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THE CHINESE

LABOUR QUESTION ;

OR THE PROBLEM OF

CAPITAL

VERSUS

LABOUR.



AN EXTEMPORANEOUS ADDRESS

GIVEN BY

MRS. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN,

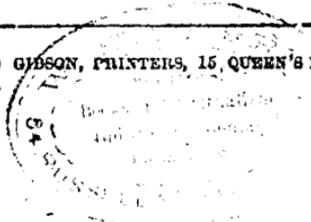
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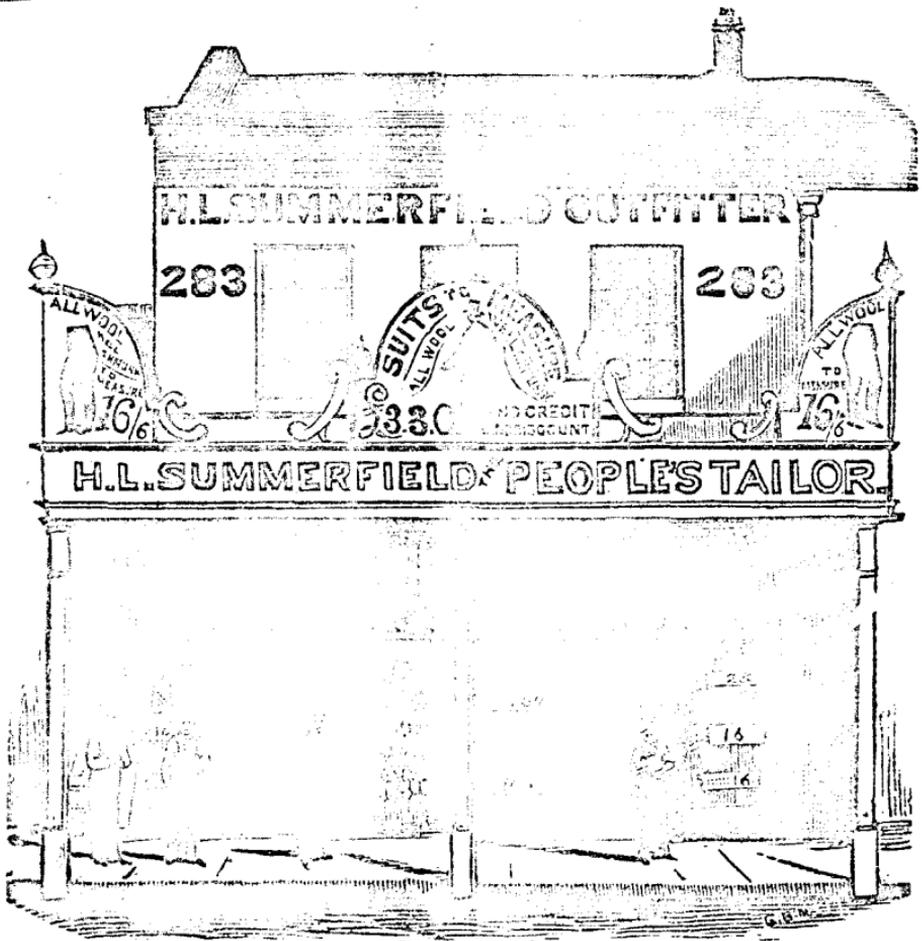
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CHINESE WOMEN IN SYDNEY.

The writer of a series of articles, entitled "The Mongolian Invasion," now being published in a contemporary, says:—

To show the estimation in which the European concubines of the Celestial residents of Sydney are held, it may be mentioned that no Chinese woman will associate with or acknowledge them in the street. It comes to a pretty state of affairs when a female Chinese, who is bought for a price, can contemptuously pass by a European woman who has been ruined by the villainy of her countrymen. There are 27 Chinese women in the city of Sydney, and they are imported in the same manner that the wealthy gentlemen of New South Wales bring in prize cattle. It may interest some of the ladies residing in the aristocratic suburbs to learn the value of women in China and the price paid for them. A woman in China has no will of her own. She is absolutely at the mercy of her father, and, as a rule, is sold to the highest bidder. The matrimonial market of the Chinese resembles very closely the sale yards at Homebush.

