

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SOME FACTS CONCERNING CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

THE NUMBER OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS NOW IN THE UNITED STATES AND WHERE THEY COME FROM—A STATEMENT FROM COL. BEE, OF SAN FRANCISCO.

To the Editor of the New-York Times:

In occasional newspaper correspondence from California, during the last five years, and in elsewhere discussing matters relating to the interests of that State, I have expressed some very pronounced opinions in regard to what is termed the Chinese question. These were, in short—First, that the danger to be apprehended from Chinese immigration was not only imaginary, but that it was political clap-trap for the purpose of securing Irish votes; second, that the immigration, which has been so greatly exaggerated, has been a great advantage rather than a detriment to the State; third, that the cry against Chinese labor has been not because it was cheap, but because it was good; fourth, that for many purposes this labor is indispensable; fifth, it is most desirable because it is more honest and steadily industrious than any other; sixth, that although the Chinese are addicted to peculiar vices, their morality, upon the whole, is fully equal to that of their censurers. With a desire to get all possible information, from time to time, on a subject of such vital interest to the public, when the terms of the Chinese treaty now under consideration were made public, I addressed a series of interrogatories to Col. Bee, the agent of the Chinese Government in San Francisco. I have received the inclosed reply, in which it will be observed that the writer discusses the question, not in his official capacity, but as an American citizen regarding the interests of his own country as of paramount importance.

J. C.

[Copy.]

I am in receipt of your letter in which you desire me, "if not inconsistent with my official position," to answer certain queries having reference to the new treaties made with the imperial Government of China, &c. Inasmuch as one of your questions seems to my mind to cover the whole ground of inquiry as far as relates to Chinese immigration, to wit: "If, as reported, the two contracting Governments have agreed upon and inserted in the immigration treaty a section that gives the United States Government the right," "if it deems it necessary, to regulate, control, or prohibit the immigration of Chinese subjects to this country, it is empowered to do so." You therefore request me, assuming that such is, in substance, the wording of the treaty, to inform you, as a private citizen conversant with the facts, if that necessity now exists. You will permit me to present for your edification facts which I at the outset challenge contradiction from any source in or out of Congress.

The argument used by the class of agitators who have so persistently urged the intervention of the Washington authorities in order to prevent the immigration of Chinese has been: That they were, as a class, undesirable; that they came under contract as coolies, (coolie is a Sanskrit word, meaning laborer,) and hence not a servile race; that the hordes continuously arriving are a menace to our free institutions, and, if not checked, will continue to be an ever-threatening danger to our republican form of Government. In other words, not only is our civilization in danger, but we are in process of being Mongolianized. If such were the facts I would, without hesitation, give you an affirmative answer by the necessity now existed for prompt legislation by Congress to check this evil. But let us come to the "hard pan" or bed rock facts.

The entire immigration of Chinese to the United States has been from the one Province of Canton, whose area is no larger than the State of New-Hampshire. There never has been a time when there was to exceed 125,000 Chinese in the United States. I don't think the present census will show that there are over 100,000. Assuming that there are now 100,000, to better illustrate, 60 per cent. of the whole Chinese in this country have been back and forth, to and from China three times; 20 per cent. have made from one to six trips; the residue have never been home. There has not been for the past ten years enough newcomers arrive to fill the vacancies caused by deaths (and the places of those who left not to return. Hence, I repeat that if there ever was to exceed 125,000 in the United States, there has been, and still is, a gradual decrease going on from the causes I have mentioned. With a record of the emigration and immigration of Chinese for 29 years past before me, having been intimately connected with them for a long series of years, enjoyed their confidence to the fullest extent, defended and protected their interests, services that the imperial Government of China recognized by rewarding me with the position of Consul, enables me to "speak from the record." To demonstrate, I give you the record as kept in this Consulate of the arrival and departure of Chinese to and from Hong Kong for the past two years and six months, from July, 1878, to Jan. 1, 1881. Fifty-four arrivals of the Pacific Mail and Oriental and Occidental steam-ships and four sailing ships brought Chinese steerage passengers to the port of San Francisco, 14,700. Fifty-five departures to Hong Kong, Chinese, 18,238. Thus you see how this free republic is being "Mongolianized," "invaded," and "our institutions endangered," not to mention our weak civilization going under. Let us see who is hurt by this invasion. The price paid by this movement of Chinese in their pilgrimage to visit their homes is \$50 each way. Hence the 32,591 Chinese paid the two steam-ship companies \$1,629,950 for passage alone in the past two years and six months, those by sail not included. It is fair to estimate that the cost to reach this port and return to the interior, paid to our various lines of transportation by 20,000 Chinese out of 32,591, will average fully \$10 each, amounting to \$200,000.

