

THE CHINESE QUESTION AND ITS IMPORTANCE

BY A WORKINGMAN

(Continued from last Week)

With a view to throwing discredit upon the doctrine of exclusion and impugning the motive and intelligence of those who adhere to it, our opponents sometimes tell us that all the talk we hear about Chinese, cheap labor, and all the agitation going on over the Chinese question "are but a canting cry founded upon and addressed to race prejudice only and not to cool considerate judgment."

As to this charge, my answer is two-fold:

1. I deny it; and the justice of this denial will be found both in my refutation of opposing arguments and in arguments I urge affirmatively in the position upon which I have planted myself.

2. Even were the charge literally true to the full limit to which it goes, the very fact of its truth, from many points of view, would be a strong reason why we ought to exclude. A few observations will be sufficient to make this clear.

For more than thirty years the workingmen of our country have been opposed to Chinese immigration; and from time to time, during all this period they have in their unions, conventions and other public gatherings, voiced their opposition in various modes of expression. They have done so in reports of committees, in arguments, in resolutions, in petitions to congress and the like. Has all this agitation continued through all these years and still going on, been founded on race prejudice and on this only? Let us assume so. As early as 1855 the state of California began to legislate against the Chinese with a view to keeping them out of its territory. As a means of discouraging them from coming within her borders the state of Oregon, a number of years ago, passed a law forbidding their being employed on public works. With a view in large measure, of affecting the Chinese a number of states have passed laws forbidding the employment of aliens on public works. Quite a number of our states, acting through their legislatures, have during the last 25 years, memorialized Congress to provide ways and means to prevent their coming here. Have all these state laws and memorials, framed by thoughtful men while in grave deliberation upon public affairs—while endeavoring to promote the general welfare of our people—have all these measures emanated from race prejudice and from this only? Let us assume it to be so.

Nearly 20 years ago the Congress of the United States, after mature consideration and full discussion, passed our first Chinese exclusion law which met with executive approval, a law which is yet in force having, in the meantime, been once re-enacted. And since then several other laws, also yet in force, have from time to time been enacted with a view to a more efficient enforcement of the first one and the one by which it was re-enacted. These laws have received the approval of more than one president while acting in their capacity as chief magistrate of the Republic and under the weighty solemn responsibility attached thereto. Were all these representatives and senators and presidents—were all these men in what they thus did under the malign sway of race prejudice and this alone? Let us assume it to be the case.

In 1879 or 1880 the president appointed a commission to negotiate with China for such a modification of the Burlingame treaty as would clear the way for the exclusion laws above referred to; and after much effort such modification was effected through the treaty of 1880. This last named treaty was also modified in the same direction by the treaty of 1894. These treaties in the usual form of procedure, were duly ratified by the United States Senate, representing a part of our

treaty-making power. Were all these high officials—these learned diplomats, bearing such ponderous titles envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary, titles so big with meaning that an ordinary mind is scarcely competent to grasp the height and depth, the length and breadth of their significance—were all these cool-headed, trained, experienced, statesmanlike, public functionaries moved by the malignancy of race prejudice and by this alone? Though sad the confession, let us take it for granted that it is all true. Assuming such, then, to be the case as our opponents venture to insist, what ought we as a government and a people to do in the premises? If desiring to act ethically right, and with the past and present condition of things before us as above indicated, I repeat the question, what ought we to do in the premises? Ought we not to say to the Chinese people in their native land and elsewhere outside our own borders: "For some reason or other, or for none at all, our American people are prejudiced against you as a race and we believe it a duty to be frank about it, to make a clean breast of the matter."

And though some of your people have been here for 50 years and at least a hundred thousand of them for more than 25 years, this prejudice, quite early manifested still prevails and is as strong as ever. It is found among both sexes and with all classes. Our mechanics and unskilled laborers are inoculated with it almost to a man. It rankles in the bosoms of our smaller dealers in all branches of industrial activity, and rages like a furious storm among those who belong to our professions. The members of our state legislatures are its victims. Our representatives in Congress are possessed with it as with an evil spirit and it rules them at will. It runs riot in the Senate chambers of the United States, where we see gathered, the most august assemblage of men in all the world, and they have been utterly unable to withstand its assaults. They have therefore "caved in and thrown up the sponge." It has swooped down upon our ministers sent abroad, those distinguished gentlemen of national and international repute who acting as the agents of our mighty Uncle Sam, conduct all the negotiations of our government with the other great powers of the earth, and it has them completely within its thrall. And as for our presidents who stand at the very head of all our official dignitaries—why they have been and still are the merest puppets in its hands, its most obedient servants, its most suppliant tools.