The Chinese women in Sydney are, as a rule, well-featured. They are pleasant-looking and take pride in their personal appearance. The "Lilies of Delight," as their cramped and cramped feet are called, act as impediments to locomotion. They are always clad in splendid silken robes, and are resplendent with flashing jewels. With scarcely one exception, these women are the wives of the lowest though wealthiest class of Mongolians in Australia—the Canton gamblers. The next paragraph will describe how they are brought here, and the price of a Chinese woman.

When a Chinaman accumulates some wealth, and cannot leave the colony, he begins to consider what he had better do. *Blasé* with the immorality which our city unfortunately offers too many opportunities for indulging in, he thinks of the ebony-haired, black-orbed, and ochre-tinted daughters of the Flowery Land. But he thinks of profit also. This is the *modus operandi*. A Chinaman, when anxious to have a wife of his own nation, sends a letter to an agent in Hankow. Your reporter has one of these epistles, but it is practically impossible to translate it into English. The following, however, is a condensed translation:—"I want a wife. She must be a maiden under 20 years of age, and must not have left her father's house. She must also have never read a book, and her eyelashes must be half an inch in length. Her teeth must be as sparkling as the pearls of Ceylon. Her breath must be like unto the scents of the magnificent adorned groves of Java, and her attire must be from the silken weavers of Kadsching, which are on the banks of the greatest river in the world, the ever-flowing Yangtze."

The price of a Chinese woman, delivered in Sydney, is £38; but two Chinese women only cost £52. Therefore, the heathen Chinese imports the women in couples. The importer never sees his women before they arrive, and then he generally selects the best-looking one. The other is shown round to a number of well-to-do Chinese, and after they have inspected her she is submitted to what is called public auction. The writer happened to be present at one of these sales. A young girl, aged about 19, was offered, and after some spirited biddings she was purchased by a wealthy Chinese storekeeper, whose place of business is in one of the leading towns of New South Wales, for £120. The melancholy aspect of the Celestial girl as she went away in company with the man who purchased her was deplorable to the last degree.



THE CHINESE LABOUR QUESTION ;

OR THE PROBLEM OF

CAPITAL *v.* LABOUR,

SPOKEN EXTEMPORANEOUSLY BY

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

LIFE is religion, and no religion is of any avail which does not apply to the practical duties of life, and regulate human relations between man and man. Let me be understood—by the term religion I do not mean a set of ceremonies contrived for Sabbath-day exercises;—I define religion as that code of principles termed in a general sense morals,—and as the chief underlying basis of all morality is justice, so, do I deem no methods of life practice can be just or true, that are not regulated by religion, and no religion can be of any value to mankind that fails to apply to life practice, and that in the solution of all its problems and duties. I trust then I shall not be misunderstood when I purpose to devote the hour especially set apart for religious instruction, to a brief review of the great conflict that is now agitating the public mind on the relations of Labour and Capital.

I may fail in the attempt to clothe my ideas in appropriate language, but it seems to me that where such a vast range of conflicting interests are arrayed against each other as the present question presents, nothing less than the application of that noble central principle of impartial justice, which constitutes alike the basis of good morals and true religion, can sound its depths or arbitrate between its parties. It is on these grounds that I venture to present you with opinions that from any other stand-point would seem presumptuous and unwarrantable.

In the very opening of the great conflict that is ramifying from this city throughout the land, and awakening vibrating echoes in many another, and far more distant scene, we are reminded that the belligerent parties represent much older

interests than their own, in fact that the personal dispute now maintained between the Employers and Employéés of the A. S. N. Company, only forms the key note of a world-wide and ever deepening evil, and one whose throes and pangs are beginning to stir society to its very depths, throughout the civilized world.

On the mere surface of the question, its complications appear to be inextricable. In the first place we have a company of gentlemen whose association has been of the utmost value to the trading public, and whose conduct has been liberal towards their Employéés. These gentlemen allege, that the employment of Asiatic labour has been forced upon them by competition from without, and that it is moreover deemed expedient to employ such labour in tropical waters.