In the discharge of my official duties, I have personally inspected 10,000 of those arriving here the past two years, and fully 75 per cent. were returning immigrants, and this going back and forth has been going on for 25 years. The great exodus takes place each year from September to January. They go to spend their Chinese New Year. Taking the four months named just passed, there has departed from this port to Hong Kong 4,751 Chinese, and only 1,234 arrived. They will commence to arrive back in April, and continue until the 1st of August. Please notice our press "about those days;" that's the "invasion" season, the time our "civilization is menaced" by the return of our old residents. During the four months named last year (1880) there arrived here from Hong Kong 3,732, and returned, same time, 1,073. To make this business plain, you may ask, Where did that 3,732 come from? Answer: During the four months from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, 1879, there departed for Hong Kong 4,147, and 842 arrived here. If I have made myself understood by explaining the truth of the Chinaman's migratory habits, you can draw your own conclusions as to the necessity of Congressional legislation to prohibit or restrict Chinese immigration.

In the foregoing I simply give you the facts, to wit: That there has been no increase of Chinese immigration to the United States during the last decade; that the emigration and immigration is almost wholly confined to those who have been resident here within the past 25 years; that there has not been the past decade enough fresh immigrants arrive to fill the places of those who have died and finally returned to their homes. To these propositions I challenge contradiction.

To another query, as to what effect restrictive legislation will have upon that class "now in this country," I answer that it will have a tendency to keep them here, and wipe out of existence the two splendid lines of steam-ships now plying between this port and Hong Kong. The first "effect" will not suit the sand-lot, as they want the Chinese "evicted." While they have failed in "Boy-cotting" the Chinaman because it affected their pecuniary interests, they are unanimous for his banishment, and if it strikes down "a bloated corporation" so much the better. I have no hesitation in asserting that 80 per cent. of that class of our people who have the interests of California at heart, who develop and build up its resources, who labor by brain and muscle, who send forth each year a thousand white-winged ships laden with our golden grains, whose homes and vineyards dot our hillsides and valleys from Siskiyou to San Diego, if called upon for an opinion would say "let the Chinese that are here alone, we need them." Another effect will be an increased scarcity of labor. It is a notable and undeniable fact that from the commencement of the sand-lot agitation here the wages of the Caucasian laborer has decreased, while that of the Chinaman has increased. The average price of Chinese labor three years ago was \$22 50 per month; to-day it is \$30, and scarce at that price. And this "Chinese cheap labor." The real cause of this is given by Mr. Willis from committee's report on education and labor, (Chinese Immigration, 45 Congress, Doc. No. 240, page 2,) thus: "The Chinese laborer, in some respects, is desirable," and why he is so Mr. Willis explains: "He is frugal, thrifty, patient, cheerful, and obedient. He learns his trade readily, and expertly performs any species of light work." The Congressional committee of which the late Senator Morton was Chairman examined 130 witnesses as to this immigration. In his report (Mis. Doc. No. 20, 45 Congress) he said: "As a rule they are industrious, temperate, and honest in their dealings. Some thousands are employed as household servants in the city and country. In this capacity the testimony generally concurs in giving them a high character. * * * As laborers upon the farms, and in the gardens and vineyards, nearly all of the witnesses speak of them in the highest terms. * * * As laborers upon the public works they were entirely reliable, worked more hours than white men, were not given to strikes, and never undertook by combination to control the price of labor." &c. As to the servile contract and coolie labor, the report says: "The evidence established the fact that Chinese labor in California is as free as any other. They all come as free men and are their own masters absolutely." Trusting the foregoing fully covers the information you desire, permit me to say, as a private citizen, if it is necessary to establish a precedent which may foreshadow the rule of action to guide this great Republic in the near future upon the free immigration heretofore extended to all, irrespective of "race, color, or previous condition," let the Chinaman receive the first shock; "put the bars up" in his case, even if there is no shadow of necessity for doing so. Then let us have a precedent, for it will soon be sadly needed to prevent our native-born from being "evicted" by another nationality not Chinamen.

FRED. A. BEE.
SAN FRANCISCO, Monday, Feb. 28, 1881.

information crediting one Lightning Ellis with having invented it and the *Northern Vindicator* with first printing it "near 15 years ago." Now, Mr. Editor, I have no desire to detract from the inventive genius of Lightning Ellis—whoever he may be—or to cast any reflections upon the industry and enterprise of either the *Vindicator* or the *Republican*, but having heard the term in common use in Wisconsin as early as 1848, (a little more than 33 years ago,) I deem it my duty at this juncture to state the fact, satisfied of my ability, if necessary, to verify my statement.

E. C. TOWNSEND.

NEW-YORK, Wednesday, March 9, 1881.

A NEW CATHOLIC MOVE ON THE SCHOOLS.

