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AMERICAN CELESTIALS.

GRAPHIC PICTURES OF THE CHINESE
IN SAN FRANCISCO.

The "Chinese Must Go" and the "Chinese Must Stay" Question—Fifty Ways of Living of the People from the Kingdom of Flowers—Chinese Theatres.

(Special Correspondence.)

SAN FRANCISCO, May 23.—It was only a few weeks ago that the city of San Francisco was illuminated in honor of the signing of the Chinese exclusion act. There were street bonfires, gorgeous pyrotechnics, bands of music, long processions and a general glorification. The community was in a condition of ecstasy, for the popular cry of "The Chinese must go!" had been realized and everybody was happy. Now the great ships from the Flowery Kingdom no longer dump a thousand or more Celestials into San Francisco every fortnight. In fact it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the proverbial needle than for a John Chinaman to get past the Golden Gate. All kinds and classes of people seemed to labor for this particular consummation. The newspapers, Democratic and Republican alike, vied with each other in urging the passage of the bill and then demanding the president's signature. The coast seemed to be a unit on the proposition, and politicians declared that the uncivilized Mongolian must not be permitted to take the breath from the civilized Caucasian, and that this was a white man's government, intended only for white men, and for



SIXTY CHINAMEN IN ONE ROOM.

white workmen particularly. Between you and me, good reader, it was largely the cry of the demagogue. Scratch a property holding Californian today, and ten to one you will find him quietly, but none the less positively, a pro-Chinese man. He will shout anti-Chinese with the best of them for business, political or other prudential reasons, but he knows and will admit to intimate friends that Chinese labor has been the making of California, and that without it the state would not have been what she is in this year of our Lord 1889. The lands that have been reclaimed, the grapes that have been harvested, the railroads that have been built and the wines and fruits exported, are the result of the plodding, uncomplaining, industrious and poorly paid John Chinaman. You might as well say that the South Atlantic states should do away with the services of the negro as that the Pacific slope should banish the almond-eyed Celestial. Today, even, they are necessities; not creatures merely held on sufferance. They can do and will do what the white man cannot and should not. They are the scavengers of the cities, the safety of the country. There are times in the vineyards, the hop fields, the fruit groves, that thousands of men are necessary at once, for a week or two weeks, say a month, in the year. For that time are they needed, and only then. White men could not exist on one month's work in twelve, but the Chinese can. It will be a perplexing problem to solve, how the California grapes and fruits can be harvested when John Chinaman is no more. I met Dennis Kearney today on the fashionable thoroughfare that is named after him and the late general. The sand lot orator is a little down at the heel at present, but he is blatant and bold as ever. "What should we do with them?" he said angrily in answer to my question; "throw 'em in the sewer; they're no earthly good. If they were not here, white men could have employment and this country would be populated by Christian and Caucasian workers. Put the Chinese out altogether, and there would flock from the east an army of white laborers who would be a credit to the state, who would be the consumers as well as the producers, which the Chinese are not; who would spend their money where they earned it, which the Chinese do not; who would improve society, not degrade it, and who would help the general cause of humanity." Now this argument of Dennis Kearney is the regulation argument of the day. Perhaps it is the strongest side of the case; it is certainly the most popular. But the interesting fact remains that thus far no one has been discovered who can fill the bill, who can take the place of the heathen, for with him the country has been developed and agriculture and viticulture made profitable. Without him it would be an impossibility.