On the other hand they claim that the demand of their Employéés is dictatorial and unwarrantable, and they contrast with this their own concession in the matter of arbitration, and their forbearance in not taking advantage of their Employéés' breach of contract.

Up to this point, the case of the Employers is a strong one, and if it represented only the interests of the two conflicting parties, would undoubtedly present a just and well-sustained plea.

To render a fair verdict in this case still more difficult, we have an opposition party who urge no direct claim in their own behalf.

They—the Employéés—do not complain either of lack of work, or insufficient compensation. It is evident then, that they do not ask so much for individual redress of wrongs, as for some advantage to the class they represent; in fact, their action would be paradoxical and unprecedented, did we not consider the speciality of their grievance upon general, rather than individual principles of justice.

The demand of the Employéés, is neither more nor less than a protest against the employment of persons of a certain nation, and this, totally irrespective of the capacity of those whom they denounce, or the value of their services.

Now, on the mere surface-view of this demand, it appears intolerant and unwarrantable. Viewed therefore, from the standpoint of personal interests and the immediate relations of the conflicting parties to each other, the action of the Company would appear to be as legitimate and liberal as that of the men would seem indefensible and arbitrary. It is only when we extend our view from personal to general interests that we are in a position to apprehend its real issues, and understand that the Employéés have stepped out beyond the range of their own interests to represent those of a class, and that they are in reality placing themselves in the position of temporary martyrdom for

the sake of illustrating the momentous relations subsisting between Labour and Capital.

There are special contingencies in this particular branch of the question moreover, which prevent its being gauged by ordinary rules.

Chinese Immigration into an Anglo-Saxon community presents peculiar features of its own. For unknown periods of time, the Chinese Empire has concentrated its ever increasing population chiefly within its own territorial limits. This conservative resistance to the universal law of intercourse with other nations, has at last swelled its population to such enormous and overwhelming proportions, that nothing but an unlimited system of emigration can stave off the approaches of famine, and act as a safety valve for its ruinous excess. The tides of emigration once poured out upon other lands, the Chinese Government must necessarily realize its benefits too surely to check or discourage its continuance. From no other country under the sun could such immense masses of the labouring classes be spared with equal advantage to its internal resources. When, in addition to this startling fact, it is remembered that the vast hordes of foreigners thus introduced, bring with them habits of endurance and economy in living with which no other nation can compete, it will be at once perceived that the unrestricted immigration of the Chinese entails upon other lands two stupendous sources of injury.

The first of these is the presence of **CHEAP LABOUR**, or labour of that inexpensive quality which is calculated to reduce the value of labour to a standard, unendurable to other races; and the next evil is the numerical strength of the alien masses, whose vast proportions threaten to absorb and supplant the industry of the countries upon which they make their descent.

Having shown even in these brief statements, that the present conflict is but the key-note to wider and more important interests, I shall now proceed in strictly impartial detail to argue the case of each party, and still more conclusively demonstrate that the subject involves inextricable complications if treated merely as a personal quarrel, in fact that it can only be dealt with successfully when ranged under the pressing and world-wide problem of the relations between Capital and Labour. For a few brief moments, then, I would ask my listeners to forget bias and prejudice, and follow me whilst I state candidly the many sides which belong to this Protean question, pleading as I would, before the tribunal of public opinion, and presenting the respective merits of both parties, before claiming a verdict for either.

Commencing then with the weakest, because the most unpopular side of this conflict, permit me to say, I have myself

seen the effect of Chinese labour, and its beneficial results on a very large scale. In several branches of industry in the New England States, Chinese labour is preferred on the ground of superior industry, sobriety, and fidelity. In California the best domestic service, and the most effective work in many directions is performed by the Chinese. The proof of this position will be found in the fact, that the employers of the Chinese, without a dissenting voice pronounce in their favour.

During the long seasons of drought which so often afflict California, the Chinese gardens are its redemptive feature, and but for the industry of the Chinese gardeners in irrigating their land, and maintaining green oases when all around them is parched and withered, the people would have been overwhelmed with disease and suffering, for the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables.