To the Editor of the New-York Times:

Allow me to congratulate you upon the effect produced by a few letters which appeared in your columns on the "Control of the Roman Catholic Priests Over the Board of Education." The Trustees elected at the meeting last Wednesday were Messrs. Rogers, Beyer, and Beal, gentlemen who believe that the public schools should be run in the interest of no Church or denomination.

By a curious coincidence, almost simultaneous with this new departure by the Board of Education, a bill was introduced in the Assembly by Mr. Merritt giving the Inspectors of Public Schools a voice in the selection of teachers with the Ward Trustees. The appointment of all teachers in future would, therefore, be made by boards, consisting of five Ward Trustees and three Inspectors, in place of the five Ward Trustees, who now have that power. The Inspectors are salaried officers, appointed for the purpose of inspecting the school buildings and the work and examinations of the teachers; they are not required to be residents of their respective districts, like the Trustees, and are appointed solely by the Mayor. The effect of this bill will, therefore, be to add to each Board of Trustees three officials appointed by Mayor Grace. We may infer how he will use this power from the appointment he has already made to the one vacancy in the Board of Education, which showed that he favored the continuation of the reign of Kiernan, Kelly and Company. The priests would, therefore, need only two members in each Board of Trustees in order to control the schools in that ward by the help of the three Inspectors.

As is known to every one connected with the public schools, and as was stated in your paper recently, there are now in almost every ward two Catholic Trustees, and in many wards there are three, and these men are trying by underhand means to turn the public schools into Roman Catholic institutions. That statement has not been denied, except by the ingenuous Mr. Eugene Kelly, who expressly based his denial on the list of Trustees as it appeared in the School Directory published at the beginning of last year. The School Directory for 1881, showing the Trustees appointed since Mr. Kelly was Chairman of the Committee on Trustees, has just appeared. Dare Mr. Kelly go over this Directory and tell the public how many of the Trustees are Roman Catholics, or their willing tools? At least four more wards have been handed over to the priests during the last year, and Mr. Kelly declared that the only blame his committee deserved was that they had not appointed more Roman Catholics as Trustees. If Mr. Merritt's bill becomes law, the priests need not trouble themselves about securing the appointment of any more of "our" men—that will be the effect of the bill, and we would like Mr. Merritt to explain if it has any other object. The Inspectors now pass upon all the applicants for the position of teacher at their examination; why should they pass upon their qualifications a second time in the Board of Trustees?

By a count of the professed Catholic Trustees, not half of the real danger to the public schools would appear. There are two other classes of men who serve the priests' purposes equally well if not better. It is a fact that there are now here in America many so-called Jesuits "of the short coat." There are now colleges here and abroad where promising young men are educated free of charge on condition that they afterward serve the Church implicitly, no matter what walk of life they may follow, and their teachers get such a control over their minds that they cannot afterward throw off the obligation. Then there is another class of men, with no real religious opinions, who want an office and find they cannot get it without the consent of the priests. What is more natural than that such men should seek to ingratiate themselves with the powers that be, in this City of New-York, by useful service or equally useful acquiescence in a Board of Trustees or in the Board of Education? It is from these two classes of men, often Methodists, Dutch Reformed, or skeptics, nominally, that the real danger lies, because they are so difficult to detect.

Is it known what Mr. Jaspas's sentiments are? He is the City Superintendent, and no one can become a teacher without his consent; he was spoken of by the Roman Catholics as "our" candidate months before his election; he was the choice of Clerk Kiernan. Would the Catholics select for such a place one who was not friendly to their plans? Clerk Kiernan, *on dit*, now receives his messengers from the Cardinal in the hall instead of in his office. Will some one in the Board of Education kindly explain what advantage there is in educating 350 young ladies yearly as teachers in the Normal College? There is no demand for them; they besiege the Trustees and claim a position as a right. Why were it not better to adopt a wider plan of study, in which girls who do not intend to become teachers might participate? This technical education is certainly not in accordance with the general spirit of our public school system; but if it is to be continued it would be better to include other occupations than teaching, for that profession in this City is now crowded, and affords so little chance of advancement unless the young lady stands well with some good Catholics.

Let us hope that the Protestant members in the Assembly will not allow Mr. Merritt's bill to pass unchallenged, as so many laws do in which Tammany Hall has an interest; and that they will also inquire whether there is any Roman Catholic influence pushing that bill, which provides that the State Superintendent shall control the Normal Schools.

NEW-YORK.

NEW-YORK, Tuesday, March 8, 1881.

THE ORIGIN OF "BLIZZARD."

To the Editor of the New-York Times:

Your issue of the 7th inst. contained an extract from the Milwaukee *Republican*, in which that sheet seems to have undertaken to establish the origin of the term "blizzard," asserting positive