Mark you, please, this letter is not an argument for the Chinese. Far from it. It is a beautiful dictum and a most acceptable one, that this glorious country is for the Caucasian, not the Mongolian; for the Christian, not the Pagan; for the brightness of American progress, not for the darkness of Chinese superstition. Heaven speed the day that it may come to pass, but we must look at things as they are, not as we would wish them to be. And in things as they are we find the pig tail a very large, important and by no means lovely element in California life. If you would see the Chinaman at his best and worst, you must look him over in his own house in San Francisco. I have seen him in his haunts night and day; in the cool of the evening and in the bright light of the morning, and know him fairly well. Within a compact area of twelve blocks is Chinatown here located, and yet within that are nearly 40,000 Celestials live, or rather

exist. They herd together like rats, and their mode of living is little above the animal. The Chinese Joss houses, theatres, restaurants, opium joints and gambling halls have been frequently described, but they can give little idea of the reeking depravity of the place. For two or three dollars a guide will take a couple through the entire town, and the excursion takes from 8 in the evening until 2 in the morning. It is all a fearful picture, but the white man or woman is treated with marked respect, and can go anywhere without fear of robbery or physical harm. In one three story building 1,500 Chinamen will live, the rooms being arranged like the forecastle of a ship, in tiers of bunks one set above another. One large room is for eating, another for cooking, and all the surroundings, while more or less clean, are dark, dingy and barren. The Celestials fairly swarm in these places, and their heathenish jabber is a puzzle. The theatre is the place to see John Chinaman at his ease. It holds about 2,000 and is densely packed night after night. The visiting white is allowed to sit on the stage. The play usually lasts for three or four weeks, and is given in sections of two or three a night. No scenery is used, and a hideous band of musicians twang at a hideous lot of ear splitting instruments while the actors perform. No woman is permitted to act, so men take their places. They are educated up to it, and the smirking Chinese maid in gorgeous dress is excellently portrayed by some young fellow. Watching the vast sea of faces from the stage is a picture one will long remember. One man seems the exact duplicate of the other; they all look alike, and wearing the identical hat, pig tail and blouse, the scene is monotonous to a degree. However much pleased he may be, the Chinaman seldom shows it and never applauds. Occasionally there is a grunt of pleasure, but the yellow, expressionless faces never light up with satisfaction. When a section of the play ends at midnight they all go out and gamble—every mother's son of them—and the lottery dealers do a thriving business. Later they tumble into their wretched bunks, and with a little box of opium "hit the pipe" and lie down to pleasant dreams. In the restaurants you can see the rich Chinaman. He is superbly dressed, and has about him his men friends and his women slaves. He sparkles with jewels, and is the fat and greasy citizen we meet in the purple of life. Chinese musicians play for him, Chinese women coddle him and the restaurant feeds him and his guests with the finest of food. Even into the secrecy of their magnificent pink dining halls the white visitor can boldly enter and look on. John Chinaman fears to offend his Caucasian brother in any way. To him everything is open. Down in other sections of the town, the gambling places, the "twice bitten lookee" quarter and the poorer streets reeking with depravity, are many interesting sights, but I draw the veil. Only this can be said for it—the Celestial keeps all his vice to himself. He is never drunk outside, never ragged, dirty, disreputable or dishonest away from Chinatown. He will plod and work and slave for you faithfully up to the letter of any agreement. It is only when he leaves you to become his own master that he makes the break and going to his haunts becomes a low, vicious atom of humanity.

I attended a Chinese funeral. While in the flesh the "remains" had been popular, and the paid criers at his bier were many. The friends also gathered numerous, and many invocations were made to the God of Wrath, the God of Luck and the God of Health to make it pleasant for the departed in the sweet by and by. It seemed to me that every back in San Francisco had been chartered for this funeral, for when the carriage procession started it was fully a mile and a half long before the last Chinese quartet had gotten into the last vehicle. A carriage full of musicians, playing tom-toms and beating gongs, led the way, then the hearse holding the body, placed in a common coffin. Upon the hearse sat a Chinaman laden with small pieces of perforated tissue paper. Behind the hearse, at intervals of ten carriages, were more tom-toms and gongs. Finally the funeral started and dashed through the city pell mell, bound for the graveyard. It looked more like a fast drive to a horse trot

than a pilgrimage to a cemetery. When they moved along the Chinaman on the hearse began throwing out his bits of paper until the streets were littered with them. The wind took them here, there and everywhere, and as they scattered, the Chinaman chuckled merrily. It is a Chinese superstition that when the body starts to the grave, the devil starts too, and tries to get there before the corpse, which he is supposed to grab. But in the race he must pick up every bit of paper thrown from the hearse. If he misses even one, the jig is up and the corpse is a winner. This particular funeral finally reached the cemetery, where the body was hurriedly put in the open grave, which was as quickly closed up. At the end of the procession came an express cart laden with a young roasted pig, dishes of juicy sweetmeats, pots of rice, nuts and teas. These were all reverently placed on the grave and the mourners departed. The idea is that when the devil does arrive he will be pacified by finding a good, hearty meal. The next day the roast pig is gone.



