

THE CHINESE QUESTION AND ITS IMPORTANCE

BY A WORKINGMAN

(Continued from last week.)

Trouble between our people and the Chinese, together with what has been known as anti-Chinese agitation began in the state of California several years earlier than in other parts of the country. As a result, legislation on the subject, in that state commenced as far back as 1855, when a law was there passed imposing a tax of \$55 on every Chinese immigrant settling therein. In 1858, another law was passed, prohibiting all persons of the Chinese or Mongolian races, from entering the state or landing at any port thereof, unless driven on shore by stress of weather or unavoidable accident, in which case they were to be immediately reshipped. From that time onward till about 1876 and possibly later, there was an almost continuous stream of legislation flowing against them in that commonwealth in the form of state enactments and municipal ordinances. But nearly all of them from time to time were declared invalid by the courts, on the ground of being unconstitutional. It was then that the people there and elsewhere, began to look to congress for relief. After much discussion and after preparing the way by a modification of the Burlingame treaty as noticed in my last letter, an act was passed by that body in 1882, the first section of which, as amended a year or two later, runs thus: "From and after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers into the United States is hereby suspended, and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come from any foreign port or place to the United States, or having so come to remain therein." Section three of the same act provides that the first section "shall not apply to Chinese laborers who were in the United States on the 17th day of November, 1880, or who shall have come to the same within ninety days" after May 5th, 1882; and section 15 provides that "the words Chinese laborers, wherever used in this act, shall be construed to mean both skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese, engaged in mining." The remainder of the act, comprising in all seventeen sections, is devoted to the providing of ways and means for its enforcement. During the session of congress of 1887-1888, a law was passed the fifth section of which is in these words: "From and after the passage of this act, no Chinese laborer in the United States shall be permitted, after having left, to return thereto, except under the conditions stated in the following sections."

The exceptional cases are as follows: 1. Where he has a lawful wife, child or parent here. 2. Where he has property here of the value of \$1,000. 3. Where he has debts due him in the sum of \$1,000 pending settlement. The rest of the law, containing, all told, 13 sections, is made up of provisions for its own enforcement and the more effective execution of the earlier acts above referred to. Next comes what is commonly known as the "Geary law," approved May 5, 1892. Its first section is framed thus: "All laws now in force prohibiting and regulating the coming into this country of Chinese persons and persons of Chinese descent are hereby continued in force for a period of ten years from the passage of this act." The eight succeeding sections are made up of stringent provisions for its execution, as well as for the execution of the earlier laws which it continues in force. The last statement is also true of another law, passed in 1893, in amendment of the sixth section of the Geary act. No later legislation, so far as I have been able to inform myself, has been enacted on the subject. What, then, is the present status of the matter as de-

ducible from the treaties and laws to which I have called attention in this letter and the one next preceding it? So far as arrangements made directly with China are concerned, the treaty of 1894, stipulated in our favor as follows:

"1. That for a period of ten years beginning with the date of the exchange of notifications of this convention, the coming, except under the conditions hereinafter specified, of Chinese laborers to the United States shall be absolutely prohibited."

The exception relates to cases where Chinese laborers wish to return to the United States after having left them, and is not of very much importance.

2. That Chinese rightfully residing in the United States "shall have all the rights that are given to the citizens of the most favored nations, excepting the right to become a naturalized citizen." Exchange of notifications took place December 7, 1894.

The substance of our federal legislation on the subject, as we now have it, stands thus:

1. That the coming of Chinese laborers into the United States rests suspended till May 5, 1902.

2. That the right of Chinese laborers to return to the United States who formerly lived here and left the country, is likewise suspended, save only in a few exceptional cases, not necessary to be stated here, as they are not of sufficient importance to cut much of a figure.

3. That all Chinese laborers now in the United States who have no right to be here, if any, may be deported in the manner provided by law.

