

and in place of their evil, blighting influence set running a copious stream of fraternal human understanding and human sympathy.

We need to cast away the accursed cup of Privilege, that the thirst of all men be freely quenched out of the abundant, living waters of equal rights.

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Not until the dull-witted guests of royalty realize the horror bubbling in their golden beakers, not until the straining men in the ditch behold the cruel shame and infamy of their battered and rusted cups of tin, shall the day of emancipation dawn.

The disease of greed at the top.

The disease of hunger and fear at the bottom.

They shall beget nothing but desolation and death.

Unless—shall we be restored?

Away with the golden and jeweled cups of Privilege!

GEORGE E. BOWEN.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN AUSTRALIA.

Moonta, South Australia, Feb. 20.

In April a referendum vote is to be taken throughout the Commonwealth of Australia to alter the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

This instrument gives the federal Parliament exclusive authority to deal with inter-State and foreign trade and commerce; but the Labor party propose giving the Commonwealth power to deal also with trade and commerce carried on exclusively within the limits of a State—a power now vested in the respective State legislatures.

The Labor party also propose giving the Commonwealth exclusive power over labor and employment questions. Because some of the States are cursed with a Tory upper House, the Labor party would centralize all power in the federal parliament.

If the federal Labor party, which possesses a majority in both Houses of the Commonwealth, understood the principles of taxation, and applied the all-round land value tax instead of their present proposal, they would soon destroy the Tory power in the upper Houses of the States. The land question once properly dealt with, the need for restrictive industrial measures would cease.

A further question to be submitted provides for giving the federal Parliament power to declare any industry or business for manufacturing or supplying goods or service a monopoly, and to conduct such industry or business by or under the control of the Commonwealth, and for that purpose to acquire any property used in connection with the industry or business. A tariff which breeds monopolies is kept up, and then we are asked to deal with effects instead of causes.

These amendments, initiated by the federal Labor government, are almost certain to be carried.

E. J. CRAIGIE.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

LETTERS FROM CHINA—IV.

Peking, January 31.

Chinese Cheap Labor.

Labor is plenty in this part of the world and, therefore, not very highly esteemed nor highly paid. At Kobe, in Japan, when we stopped there on our way, a man was at work picking buds off a tree—evergreen—to make the tree take a desired shape. He picked away patiently bud after bud. The next morning he was still picking buds off the same tree. How long before or after he worked I know not.

I am now living in my own house, with two servants. In addition, a man to take care of the pony if I get one will cost about four dollars a month or less and will live out of that. But he will do nothing except attend to the pony. The great number of this retinue is to be explained by the fact that a servant does not expect to do many things—also that that is the measure of his wages. With Feng Yang (the name is not the real one, but of my own coinage and I have as yet too little Chinese to know whether it would seem natural), I have entered into a contract by which he agrees to cook for me, and with Kwan Sun have agreed that he is to black my boots, run on errands, sweep, make fires and otherwise faithfully serve me.

Feng Yang is said to be a wonderful cook. When six unexpected guests arrived he was able to provide for them as well as for his employers. Once he sent in what seemed to be a pumpkin, and his mistress was wondering what he had sent that to the table for. When she cut into it with a knife, she found it was some sort of pie, so artfully browned over that it looked just like a pumpkin. Another time a fish came in—apparently with head and scales still on. But examination proved that Feng Yang had put on little pieces—yellow and white—alternately, in such a way as to look like scales, and he had also put on something that looked like an eye. On another occasion the lady cut open a pie and two little blue birds flew out. When he is not employed as a cook, Feng Yang earns his living by supplying sustenance for the dead. At a Chinese funeral it is necessary to provide the departed with things useful for his journey and residence in the other world; this is done by making paper images of horses, servants, houses, etc., and burying them. Feng Yang can make a paper house and lot to delight the soul. These horses, by the way, are conspicuous at the shops where they are sold. They are life size. So I am to begin house-keeping with a cook who is an artist, with a delight in the business of cooking. In Chicago you would pay for such a cook about forty dollars a month—or a hundred—besides feeding him well. With a former employer, Feng Yang received \$8 Mexican (\$3.64 U. S. gold) per month and provided his own food and house and supported his family more or

less out of that wealth. Kwan Sun has also worked for the same people and he got \$7 Mexican. I said nothing about wages, assuming that rates would be the same, but Kwan Sun sent word that he could not work for me at such prices. Apparently he had concluded that I am opulent. For you must remember that hereabouts the servants' compensation is apt to vary with the ability of the master. Is it because when there is so little demand for labor, the laborer must take what he can get and therefore what the master can pay?