One of the finest and longest railroads in the world, the great "Central and Union Pacific," was built chiefly by the Chinese; and this magnificent work of industry, scaling as it does the tremendous heights of the Sierra Nevadas, and piercing the heart of the Rocky Mountains—would have occupied double the time in its completion with less sober and automatically faithful labourers.

I could multiply illustrations in these directions *ad infinitum*, but I must sum up by reiterating the opinions of those most experienced in the two classes of labour. The three great requisites in labour are—capacity, sobriety, and industry. In respect to the first requirement, there can be no dispute, the intelligence and skill of the Anglo-Saxon, being eminently in advance of all other races in the special departments of such labour, as contributes to the advancement of high civilization. On the other hand, I grieve to be obliged to admit, the balance in favour of Chinese sobriety and automatic industry, is so far in advance of that of white labourers in general, that these very points become the most salient grounds of attack, to which white labour subjects itself.

As to that religious faith on which bigots, and credists, lay so much stress, we have but little time to make comments in this address. Were we in brief, however, to try the several faiths of the White and Mongolian races by their fruits, we could scarcely find a more expressive illustration of our subject, than the British Government, representing the Christian faith, by forcing a deadly and poisonous narcotic on the Chinese at the point of the sword, in the infamous opium war, and the Chinese Government, illustrating the faith of "the Heathen," by retaliating only, in the influx of useful and patient labourers.

The next phase of the question that presents itself, is, in the popular outcry, that is raised against Chinese "immorality" and "uncleanness." On such points as these, it would be impossible

to remain neutral, for here indeed we approach the pivot on which the well-being of society hinges.

We will grant as a basis of argument, that the class of Chinamen whose labour is poured out upon us, in such profusion, are unclean in habits, and immoral in practice. But are not these blemishes due chiefly to the conditions of society from which the Emigrants are drawn? and will they not equally apply to the same grades of life in every country?

I am myself a native of London, and as a girl resided in the Collegiate district of Westminster Abbey. Close to the sacred precincts where Bishops, Priests, and Deacons lived in holy seclusion, was a large and thickly populated quarter which once belonged to the Monastic Fraternity of the Abbey, and formed its sanctuary and almonary. In my girlhood this district was the resort of thieves, murderers, and outcasts of both sexes, and no person of decent habits and appearance could tread its lanes, streets, and alleys without the protection of armed police, even in the glare of sunlight. At night, the vicinity was made hideous by the shrieks of altercation, and the yells of inebriety, and when finally these dreadful haunts of vice and uncleanness were broken up, characteristics and modes of life were revealed, which would make the worst records of Asiatic immorality appear civilized.

Twenty years ago Mr. John Mayhew, the celebrated author of "London Labour and London Poor," reported the existence of some fifty thousand persons in London—rich, splendid, palatial London—who were utterly homeless and outcast.

Three years ago, these statistics were more than doubled; and I, myself, obtained from official reports, evidences that there were over one hundred thousand persons who never slept beneath a roof, but either spent their dismal nights in criminal practices, or herded together as street robbers, tramps or river pirates; resting on door-steps, in bridge arches, amongst the decaying garbage of the city river, or market; anywhere, everywhere, but beneath the shelter even of such poor roofs, as your police denounce as "Chinese dens."

Take the accounts of Mr. James Greenwood, the "Amateur Casual," of our disgraceful English workhouses; the writings of the "Dorsetshire Parson"—concerning the horrors—carried on even in the rural districts of England; districts lovely to the eye, but revolting to every sense of humanity in some of their features of uncleanness and immorality. Pass through what is called "the Black County" between Birmingham and Wolverhampton; view, as I have done, the scarcely human manners and aspect of some of the labourers congregated together in our Midland Potteries or North County Collieries. The conditions of degradation to be witnessed in these scenes, defies all description, and more than justifies Charles Edward Lester's

tremendous revelations, on "the glory and shame of England." If these scenes are not graphic enough, visit the City of Glasgow on a Saturday night; watch the Saturnalia that prevails amongst the thousands of Iron workers that crowd its streets, and alleys, and search the world over to find pictures of vice and degradation, that will exceed those drunken revels.

