

the land value tax and local option feature, generally in vogue there, especially recommend themselves to the commission. The land value tax, while it has some things in common with the single tax theory, is not to be confounded with that system, which it ante-dates and from which it also differs materially.

Propositions are now pending in the Texas legislature looking to local option in taxation in purely local matters, and it would be gratifying to a large and growing element in Texas if our legislators would find time to thoroughly discuss these measures and reach some practical conclusion with reference to them.

Many cities are hampered by the inflexibility and the general nature of the restrictions upon even local taxation. It might be well enough to fix a maximum beyond which communities could not go, but if any city, acting under a special charter, desired to place the bulk of taxation upon one kind of property, or wanted to exempt certain other kinds of property from taxation, for a certain period or even permanently, it ought to have the right to do so by vote of the taxpayers. These latter can always be depended on to take care of themselves in the matter of voting taxes.

A reform like this would give an independence and a flexibility of government to our growing Texas cities that would enable them much better to promote their own development in many directions than now.—Editorial from the Houston Daily Post, of Sunday, March 3, 1901.

CHINA A WELL GOVERNED COUNTRY.

An extract from an article on "The Settlement of China," by Thomas F. Millard, published in Scribner's Magazine for March.

The patriarch among nations which now exist on earth, China is none the less imposing, nor to be less respected, because she is at present surrounded by a halo of pathos. Now that I have seen her from within, I marvel at the mist of misrepresentation which has, in the guise of partial truths, been wrapped, by a myriad of book-writers, about her. It seems to me that the average traveler who writes about China, unable to overcome his amazement at innumerable petty social customs so different from those to which he is used, overlooks the most fundamental and important elements in the enduring national structure. That China is badly and tyrannically governed, that she is rotting away from age, and will fall into

pieces unless western civilization assists her in managing her internal affairs, are familiar conclusions persistently thrust before the world by the class of commentators I have in mind.

I do not agree with such conclusions, but I mention them here, not in order to air my own views, but because they become pertinent on account of the certainty of their being assumed as facts in the discussion of the terms of the forthcoming settlement. The brevity of this article forbids elaboration of my own point of view, but I believe that China has still a great deal of vitality, and that it is to-day, in any profound analysis, a well-governed country. Furthermore, I believe that any outside attempt to govern China is certain to have disastrous results, not only to the empire, but also to the powers who interfere and the world at large. All sound governments are founded upon, and derive their strength from, a certain mental reciprocity between the population and the governing authority. This is usually called "the consent of the governed." Is it not preposterous to assume that the Chinese government could have endured thousands of years unless it rested on such consent? Its very endurance is a passive guarantee, to which history can present no parallel. I think that when a European says that China has a bad government, what he really means is that it is a different government from the one to which the European is accustomed. This class of observer seems unable to comprehend that what would satisfy him perfectly would not content the Chinese at all. The Chinese government, as it exists to-day, is the result of peculiar social and economic processes, working in certain grooves for centuries upon centuries. No western civilization can replace, in internal industrial and political utility, the conditions which now obtain. And is it not conceit gone mad, for nations which are, comparatively speaking, mere babes in age, to apply to the Chinese empire terms suggesting instability?

Only the other day I met an American friend, a lawyer, who questioned me about the Chinese.

"I guess they're very uncivilized?" he said.

"Why, not at all," I replied. "They were civilized when our forefathers were naked savages."

He seemed a bit staggered by my answer, although he must already have known what I told him.

"Well, if they're so civilized," he re-

turned, "how does it happen that we can lick them so easily?"

This was the first time I had heard the notion, that a man's claim to superior civilization rests on his ability to kill some other man, put so tritely. That this idea is so general and deep-seated, even among the most intelligent classes, must puzzle people who cherish the belief that enlightenment is the guide of western progress.

MR. WU TING FANG ON THE CHINESE CIVILIZATION.

An extract from the speech made by Mr. Wu Ting Fang, minister from China to the United States, before the convocation of the University of Chicago, March 19.

Does civilization consist of railroads, telegraphs, telephones, electric light, battleships, rapid-firing guns, magazine rifles and a thousand and one things which are often regarded as necessary for a progressive nation? This would be a narrow interpretation of the word. Civilization has, I believe, a broader meaning, with intelligence, order, morality and refinement for its essential elements. Such a civilization China undoubtedly has—a civilization different, to be sure, from that of the west, but a civilization nevertheless. In other words, civilization is the elevation a nation has reached in its progress from a lower to a higher state of society. It is to be expected that the civilization attained by China should be different from that attained from the nations of the west by reason of their difference in national development. Chinese ways are not necessarily bad because they often seem strange to western eyes. It is merely a question whether one is accustomed to them or not.

The people of the west may know more than the Chinese about the building of railroads, the floating of foreign loans, the combination of capital, the development of resources and the like. All this is granted. But the Chinese naturally feel that they are in a better position to judge what is best for their own interest and welfare than any outsider can be. Therefore any attempt to impose upon them any reform or religion they do not feel the need of is apt to create trouble. . . .

It is not easy for foreigners to look at the Chinese question from a Chinese standpoint, and many misunderstandings which have occurred between foreigners and Chinese can be traced to this source. Fortunately there is an increasing disposition on the part of many public men in America and Eu-

rope to deal with Chinese affairs, not in a high-handed way as of old, but in a spirit of forbearance and with an earnest desire to do what is right. It would be a great mistake to put the Chinese in the same category with the tribes of central Africa or the inhabitants of the South sea islands.