So I offered to begin with the wages mentioned above for the first month, and increase each man's pay \$1 per month up to \$12 and \$10 (making a little more than \$5 gold for the cook, and slightly less than \$4.50 for the "boy"). And this I had supposed to be the understanding.

The other day I saw my "boy" coming from the post office with a draft for which I had sent him. He was grinning with joy and almost running, as he supposed that he and the cook would now be paid. In a few minutes the cook, acting as speaker of the Commons, presented himself before my throne and asked for his money. I was about to pay him in accordance with my understanding, but he said he did not like that; that he wanted me to give some fixed amount at once because he wanted to be able to tell his family and friends just what he got. Then he would have "face" according to the amount of his wages. I asked how much he wanted. He said that was for me to say; it is not polite for a servant to tell his master how much to pay. I finally told him that I would pay him \$10 for the month now completed and \$12 for the months about to begin. He will thus have the amount of "face" which corresponds to an income of \$12 (equal to about \$5.20 U. S. money). With this he will undertake to supply his family with all the necessities, comfort, convenience and luxuries that wealth can command or the imagination suggest.

Next I called into my presence Kwan Sun, my "boy." He was to do all my work, except what was left to the cook; but a few things, especially carrying water, he had not done, but engaged coolies to do them, and then I was called on to pay \$3 (\$2 for carrying water). I called Kwan's attention to this matter and he alleged first that his duties were heavy (he takes care of my rooms, goes on an occasional errand—once or twice a week, waits on the table, and washes my dishes). Then he referred to the great distance from the house to the well (it is about 100 yards). Finally he said that if he took that work, instead of leaving it to the coolies, he would be criticised for greed. I suppose that was the real reason. I proposed to give him \$7 the first month with a later series of raises monthly. He was not so modest as the cook. He said that he had a family in Eastern Peking; that his former employers pay wages exceedingly low, as all know, but that "a gentleman like yourself—"

These fellows find out all about their masters' affairs. Sir Robert Hart's cook came to him once with the week's reckoning and all the items were greatly increased, prices seemed to have gone up. The rascal had increased his own commissions in buying—what is called the "squeeze" out here. Sir

Robert protested. "Oh," said the cook, "Master got a raise this month." I agreed to give Kwan \$9 this month and take a further raise into consideration. When Miss Mary has her coming out party next month she will have to pay the orchestra and the florist out of her father's opulence of \$3.96 gold per month. I might have raised the opulence to \$4.44 by adding another silver dollar, but I was afraid the family would contract extravagant habits.

I am really somewhat ashamed to pay these fellows such amounts. Kwan would have to work eight and one-half years at his present salary (probably his highest) to earn the value of the check he brought so gleefully, providing he was never out of work. He is honest, faithful and patient; for all his faithful, patient effort to please, through his whole life he will not have received the amount which I have handed in these two months. That is the world's estimation of Kwan Sun from the cradle to the grave—the price of all his muscle and his fairly respectable brain; that his place and significance in the universe. Isn't it enough to make us all Communists? I doubt whether it would be quite the best thing to double these men's wages at once, but I have promised myself to do anything I can for their families if I can find a way to do it without doing more harm than good. Meanwhile, as I have really only enough work for one man, it is necessary to exercise some thought and ingenuity to contrive something for them both to do. I hope to save them from utter ruin by the temptation of idle hands.

I have just returned from a very interesting visit to a woolen mill six miles north of the city. The mill has been established to provide clothing for the Chinese army. The government holds half the stock, the other half is held by Chinese. The work is under the direct supervision of four men from Bradford, Yorkshire. One of the men took me through the mill from the beginning of the work to the end. They seem to make very good cloth. Three hundred Chinese do the work. These people had been field laborers working at 10 cents (Mexican) per day, or 4½ cents U. S. When the mill was opened it was proposed to give them twice that amount. But the men soon struck—without having a union—and gained an increase to three times their farm wages—i. e., 13½ cents. They work pretty well, though they must be supervised very closely. The Englishmen are on a five years' contract.

A weaver here getting 13½ cents does as much work, almost, as an English weaver who is paid \$1.80.

You may be interested in prices which obtain here. Take a few samples: My wash bill is 3 cents silver (equal to 1½ cents U. S.) for each garment, including articles as large as duck coat or trousers, or even a pair of Khaki riding trousers.

I had expected to order an American range for the kitchen—this would cost, I suppose, \$20 or \$30 gold, but I found that the brick stove which the Chinese use could be built for \$2 or \$3 Mexican. This latter seems to answer admirably. I have just received from a tailor a very good white duck suit, which costs me between \$3.50 and \$4.

One of the hotels advertises in the papers its

rates as \$5 to \$6 per day, or \$50 per month, but these presumably are silver, one-half the value of the gold.