To these dismal illustrations of the lowest classes of English, Scotch and Irish labourers, we might add equally wretched pictures of the Lyons silk weavers, the Brussels lace makers, the toy makers and stone cutters of Belgium and other Continental towns, the aggregate of which furnish a population of ill-paid, intemperate, and degraded beings, who, if imported into China would scarcely present in the eyes of the "Celestials," a very elevated representation of the Anglo-Saxon working classes. And yet, it is from the debris of over populated cities, and from their lowest depths of poverty and want, that we claim to found our opinions on Chinese morality and uncleanness. Reverse the position, and introduce the upper classes of China to the scenes I have just alluded to, and then tell me whether they would not present features of degradation and wretchedness, as glaringly hideous to the Asiatic, as the immorality and uncleanness of their National debris becomes, in the eyes of European refinement.

The question that necessarily arises in this connexion is, whether the immorality and uncleanness we complain of, is surpassed by the Asiatic; whether it does not belong to the condition rather than the Nation; and whether it would exist anywhere, if *cheap* labour did not create degraded labour, whilst degraded labour exhibits the same repulsive features everywhere. We talk loudly of the contaminating effects which Chinese immorality may and must diffuse by contact, but whilst similar influences are being disseminated in all our great centres of European civilization, we are, as usual, too busy in denouncing the Heathen to look at home, or consider whether it would be possible for any foreign influences to sink our lowest strata of European society beneath the present degraded status.

I have said thus much, friends, on the one side, to show you the impossibility of dealing with the present conflict in direct reference to the personality of the contending parties. I shall deepen this problem by a brief reference to the second party in the struggle, and show you how impossible it would be to pronounce any verdict under the impulse of personal predilections alone. The opposing party in the immediate struggle, is the British Seaman, and the very moment I mention this honoured name, I feel the tides of sympathy pouring out from my own soul and yours in such irresistible floods, that they bear down all opposition, sweep away the evidences of calm reason, and compel our judgment to yield to the unconquerable pressure of kindly emotion.

If there is one class of men upon the face of the earth, who most deserve the respect of their nation, or command the sympathies of their fellow men, it is British Seamen. Generous as princes, simple-minded as children, brave, courageous, chivalric; these men have existed as a class, during all that thousand years in which the flag their bold hands have upreared, has "braved the battle and the breeze."

I am myself the daughter and the sister of British Seamen, and independent of the holy emotions which bind me to this noble class, I am confident that the pre-eminent position their glorious deeds have earned for their nation, no less than the invariable excellence that has stamped their character as a class, would all too soon and too readily enlist every human heart in their favour—and that at the utter expense of judgment—if hearts were to be the arbiters in this quarrel, instead of consciences. But there is yet another, and a still more momentous question, involved in the present crisis. The protest of Europeans against the employment of Asiatic labour cannot end with Asiatics, but must extend its principle to the employment of aliens from any and every other nation. The taboo, which would restrict emigration from one land, must by the law of nations, and the international exigencies of commercial intercourse extend to all, and the principle we would adopt in reference to the overwhelming tides of Asiatic immigration, if tolerated at all—must cut its way through the cords of international relations in every country of the earth. Taboo one alien, you taboo all—unless indeed your legislation is directed against an excess, whose limitations it would be very difficult to define.

Don't you remember, friends, that this very question has been tried, fought out and defeated, in scores of instances in the political history of America.

Whilst the Americans were buying and selling the flesh and blood of the black man, for the sake of obtaining cheap labour, large masses of the nation screamed and hooted against the influx of the Irish. An immense political party was formed to prevent their holding office, or participating in legislative action, and it has only been through the irresistible force of unchecked Immigration that the Irish have at last obtained that foothold in the land at one time so fiercely denied them. The same warfare, though on a much more limited scale, has been fought out in many places, in relation to a preference for Dutch, Scotch, English, German, and Swedish labour. But whilst the invaluable services of the Irish as builders, the French in art, and other nationalities, each in their special branches of excellence, have compelled their toleration from the Native American, it is a significant fact, and one that should awaken attention from the thoughtful of all lands, that every nationality combines to protest against the unlimited influx of the Chinese. Useful,

capable, and in many respects desirable as these Immigrants have proved themselves to be, does not this universal movement of the working classes, speak for itself in an universal and significant tone of protest against the influx of cheap labour, and the irremediable wrong which the cause of the labourer must sustain by its absorption into the ranks of those, who can afford to work, for what to other nationalities would be, starvation prices?