In our dealings with you, therefore, should you come here, justice, equity and humanity on our part, would be unknown quantities. You could expect to receive evil and nothing but evil at our hands. Hence in order to protect you from our own unreasonable race prejudice against you which the fires of hatred and malice—fires that would flame upon you in our words and roast you in our deeds—in order to protect you from our own unspeakable infamy, we deem it our duty to let you remain where you are, to prevent you from coming here. It is the one way—the one way only in which we can possibly do you a kindness in the matter. To this end, therefore we propose to pass exclusion laws against you." If our opponents are right as to the existence of the prejudice which they allege prevails, is not this the course—the course which in mercy itself—we ought to pursue? If so, then the existence of such prejudice instead of being an argument against us becomes one of the strongest arguments possible why the measures for which we contend should be adopted.

J. T. MORGAN.

(To be continued.)

POKER IN POLITICS.

How Shelby M. Cullom Was Re-elected to the United States Senate.

The following description from a poker player's point of view, in the Galesburg Labor News, tells how Senator Cullom was re-elected, and indirectly how the game of politics is played, not only in Illinois but in Oregon as well:

"Why, there wasn't nothing to it. That man Cullom had 'em all faded right from the start, skinned from the jump. When Tanner fumbled the cards and made a misdeal his money was burnt up. Cullom, he gets the deck, riffles them a few times, shifts Tanner's cut and then gives himself four cold aces. Tell me he don't know the game, and him livin' off it and handin' it regular like to the boys for forty years. Think of it! Cannon staying in the pot on two little pair, Hitt with two queens and Prince with a three flush, Townsend, Murdoch and Jim Howe. Course, Tanner had a good hand, kings up, and draws a king. Prince doesn't help his three flush and then bets all he has. What do you think of it? Prince goes broke, gits up and says, 'This aint my game, anyway, boys, it's too fast for me,' and he goes over to the little, 1-come-3 game, the house stakin' him. Oh, yes, Uncle Shelby aint wise nor nothin', but he'll do till somebody else that's wiser comes along."

"Think he'd let a lot o' tennis players win his money? Not him. May be Prince can top the deck most of the time on such amateurs as the editor of the Rep.-Reg. and church deacons who think everything in the game is on the square, and he can deal 'second' some in a game of 'Authors' or 'High-five' at pink teas and conventions, but not in a game with governors and senators. His work is too coarse and lumpy for the wise boys and they'll call all raw bluffs."

"I guess Hitt and Cannon can run 'em up some in a farmer's game like 'Old Sledge,' and I aint goin' to say but what Old John R. can get a few off the top and one or two from the bottom, but your Uncle Shelby has been so long at the game that he can git 'em anywhere, top, bottom or middle."

"I tell you there wasn't anything to it after Tanner lost the deal."

"How about mayor? Wait till I see who sits in the game."

KNOW NOTHING OF GOD.

If trade unions never did anything more than to call the attention of the world to the evils of child labor they would be doing a world of good. In the early days in England and before the trade union became so strong in that country, women and little children were compelled to work long hours in the coal mines, says an exchange. This practice became the subject of a Parliamentary investigation. During the investigation a little boy of tender age was placed on the witness stand, and among other questions was asked if he knew anything about God, to which the little fellow said: "No, I don't know God; he don't work in our mine; maybe he works in one of the other mines." This question and answer went a long ways towards arousing the dormant senses of the British people to action and thought, and resulted in the measures that largely helped the trade unions of miners to correct this crying evil.

The cigarmakers of Nashville, Tenn., held a blue label smoker last Tuesday night. Governor McMillan was the principal speaker and was followed by a representative from each organization in a 10-minute talk. "A hot time in the old town" was the outcome of the meeting, and it wasn't caused by the heat from the blue labeled cigars altogether, as the "eloquent" was there in abundance.

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