

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-