The more we analyze this subject, whether from the standpoint of personal or general interests, the more inevitably we find it resolving itself into the relations of Capital and Labour, and the more hopeless it becomes to attempt dealing with it on any other basis. Upon what other grounds have any Governments an excuse for imposing protective duties upon Foreign manufactures?

Such duties are not assumed to be levied because foreign manufactures are invariably superior, but because home manufactures cannot compete with them in price, and this again, because Capitalists employ *cheap* labour; hence their manufactures represent far more forcibly the degradation of labour to the minimum of recompense, than the value of the products imported. A striking instance of this occurred, when America found it to her interest to import her iron into Great Britain to be manufactured,—receive it back, pay for its transport, shipment, and manufacture, and still find it cheaper for the construction of her western railroads, than to gather it up from her boundless metallic districts, and pay for the cost of manufacturing it on the spot with home labour.

At one time the same principle applied to cotton, and it still obtains in the manufacture of rags into paper, and many other branches of mechanical art. The imposition of heavy duties is no barrier to this unnatural species of interchange, and the real conflict, but the one that so many political economists overlook, is, between the cheap and degraded labour of Europe, and the more costly labour of educated and intelligent Americans. At the first glance, or rather upon mere commercial and political grounds, this great question would seem to resolve itself into the problem of which party has the strength on its side, and as both plead equal rights, the conflict is to be decided upon the ground of which can afford to hold out the longest, and so ultimately become the conqueror.

The Capitalist and the Employer generally, argues, "I have a right to do as I please with my own. My capital is my own, and if I choose to invest it in cheap labour, who is to hinder me?"

The Labourer pleads that his flesh and blood, or his mechanical skill constitute his capital, and he has the right to exchange it for as much or as little return as he can command. Against

the tyranny of strikes and combinations, he argues, that any compromise associations may effect, are temporary, and partial. The Capitalist being in possession of wealth, can live without its investment in labour, but the labourer, on the other hand, cannot live without the investment of his labour in capital.

The labourer, however firm, courageous, or self-sacrificing, must go to the wall at last. Starving wives, famishing children, houseless heads, rags and ruin, are the slave whips which ultimately lash him into subjection, and from these, there is no appeal.

Again, the Capitalist may say, in further elaboration of his right: "I cannot afford to diminish my profits by the payment of high wages, and when I can procure the service I require at a lower rate, my necessity prompts me, and the exercise of my legitimate right justifies me in availing myself of it. To meet this new allegation it is only necessary to observe that the standard of what individuals *can* afford, is purely optional, and somewhat moveable.

For example. The Capitalist's wife, cannot afford to run a milliner's bill of less than five hundred pounds a year,—descending in the scale of rights, the milliner—if she be a fashionable *modiste*—cannot afford to rent an establishment at less than three hundred a year. Her forewoman, cannot afford to hire an apartment at less than one hundred a year; but their sewing girls, whose only capital is flesh and blood, have neither choice or option in what they can afford at all. The trade allows them a certain general rate of wages, and if these are not enough to afford them food, clothing, and shelter, why let them go elsewhere! Cheap labour is abundant. Flesh and blood is the cheapest thing in the market, and if white labour cannot be had, has not the milliner the right to invest in any alien labour that may suit her purpose? In the interest and rights of Capital, she is perfectly justified in such a course. Let her dismiss the murmurers, and employ cheap labour; and as to the sewing girls—why, in the interests of Labour, let them strike!—but alas! alas! whom do the blows of the poor hit, but themselves? The richer men are, then, obviously, the less they can afford to reduce their profits, and the lower men descend in the scale, the more they can afford to do without.