4. And finally, if the Geary law and the several other laws which it continued in force for the period of ten years from the date of its approval, be not re-enacted, then on and after the 5th day of May, 1902, all restrictions of every kind will be removed. And immediately thereafter we may expect to see the Pacific ocean fairly yellow with hundreds of thousands of "almond-eyed Celestials" moving eastward, under the "Star of Empire," instead of westward, as heretofore, and finding no barriers in the way on striking our shore, they will sweep the country like a besom of destruction.

Let us hope, then, good reader,

In this brief narration,

We both see full well

The plain situation.

J. T. MORGAN.

(To be continued.)

OPPOSED TO GENERAL OTIS.

Whereas, It is currently reported that Harrison Gray Otis, proprietor of the Los Angeles (Cal.) Times, is an aspirant for a high official position under the administration, said to be the portfolio of war, and

Whereas, The said Harrison Gray Otis is an unscrupulous and unrelenting enemy of labor, manifesting his hostility in the most effective manner, and

Whereas, The American Federation of Labor, in convention assembled, has protested against any such recognition of said Otis, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Central Labor Union, of Erie, Pa., that protest be also entered in the name of organized labor of this city against any action of the administration the object of which will be to exalt said Harrison Gray Otis in any manner, and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the executive officers of the American Federation of Labor and to his excellency, President McKinley.—Erie People.

The Christmas number of the Terre Haute Toiler lies before us. It is the handsomest labor paper that we have seen, and is a credit to Terre Haute and the editor of the paper.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The coming four years would appear to be the most critical in the nation's history, not excepting the rebellion. Competition is a life and death struggle even to the crushing of one's competitor in self-defense.

The genius of man is rewarded for devising means to destroy labor known in economics as "labor-saving." Carroll D. Wright says that for every \$10.50 produced for the master, labor receives but \$1. The small capitalist is as helpless as the man is without arms and legs, blind, dumb and deaf. There is no niche in the wall for him to squeeze in and do business. Every foot is pre-empted by the commercial cormorant. There is no trade for the young man and no room in the professions. The lawyers even are having short shift by the centralizing of industries into close corporations. Few workingmen are either buying or building homes.

The daughters of respectable people in the stores, the shops and the factories who have taken on the scarlet hue as a side line is food for a chapter all by itself and the story then but begun.

The "empty dinner pail" is the fear of the future. Our modern commercialism and industrialism can hardly assure more than a short period of prosperity. The pace is too swift. National elections have come to be land-slides, according as the dinner pails are empty or full.

The hungry man is a savage, and the possibility of several million savages makes it necessary to prepare for such a contingency.

This is no dream. We have been on the ragged edge more than once in the few decades; near enough to put capital on its mettle. Capitalists are uneasy with so much liberty stalking around loose, and they have reason to be. The capitalist is not a humanitarian, but strictly business. There is no charity in business. In business man is but a machine, and when a piece of iron comes along that is a better machine than man, then man takes a walk. That's business. Out of iron they make guns. The gun is the best friend the capitalist has got.

And the capitalist has a monopoly on the use of guns. That's business.

There is worry for the capitalists, and not for the first time.

They were worried in the days of the Chicago anarchists. They were worried when Debs and Pullman clashed. They were worried in the days of the Knights of Labor. And they are worried now over the dinner pails, the task they have to keep them filled.

For weather forecast watch the dinner pail. High "full," clear and pleasant, soft summer breezes; all nature smiling. Low "empty," local disturbances; agitation spreading; not yet general; cirrus clouds; atmosphere hazy; wind fitful and erratic. All craft advised to seek shelter.—E. P. Mills.

SALT HAD LOST ITS SAVOR.

A customer walked into a clothing store the other day to make a purchase. An affable young gentleman stepped up to wait on him.

"Have you a union card?" asked the customer.

"I have," replied the clerk, and began to show the line of goods from which the customer wanted to select.

"Let me see your card," said the customer.

The clerk fumbled in his pocket, and drew out a sure enough union card. The customer took it and examined it. "This card expired three months ago," said he as he handed it back and walked out. The clerk lost a sale and the store a customer.

Moral: Get your union card and keep it renewed.

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