The rug I ordered some weeks ago came Friday. It is a beauty—thick and soft like a covering of moss, and cheap—about \$28. An American told me the other evening that he got a rug at the same place for about \$28 and took it home with him, and a dealer in New York told him it should sell at retail for \$150 to \$200.

Walls and Roads.

One of the things which must impress one most here is the abundance and omnipresence of walls. A rural village has no real roads—none, that is, resulting from labor applied to that purpose; but every hamlet of half a dozen houses has its wall and closes its gate at night. When night comes on the gates of Peking are closed; a belated traveler may knock and shout in vain for admittance, unless perhaps he can show credentials. Any evening you may see the night watch marching out to guard the walls. (Against what?) As you go through the streets you see no houses—or seldom a glimpse—but on every side are walls. There seem to be no trees. Yet if you look down from a height—as the city wall—you look into courtyards planted with trees, and in some directions you seem to be looking upon a forest.

When I went out to the woolen mill the other day, I walked from the station and thus made acquaintance with Chinese country roads. They are like cow-paths, extending where people have happened to travel, an irregular net work which has never been paved or repaired; the wheels of carts cut deep ruts and in the course of centuries the soil has been washed out, so as to leave a deep ditch, which must become a torrent when there is a heavy rain. The ruts were so muddy in places (though there has not been much rain) that it took a terrible struggle for a pony to go through with a load of no weight. I thought I was lost. The chimney of the mill disappeared from sight as I walked through these ravines, but I happened to come out right.

On the return I came with a party of Chinese. There was no passenger train and it became necessary, since there were not donkeys enough to be had, for many of the party to walk, contrary to their habit. I walked the distance, more than six miles, without effort, while they were tired. The well-to-do Chinese are physically lazy; it is not quite dignified to walk when other means of transportation can be had. I was rather glad to impress them with the physical superiority of the foreigner—they need the lesson. At first they found the idea of physical exercise for its own sake hard to understand. Now, however, the students in the colleges are taking it up, quite in American fashion.

The streets of Peking, outside of legation quarters, are very dirty; that is, they are quite unpaved. Mere black earth, which has absorbed the filth of ages, frequently covered with many inches of dust or mud. This is the way we sprinkle the dusty streets in our town. Two men bring a large tub full of water, then one of them takes a woven basket about the size of a hen's nest fastened on the end of a stick and throws the water on the street;

when one space has been sprinkled they move on. As they are very patient, a considerable stretch of road is covered in course of time. Sometimes when there is water standing in the gutter the man throws this with his basket onto the dusty road. The gutter water is not clean. Yesterday I saw a man at a place near here, when the dust in the street was about six inches deep, smoothing the dust with some sort of a rake. Why he did this I do not know.

Children's Games.

I talked the other day with a young Chinaman about games he used to play when he was an urchin. It seems the Chinese boys play "Hide and Seek," "Blind Man's Buff" and "Fox in the Morning," alias "Pull-away," just as we did.

Postal Service.

Be careful about addressing letters to me. I do not know that they have gone wrong, but I suspect that the people who handle the mail do not know very much English. The Japanese, French, German and British maintain their own postoffices here. My mail from San Francisco crosses the ocean to Japan and is handled even here by the Japanese. My weekly Springfield Republican has not come for three weeks, and I suppose it has been sent wrong. So write plainly. The Chinese employ Englishmen in their postoffices to handle English mail; the Japanese try to read the English themselves.

W. M. E.

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THE BRITISH REFERENDUM.*

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

In explanation of the widely differing attitudes of the British and American democracies toward the principle of the Referendum, The Public of March 10 (page 220) states that while over here the referendum is a people's referendum, part of the fast spreading movement for the extension of people's power in government, the proposal in Great Britain is a House of Lords' referendum, part of the fast dying institution of hereditary power in government; or, as an earlier issue of the Public tersely put it, "The essential idea of the referendum is that the people shall control it." The essential idea of Balfour's referendum is that the House of Lords shall control it.

But the provisions of Lord Balfour of Burleigh's "Reference to the people bill" are more democratic than we have hitherto been led to expect.

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The measure deals with two classes of bills—(1) "Rejected bills," which have been passed by the House of Commons, but thrown out by the House of Lords, and (2) "Carried bills," which have been passed by both Houses of Parliament.

Bills in the first category are to be, on the demand of either House of Parliament, submitted to a poll of the electors in the manner provided by the bill. Bills of the second class are to be "referended" in the same way if a petition is presented by not less than 200 members of the House of Commons.

*See The Public, vol. xiii, page 1153; this volume, pages 220, 229.