That occidental civilization in all its phases is superior to oriental civilization is not clearly established. The burden of proof is on the side that endeavors to effect a change in the existing order of things. The mere assertion that one system is superior to the other is not sufficient. It does not follow that a system which has been tried and proved successful in the west must be suitable to the conditions which prevail in China. A superb landau runs with great smoothness and rapidity on the asphalt pavement of a city, but that does not show that it can go any faster and more safely than an old express wagon in a muddy country road. Sixty years of foreign intercourse have by no means convinced the Chinese than western ways and methods are better than their own in all respects and under all conditions.

If the people of the west would study the civilization of China instead of trying to pull it down they would save themselves a great deal of trouble. They will find that the Chinese are not addicted to "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," as they are represented to be by an American poet. They will find that China, old as she is, still exhibits all the strength and vigor of full maturity. They will find that the civilization that has stood the test of forty centuries is far from being effete. They will find that the proper course to be pursued in putting China on the road to prosperity and happiness is not to shake the foundations of her social and political fabric, but to allow her to incorporate such elements of western civilization as she can assimilate.

PUBLIC "PUTZ."

I do not remember having seen an announcement of the meeting, but I am told that the heads of several of the leading universities in the east did recently have a meeting to decide upon the regulation gowns, caps, hoods, etc., to be used at public functions. There was, it seems, some rawness of knowledge, or misunderstanding, as to the proper colors for masters and doctors of this and that de-

gree and place. The fact of this meeting of learned men was urged as an indication of the real importance of such badges of dignity. Such men, it was urged, would not meet to discuss mere foolery. I admit that some may honestly look at it in this way. There are many good folks who still think kings are infallible and must be taken seriously.

There is, however, another way of looking at the matter. May not the aforesaid meeting be another outward and visible sign, like our rapid development of liveried coachmen, butlers, etc., of the reactionary trend which our democratic country has taken? The tendency would naturally show itself in matters small as well as great. But is there not something in the thought of this meeting which appeals to the good American humor of even an American imperialist; that learned men here in America, in the closing days of the nineteenth century, should meet in grave conclave, discuss gowns, and take themselves and the subject seriously!

Where costumes, once employed, have acquired time-honored association, there may be something appropriate in the continuance of their use. But that new institutions should deliberately borrow the plumage and decorations of other folks' effete paraphernalia is so absurd that it could not come to pass except in a conceited and shallow epidemic. It is absurd to argue that such procedure is necessary to the doing of things decently and in order, and, if you please, with dignity. There is in it rather the unconscious confession of some loss of hold upon the simple realities of life that go to make true dignity. The growth of ceremony has always indicated affectation of dignity, emphasis of class distinctions, and the artificial exaltation of prerogative.

So then it was to be expected, in view of the prevailing revolution of ideals in this country, that President McKinley's second inauguration should have been marked by an increase of what the Germans call "Pütz und Ceremonie."

We were not quite ready yet for a robe. But why should it be long delayed? Why should not the most distinguished officer of the nation wear a robe of state on great occasions? *Scotus Maximus!* if President Seth Low cannot lay a cornerstone without a gown, why should President McKinley take the oath of the greatest office on earth, or receive the variegated diplomatic corps, in just the ordinary coat, vest and trousers?

When it comes the time that we shall see the propriety of enrobing, as they do abroad, all the officers of the state, let us hope that something new may be devised. The artistic ability of America ought to be able to give us something original, so that we may not be compelled just to copy the old-fashioned robes and gowns of Europe. If we had only kept them going it might be all right; but having given them up for a century what a confession of weakness it would be to return to just the same old things.

J. H. DILLARD.

O YAM—A SKETCH.

This story, by Miss Sul Sin Fah, was published in *The Land of Sunshine* for November. Of the author the editor of the magazine, Mr. Charles F. Lummis, says:

"This 'Chinese Lily' (for that is the translation of Sul Sin Fah) was born in 1868 in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England; her father was an English merchant in Shanghai, and there married her mother, a Chinese lady of rank and beauty. Her education was limited by reverses before she was 12; and ever since she grew to woman's estate she has supported herself as a stenographer. What her other wanderings have been, I do not know, but her stories have come from Montreal, Seattle, San Francisco and the Island of Jamaica; and last year we had the pleasure of a visit from our little 'Chinese Contributor.' She is a wee, spiritual body, too frail to retain much strength for literature after the day's bread-winning; with the breeding that is a step beyond our strenuous Saxon blood, and a native perception as characteristic. For all her father, she is evidently her mother's daughter—a Chinawoman transplanted and graduated. And her work has a poignant intuition for her people that makes it good to all who understand that literature is, after all, something more than words. They are its skin-deep beauty—its birth-right, indeed, but its minor organ. For, like woman, literature must have a heart."

It was a southern California village, a picturesque spot, where summer held sway all the year 'round, and sea and mountain air mingled. Searchers for health basked in its sunshine and tourists wandered amongst its flower-buried cottages and crumbling ruins; for there, in times gone by, a Spanish mission had stood.

Five years ago Wo Kee had come to the village, bought a piece of ground outside its limits, built a little shack and started a market garden for the purpose of supplying the community with the succulent vegetables a Chinaman knows so well how to raise. His garden thrived and his little daughter, O Yam, thrived with it. She was a pretty little thing, and when she first appeared before the villagers, attired in tiny scarlet vest, mauve jacket and trousers, her