When we touch the base of Society, and arrive at the real artificers of life, we find those who can afford to do—*sometimes*—without bread to eat, or a roof to shelter them; but when we rise in the scale of society, our grade of "what we can afford," rises with us, hence we must fall back upon our rights, and battle strongly for the privilege of ever doing as we like with our own. Without exaggeration then, and certainly after viewing all sides of the question with equal impartiality, are we not approaching the true basic principle of the conflict, when we sound the keynote of cheap wages?



Remitting for the moment the question of rights, do we not find that the real grievance at issue is—the possibility, or rather the certainty, of degrading the value of labour, and lowering alike its dignity and worth, when we introduce into any land the element of cheap labour? Is not this the real question underlying the conflict between Protection and Free Trade, and does it not apply with just as much force to the artisan, as to the products of his labour? The question of a poll-tax on the head of the alien may appear as impossible and destructive of international good faith as the prohibition against the admission of aliens at all,—in fact, the two positions are almost synonymous, for there is but little difference between imposing a duty upon the work when it is done, or the workman who comes to do it, always provided both imply the patronage of cheap labour.

Deal with this part of the question, and you tap the root of the entire evil; avoid it, and you touch only the surface of an unhealed wound, the fatality of which will prove an ever recurring sore to the body politic of humanity.

And now we arrive at the finale of the subject, and that is, in reference to the remedial measures, by which the great problem may be solved.

In the first place, we must no more regard the assertion of individual rights, from the stand-point assumed to exist by individuals and corporations.

Capital has its rights and its honours, but those rights are bounded by the rights of others, and those honours cannot be legitimately wrung out of the dishonour of others.

The Employer's oft reiterated claim, that he has a *right* to select his own Employée, is undoubtedly just; but when he claims the right to degrade the market price of labour, by those who in the terrible competition for bread, would or could run labour into the shipwreck of semi-starvation—the Employer, in his individual capacity, tramples on the collective rights of all Employées, and it is at this point that his rights end, and that of his oppressed fellow men commence.

Whether the judicial laws of the land have any axiom for it or no, the religious law of life, of which justice is the corner stone, demands, that the action of an individual or a company of individuals, shall not be permitted to inflict a wrong upon a whole nation. Individuals and companies, then, have no right to make such investments, even of their own property, as will lower the market price of the poor man's capital, cheapen his flesh and blood, degrade the worth of his industry, and put up the welfare of his dependant ones to auction, for sale—not to the highest, but to the lowest bidder. And it is in this sense, friends, that I have so often pleaded that, whilst the laws of human judicature protect men in the enjoyment of their possessions, they make no provision for those who have no

possessions, nay more, they do not even pretend to open up paths for enabling the destitute to provide means for themselves; in short, they are made for the rich, and not for the poor; they operate for protection, but not for provision, and it is at this point, that a new, more humane, and more religiously just recognition of human rights is demanded.

If you ask in what direction the law could intervene in such an emergency, I answer unhesitatingly, in two modes. First, by regulating the market value of labour; by drawing up a tariff of just recompense for labour; by enacting laws that will prevent the rate of wages from sinking below the standard of fair remuneration, and, next, by providing for the protection of employers, by regulating the worth of the labour rendered. Let there be a graduated scale of wages, and a graduated scale of labourers. "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," is a noble axiom; but whilst the wages should never sink below the rate of fair, the labour should stand in the same category. You register your ships, and determine to what class they belong; you register your merchandise, and grade the scale of all your products. Why can you not apply the same equitable and just methods of classification to your operatives and their claims for remuneration?

By so doing, you take away the unkind and unjust sphere of national competition, and narrow it down to the much nobler and more equitable standard of true merit. In this generous strife, birth and country would have no part; merit and manhood would then be the only standards, and in such a contest, who should win but the true workers, the good workers, and the capable workers?

If sobriety, industry, and capacity be made the standards, who would have the right to complain if he failed to attain to the highest class of remuneration?

