

office holders, to support a great army system, and to feed foreign bond holders. In his world-famous book, "Progress and Poverty," Henry George writes that—

In India, from time immemorial, the working classes have been ground down by exactions and oppressions into a condition of helpless and hopeless degradation. For ages and ages the cultivator of the soil has esteemed himself happy if, of his produce, the extortion of the strong hand left him enough to support life and furnish seed; capital could nowhere be safely accumulated or to any considerable extent be used to assist production; all wealth that could be wrung from the people was in the possession of princes who were little better than robber chiefs quartered on the country, or in that of their farmers or favorites, and was wasted in useless or worse than useless luxury while religion, sunken into an elaborate and terrible superstition, tyrannized over the mind as physical force did over the bodies of men. Under these conditions the only arts that could advance were those that ministered to the ostentation and luxury of the great. The elephants of the rajah blazed with gold of exquisite workmanship, and the umbrellas that symbolized his regal power glittered with gems; but the plow of the ryot was only a sharpened stick. The ladies of the rajah's harem wrapped themselves in muslins so fine as to take the name of woven wind, but the tools of the artisan were of the poorest and rudest description and commerce could only be carried on as it were by stealth.

No, the charge against Great Britain is not that her government in India has introduced the conditions that cause famines. It is that she has perpetuated those conditions by methods only less crude and palpable, and has made them worse. As George goes on to say—

The millions of India have bowed their necks beneath the yokes of many conquerors, but worst of all is the steady grinding weight of English domination—a weight which is literally crushing millions out of existence, and, as shown by English writers, is inevitably tending to a most frightful and widespread catastrophe. Other conquerors have lived in the land, and, though bad and tyrannous in their rule, have understood and been understood by the people; but India now is like a great estate owned by an absentee and alien landlord. A most expensive military and civil establishment is kept up, managed and officered by Englishmen who regard India as but a place of temporary exile; and an enormous sum estimated as at least

£20,000,000 annually (raised from a population where laborers are in many places glad in good times to work for 1½ to 4 pence a day), is drained away to England in the shape of remittances, pensions, home charges of the government, etc.—a tribute for which there is no return. The immense sums lavished on railroads have, as shown by the returns, been economically unproductive; the great irrigation works are for the most part costly failures. In large parts of India the English, in their desire to create a class of landed proprietors, turned over the soil in absolute possession to hereditary tax gatherers, who rack rent the cultivators most mercilessly. In other parts, where the rent is still taken by the state in the shape of a land tax, assessments are so high, and taxes are collected so relentlessly, as to drive the ryots, who get but the most scanty living in good seasons, into the claws of money lenders, who are, if possible, even more rapacious than the zemindars. Upon salt, an article of prime necessity everywhere, and of especial necessity where food is almost exclusively vegetable, a tax of nearly 1,200 per cent. is imposed, so that its various industrial uses are prohibited, and large bodies of the people cannot get enough to keep either themselves or their cattle in health.

Written 20 years ago, those passages explain the underlying causes of the terrible famine in India to-day. It is not due to scarcity of food in India. Food is abundant there. It is not because silver has been demonetized. Silver had not been demonetized when other great famines were produced by the same causes that must have produced this one. It is not the failure of the monsoon. That is only the immediate cause, the mere accident which has precipitated the famine but did not create its conditions. Thriftlessness, which has prevented the accumulation of capital by the peasants and the extension of their industry, is indeed a cause. But it is only a little farther removed than the monsoon failure; it is really itself an effect of a deeper cause. The true cause of this famine, as of all that have preceded it, is confiscation of the earnings of the people by means of labor taxation and landlordism.

While these causes exist, famines will appear and reappear. Robbed perennially of the property they annually produce, the Hindu peasants are held down to the same degraded plane to which generations of such

confiscation have sunk them; and living on the verge of starvation from season to season, they become victims to famine whenever the monsoon fails to water their crops. There is no help for this condition short of removing this cause. And while that remains, though no one should be deterred from helping the famine victims with such charity doles as he can spare, yet let none imagine that he thereby buys redemption from his responsibility for the awful social crime against man and God the world over to which this Indian famine so shockingly testifies.

NEWS

Reports from China at the time of our last week's issue told of the seizure of the Tientsin-Pekin railroad by 1,500 allied foreign troops who were repairing it with the view of advancing upon Peking, where the foreign population was believed to be in hourly danger of extermination by Chinese mobs. These troops appear now to have numbered 2,500, British and Russians being largely in the majority. There were 100 Americans in the number. The force was under the command of Admiral Seymour, of the British navy, who had permission from the Chinese viceroy at Tientsin to advance to Peking. His expedition appears, however, to have been a failure, Admiral Seymour being now reported to have been obliged to return. Communication with Peking is, therefore, still cut off. But Admiral Seymour's retreat, however humiliating, loses much of its interest in consequence of reports of a battle between the allied fleets and the Chinese forts at Taku.

