

AN OLD QUESTION IN A NEW FORM

(Continued from Page 12.)

reason has always been entrusted to our governors.

I have considered the question now from the standpoint of society and the state and come next to the purely personal proposition of punishment to the accused. Is an execution any punishment at all? I

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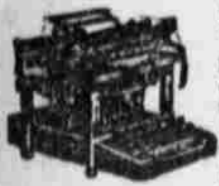
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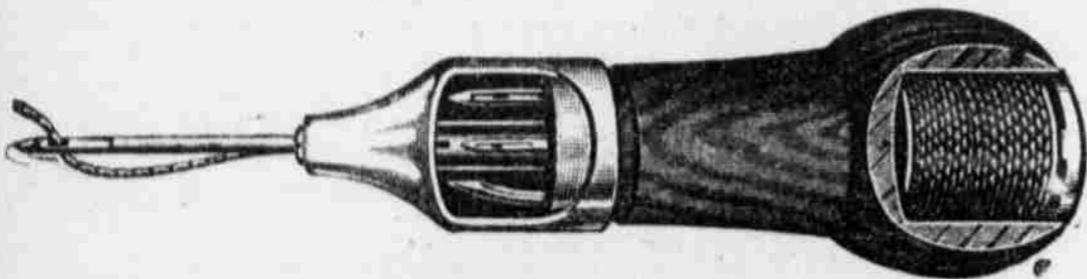
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deny it. To kill is not to punish but it simply puts him out of the way and beyond all human punishment. To kick or mutilate a corpse is as senseless as to turn upon a log over which we may stumble and kick or curse it for an accident it may have caused. An execution is an act preventing and ending punishment. Since there is neither punishment nor reformation to the condemned in hanging since a dead man feels no restraint for pain of conscience as a burden for errors or wrongs what are we doing to him by execution? He ceases to be a man and ceases to bear the mark of Cain. He becomes inanimate matter. We overdo our punishment. If by death we cut off his joys and happiness in the same measure we cut off his sorrow and humiliation. We may balance things for the accused but I deny that death is a punishment to the man killed any more than we can, by hanging, punish a stone. He must live a human life to receive human punishment, assuming that punishment is our aim. Is death in the sick chamber or hospital called by the name of punishment? Does death on a battlefield punish a soldier? It is never called or named punishment there. But the net re-

sults to the man who passes over is the same, whether the memory left is one of infamy or of honor.

His character and not his reputation count there. Do our brave soldiers who have defended this nation and are ever ready to lay down lives for our liberty fear death? They do not fear either pain, suffering or any emotion akin to punishment. Their anxiety is only a sorrow for the overwhelming grief of dear ones that may be left behind. Hundreds of men deliberately take their own lives to avoid imprisonment. They take death as an antidote against punishment. Scores of men and even young timid girls select death in preference to exposure and shame. Death is an asylum impregnable against punishment. Death is nature's haven and refuge from unbearable conditions. Death comes to the rescue the instant pain and suffering reaches its limit and still we call nature's great and final balm for all extreme suffering a punishment—capital punishment—the very reverse of its design by nature.

Death is the natural and logical sequence of birth and the end of all mortal life which included the beginning and ending of both joy and sorrow. Should death be decreed with no better reason than to have been a punishment. Death is no punishment to the condemned. It pains the mother, wife, and sisters. By an instantaneous jerk he is passed over all suffering and beyond all punishment.

As Christians we teach that death is eternal life; the passing from darkness to light. As a Christ teaching nation we send clergy to a condemned man to prepare his soul and convert him to our religion which teaches it is never too late to repent and be saved and then after this careful and natural preparation send him beyond our control and call that punishment? I charge that from the standpoint of neither a Christian, an atheist, a scientist or a philosopher, can death be considered or figured out as a proper punishment or any punishment at all to the condemned.

While I would not touch philosophy in this document of law and mortality I can not refrain from the observation that if there is a continuance of spiritual life why release and set at liberty in the great beyond a murderous spirit? Why not finish the incubation of this earth and permit a man in safe environment to change his mentality and pass on if such is divine providence with more of a Christian spirit?

Some people try to be governed in all they do by what the Bible says. I revere and respect them for such opinions. The old testament possibly justified and recommended the death penalty as it is written: "Who so sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," but we are told the purest Being, the greatest Teacher, the holiest Judge who ever presided over the destinies of man never wrote a sentence preserved in history excepting when meditating upon capital punishment. He wrote with his finger in the sand and then immediately said as if an interpretation of what he wrote: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." The old law read, "Let her be stoned to death." As all men are sinners this harsh and cruel law of death written in the old testament was reconstructed and repealed by the Saviour of man and savage justice was tempered with the saving influence of the Master's mercy.

If this teaching of Jesus Christ will not suffice I should think in a Christian nation, where we worship the Son of God who was tried in a court, condemned to death and crucified according to law, we would profit

by the evident example of horror and stop, hesitate a moment, in every court and every office of this land and think of Him before we take a life—the life of any one whom Jesus died to save. JOHN A. YEISER.

WALL STREET'S RAGE

Did Wall street think Woodrow Wilson was a political crook? Did it think he was a political liar? Did it think he was a political confidence man engaged in buncoing the American people? Did it believe that he was seeking the presidency under false pretenses and would sell out as soon as he was elected?

The protests that have followed Governor Wilson's speech at Chicago admit of no other construction. In this speech Governor Wilson said nothing that he had not said before he was nominated for president. He said nothing that he had not said after he was nominated for president. Every word was in harmony with the principles and policies to which he has adhered throughout his public career. Every word was in harmony with the programme to which he is definitely and irrevocably committed by solemn pledges and promises.

Yet the great financial interests of the country have chosen to make an issue of this speech. The spokesmen of big business are overwhelming the governor with protest and rebuke.

The Journal of Commerce tells us that "bankers who were interviewed by a representative of the Journal of Commerce stated that they were disappointed and disgusted with the speech" and that "some of them indulged in exceptionally strong language when asked for an expression of opinion." A member of the firm of J. Pierpont Morgan & Co. is quoted as saying, "I become more and more disappointed with Wilson every time he speaks." An officer of "one of the largest and most influential banks" describes the speech as "rotten." Another banker thinks "Wilson is making a great mistake," and Henry Clews hopes his next speech "will be more encouraging and acceptable to business interests." And thus the story runs.

Governor Wilson said nothing at Chicago at which any honest business need take alarm. There was no menace of a reign of terror; no threat against legitimate industry or legitimate finance. The speech in the main was an appeal to the business men of the country to join forces with the administration in eradicating abuses concerning which the public mind is fully made up. It was a plea for honest counsel and honest co-operation. It revealed a chief executive trying to judge with the mind of a just and upright judge. This is the speech and the appeal Wall street denounces.

There can be only one interpretation of this criticism. Either Wall street thought Woodrow Wilson was a coward who could be scared, or a demagogue who could be dealt with, or a snob who could be flattered, or a corruptionist who would traffic for the favor of big business, or a traitor to the principles of government which he advocated throughout the campaign.

The Woodrow Wilson who spoke at Chicago is the same Woodrow Wilson who was nominated at Baltimore. He is advocating the same policies in the same language and in the same way. Wall street's rage is not the rage of honest business threatened with oppression of confiscation. It is the rage of baffled privilege which finds itself face to face with an honest and fearless and intelligent leader of the American people.—New York World.