a few more subscribers from your vicinity.

T. C. H., Pendleton, Or.—We have complied with your request and reprinted the statistical statement. We had it published in No. 33, before you became a subscriber of The Firebrand.

P. J. F., Dayton, O.—The paper has been sent regularly since the 18th of December, 96. You will find a new convert at the Soldiers Home named Titus. Yes, you can send stamps of any amount.

Mrs. G., Pana, Ill.—We never discontinue sending the paper to anybody on account of not being able to pay for it, as long as they like to read it. And as you read The Firebrand with great interest, and it has taught you how to bring up your four little boys, as you say, you shall have the paper as long as we are able to issue it.

A. R. T., Dayton, O.—Certainly people will have "some rules of conduct in a condition of freedom," but they will grow out of the conditions spontaneously without being "enacted by law." Any rules or "better and new laws" become despotic and a stumbling block to progress as soon as they are written down. Government is then established again, as police would be necessary to enforce such rules, etc.

Receipts.

New Years present from C. Pfluetzer, \$5.40. Wm. Duff, Glasgow, Eng. \$6. Fuchs, Chicago, \$4.50. International Working People, Chicago, \$5. Maloy, Pledge Park, each \$1. Komow, Taylor, Eggers, Hendry, Gordon, Reedel, Dr. Lewis, Poppers, Brust, each 50c. Levitz, Rudash, Buhr, Rodas, Adams, Bergman, each 20c. Ballou, 20c. Shaw, 10c.

Poisoning People

because they are sick is going out of fashion, in spite of it being the law. Reason, which is higher than the constitution, demands that they should be cured, not killed. The many one-idea methods, mental and physical, that profess to cure and which sometimes relieve pain, is evidence of this. The Philosophical, Scientific, Psychological and Physiological Method cures after these chance methods have failed even to alleviate. This method is all that its name implies, it cures all forms of disease, of either male or female, from whatever cause arising, including the so-called incurables. L. Levin. Write now. E. G. Lamont, 68 St. James Place, Brooklyn, N. Y. When writing please mention The Firebrand.

A Splendid Book.

The Old and the New Ideal. A Solution of that part of the Social Question which pertains to Love, Marriage and Sexual Intercourse. By Emil F. Ruedebusch. Paper cover 50 cents. Cloth, nicely bound \$1.00.

Order from The Firebrand.

FLOWERS & SHRUBS.

ANYONE who will send a donation of ten cents to The Firebrand, or a 50 cents subscription and a two cent stamp to pay postage, I will send three nice plants. Among them are roses, bulbs, house plants, and hardy outdoor plants. This is a splendid opportunity to get some nice flowering plants and help The Firebrand at the same time.

Order of REINHOLD HOPFMAN,

768 Glisan St., Portland, Oregon.

The Plants will be sent all over the United States.

DR. FOOT'S PLAIN HOME TALK

EMBRACING
MEDICAL COMMON SENSE.

For the information of those who may be interested, I would call attention to the popular edition of this book, that has been a standard of information, and a source of knowledge to tens of thousands of families for many years. The popular edition has been brought out to meet the ability of the poor to buy, and is sold at the remarkable low price of \$1.50.

Order from The Firebrand.

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We send out each week large numbers of sample copies, and for this purpose we ask friends to send names of persons likely to be interested. The receipt of a sample copy has no other significance than the hope of interesting you and securing your assistance in the work. The subscription price is nominally

fifty cents a year, though in reality it is voluntary, for many friends pay more than the subscription price, and we send it to all who desire it, even if they are able to pay only a few cents or nothing at all. If you receive the paper without having ordered it, do not hesitate to accept and read it, as no bills are ever sent out.

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The Independent Educational Club meets every Sunday evening, at 7:30 p. m. at 1927 E St., Tacoma, Wash.
The Peoples Union, a free discussion club, meets every Sunday evening at 985 Westminster St., Providence, R. I.
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Radical Literature of all kinds, including English periodicals, can be found at the news stand of comrade I. Rudash, Cor. Essex a Division Streets, New York City.
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