On the other hand, if the Employer was debarred by law from investing his capital in cheap labour, and thereby degrading the worth and dignity of labour throughout the land, at least he is recompensed for the absence of enormous profits, by the certainty of "a fair day's work for a fair day's wage." If he cannot obtain labour at as low a rate as he desires, he can at least be sure of a good return for what he does invest. Madame may have to reduce her jeweller's account a hundred or so per annum, because those "barbarians" of workers in metals and precious stones, have the audacity to demand butter to their bread, and shoes to their children's feet; still, Madame may be sure that her reduced allowance will return her work from a certificated A. No. 1 workman, and that a larger per centage of gold than formerly, has crept into the splendid toys she invests in.

The Capitalist may be obliged to dispense with one fast horse,

or even to part with a few hundreds of his broad acres, but he will no longer be at the mercy of unprincipled grooms, or lazy farm labourers; he has but to employ certificated A. No. 1 workmen, and he is more certain of a good return for his investment than he is now, when he is obliged to pay overseers to watch that his ill-paid work is well done.

As to the labourer, why, who cannot see that this is a measure which cuts with the two-edged sword of justice? If White men will not rise to the standard of excellence achieved by Red, Black, or Yellow races, let them sink to where they belong! If Red, Black, or Yellow, are proved to be inferior to White races, do you think that they will be able to command the wages that the law allows only to the best?

Those who have aught to fear from such a system, are the ones who deserve to lose, no matter what be their nation or colour. The rights of the Capitalist are to good service; the rights of the Labourer to good wages. Let but the legislation of the land intervene to ensure these just and equitable mutual relations, and the sober, industrious, and capable workman, of any land, or any clime, has nothing to fear from competition. The intemperate, the idle, and incapable, have no rights; and the veriest demagogue that ever lived, could never urge their claims successfully.

In such a contest as this, may I not say, without exaggeration or boastful egotism, that the Anglo-Saxon race has nothing to fear. Nature, climate, soil, history, and national power, has placed this favoured race on the apex of a civilization which can defy any competition from without; which has nothing to fear from any source, save its own internal corruption.

If John Chinaman can beat John Bull, in such a fair and equal game as this, John Bull deserves the lesson, and only needs to rise to the conflict, a better and wiser man, to regain all the vantage ground which his own deficiencies have forfeited.

I dare not tax your time farther by enlarging upon the merits of a plan which, however revolutionary it may sound in your ears to-day, will, I know, yet be the law of adjustment between Labour and Capital, when right, not might, prevails, and justice rules the nation instead of law. In the meantime, and pending such legislative action as will meet the great crisis into which all the relations between Labour and Capital are surely drifting, I cannot close without complimenting both the belligerent parties in this great struggle, upon the attitudes of peaceful argument, and dignified controversy which they have assumed.

I know that each party must be moved by deeper and broader considerations than selfish purposes, or the expediency of the hour. I feel that the Seamen are animated by the spirit of the old martyr, in the defence of a principle which they believe will extend to all time, and through all classes of labour. I

believe that the Company has been urged on by the vice of the times ; by the monstrous power of competition—through cheap labour, which custom has sanctioned, and rivalry has prompted.

I believe both parties have done enough to awaken the community at large to a sense of the crisis in which the cause of Labour and Capital stand ; both have done enough to provoke healthful agitation, and compel just legislation. Let the harsh and injurious strife now cease. Let arbitration intervene, and mutual forbearance temporize, until the hour when the long postponed work of true adjustment can be put into operation. Both parties have read the age a salutary and much needed lesson, and pending the prompt legislation which the circumstances call for, the part of true wisdom would be, to proclaim a truce, even if it were but a temporary one, to present hostilities, and a reserved force of determination that better things shall ensue in the immediate future.

In concluding, I offer no apology for the opinions and thoughts I have presented. If they enshrine the elements of beneficial truths, the parable of the sower and the seed will apply to me. If they are but vain theories, they are prompted by the most earnest love for humanity, of truth and justice, hence I commit my work to that God in whose holy name I have undertaken it.



NOTE.—Throughout her address Mrs. Britten was listened to by an immense and overflowing audience—filling the hall to its utmost capacity—with breathless attention, only interrupted by loud outbreaks of applause. At the close she recited a poem, which the reporters failed to take down, and resumed her seat, amidst loud and long-continued cheers.