Taku is a fortified place on the Gulf of Pechili at the mouth of the Peiho river. Official information of the battle there is not yet available, and the unofficial dispatches are variable in their accounts. It appears, however, with reasonable certainty, that the foreign naval commanders in the Gulf of Pechili, after conferring on the 16th on board the Russian flagship, sent a joint ultimatum to the commanders of the Chinese forts at Taku, demanding that they withdraw their troops before a specified hour on June 17. This was done because the Chinese were planting torpedoes in the river and assembling large bodies of

troops at the forts. After receiving the ultimatum, but before the hour specified, the Chinese commanders opened fire upon the allied fleets and the fleets replied. So say some reports. Others indicate that the fleets opened the bombardment. At the end of a battle lasting several hours, the foreigners captured the Chinese forts and pushed some of their lighter draft vessels up the Peiho river. The foreign warships participating in this battle were British, French, German, Russian and Japanese. Some reports credit the Americans also with being engaged, but the better inference is to the contrary. Twenty foreigners are reported to have been killed and 57 wounded in the engagement, while a British gunboat and a German warship were badly damaged, two British merchant vessels were sunk, and a Russian gunboat was blown up. On the other side two of the Chinese forts were destroyed, and the rest were captured by foreign landing parties in bayonet charges. The Chinese loss in killed is said to have been heavy. Later but still untrustworthy reports are to the effect that the loss of the foreigners was greater than as stated above.

Following the news of the battle at Taku come reports of European preparations for a Chinese war. It is said that 4,000 German troops have been ordered to China; that 10,000 French troops are on their way, and that 4,000 additional Russian troops have been dispatched from Port Arthur across the gulf to Taku. In announcing this to the European powers, Russia explains her purpose to be the protection of Russian and other European residents, and gives assurances that she has no special interest in the matter and will strictly adhere to all agreements. Great Britain is credited with 5,000 troops ordered out from India, and Austria-Hungary is preparing to forward 1,000; while the United States has ordered the forwarding of a regiment, the Ninth infantry, from the Philippines.

Meanwhile the press is full of sensational rumors of the condition of affairs at Peking, none of which are as yet confirmed. According to one of these rumors, 100,000 Chinese troops are guarding Peking, and guns are trained upon the American, British and Japanese legations. Another one announces the burning of all the legations and the killing of the German minister. A later one reports

the killing of the French minister also; and a later one still the destruction of all the foreigners in Peking along with their native employes. From other points are rumors of massacres by Chinese mobs and of the going over by Chinese soldiers in bodies to the "boxers." One of these unverified rumors, transmitted from London on the 18th, was to the effect that 7,000 Russians with 12 machine guns and 12 field guns were marching upon Peking. It was followed by one from Shanghai on the 19th which stated that this Russian relieving force, having arrived that morning outside of Peking, had begun an attack upon the city on two sides. But no further news has been received about this matter. A private letter from Miss Edna Terry, an American missionary in China, who was falsely reported killed a week or two ago, throws additional light upon the Chinese uprising. She describes a condition of famine in China, the severity of which may be inferred from her statement that "chaff, peanut husks, sweet potato vines and all such substances were about gone," and "some had been living on the bark of mulberry trees."

The American authorities at Washington, while they have ordered a regiment up from the Philippines to Taku, indicate their intention of refraining from any further military participation in the Chinese troubles than may be necessary to protect Americans there. The immediate pretext for forwarding these troops is the precarious situation of the American minister at Peking, from whom nothing has been heard for several days.

The opening of this new war, in which the United States is almost certain to become deeply involved as a "world power," coincides in point of time with the gathering of the republican national convention of 1900. Pursuant to the call of Chairman M. A. Hanna, issued on the 20th of last December (See No. 90, page 11), by direction of the national committee, the convention assembled June 19 at Philadelphia. About 10,000 people were in attendance at noon, when Mr. Hanna, as chairman of the committee, called the convention to order. After a prayer by the Rev. J. Gray Bolton, followed by a speech by Mr. Hanna, the latter announced that Senator Wolcott, of Colorado, would be temporary chairman. A vote was then

perfunctorily taken, and Senator Wolcott came to the chair. His speech was followed by the appointment of committees on rules, credentials, resolutions and permanent organization; and the first session of the convention closed with a prayer by the Rev. Dr. Edward M. Levy, who 44 years before, on the same day of the month and in the same city, had made the opening prayer of the first national convention of the republican party—the one that nominated Fremont for president. The second session convened on the 20th. The committee on credentials then reported. Its report was followed by that of the committee on permanent organization, which nominated Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts, for permanent chairman, and Charles W. Johnson, of Minnesota, for permanent secretary. After these permanent officers had been elected and seated, the committee on rules reported, and at that point Senator Quay offered an amendment which, if adopted, would reduce the representation of the south in future republican conventions about 50 per cent., while raising that of the northern states 25 to 50 per cent. A substitute was offered by Lynch, of Mississippi, and the matter went over to the 21st. The next business of the convention was the adoption of the platform. When that had been done, an adjournment was taken to the 21st.

The platform, drawn by Postmaster General Smith before the convention and submitted to Mr. McKinley, who approved it, may be fairly summarized in these terms:

After referring to the unsurpassed prosperity of the present time as due to the return of the republican party to power, and congratulating the people upon the results of the war with Spain, the platform indorses the McKinley administration, and, renewing allegiance to the principles of the gold standard, approves the financial legislation of the Fifty-sixth congress. On the subject of trusts it condemns commercial conspiracies while recognizing the propriety of the cooperation of capital to meet new business conditions. The policy of protection associated with reciprocity is reaffirmed; and, for the benefit of labor, the restriction of the immigration of cheap foreign labor, the extension of educational opportunities to working children, the raising of the age limit for child labor, and some system of labor insurance are advocated. A timidly expressed plank in support of subsidies for American shipping is