LIGHTING TAPERS TO KEEP THE DEVIL AWAY.

Frederick W. White.

LONDON MEMORANDA.

Photographic Flashes Taken in the Great City by Prentice Mulford.

(Special Correspondence.)

SAG HARBOR, May 30.—No "tumblers" in England. All glasses. A "pitcher" is a jug. Don't ask for pitcher of water over there. Nobody will know what you mean. Warming ale in cold weather they call "chilling" it. Done in a sort of brass hopper kept on bar. Nobody in London knows Thames as a river. Told driver once to drive me to river. Didn't know what I meant. Must ask for bridge you want that crosses Thames. Such as "Westminster," "Waterloo," "Blackfriars," "London," etc. Coal spoken of as "coals." No "buggies." Molasses known as "treacle." Sold by the pound. "Chemist" and "druggist," different affairs. People spoken of as "starved with cold." London English better spoken than with us. All syllables sounded. None cut off. Full justice done to the terminal "ing." Thus: London says "speak-ing," America, "speak-in." Lancashire English next to Choctaw. Devonshire English resembles New England English. Liverpool English sprinkled with Welsh.

Few restaurants. Mostly coffee houses or chop houses. Coffee generally sloppy. Tea good. Frequent notice in windows: "No charge for cooking." Meaning this: Customer buys chop or steak at market. Coffee house cooks it without charge. Charges penny for coffee. Ditto for bread and butter. Special shops for cooked food abundant. "Ham and beef shops." Corned beef. Ready at noon. Can buy down to two pence worth. Shaved off very thin. Superbly cooked. Freshly boiled potatoes and turnips by the ha'penny worth. Given you in paper roll. Also soup kitchens. Soup only. Pea soup and beef soup. Penny a bowl. Bowls chained to table. Also fish kitchens. Busy mostly at night. 10:30 p. m. for late suppers. Fish fried in vats of oil. Potatoes ditto. Eight cents buys fish supper for two. Pint of porter two pence. Fish kitchens crowded at night. Customers, plate in hand, at counter, two deep. Also hot sausage shops, eel pie shops, kidney pie shops. Boiled "winks" on hand cart. Otherwise salt water snails. Picked out of shell with pin.

Britain a land of bars, otherwise "public houses." Our saloons there are "wine and spirit vaults." Brass mounted. Heavy brass work and railings outside. Endless polishing required. British bar mounted for heavy work. Heavy liquors, generally taken straight. Liquors cheap and as a rule better than ours. All measured out to customer. Customer never touches bottle. Buy by the "go." Thus "a two-penny go of rum," "a three-penny go of gin." British bar divided into compartments and departments. To suit classes and wants of customers. Thus "bar parlor," for sedentary and social drinking. "Bottle and jug department," or "Family Entrance." For the maid with the family beer jug. Other departments for stand up drinks. All front on same bar. Bar maids abundant. Bars as free to women customers as men. Equality of privilege. Ditto at times of drunkenness, especially on Saturday night at London's East End. Drunken women common in parts of London. Also women in rags. Also women in rotten rags. Find them on sunny days sitting in rows on curbstones. Bleary eyed. Slouchy, sooty, slovenly. Beg of you for penny as you pass. Live on gin and herring. Live in holes. Live anywhere. Can't tell themselves where they do live. One roof this week, another that. Not much woman or humanity apparently left in them.

Gin and milk favorite morning beverage. Among working classes. Reputed nutritious as well as stimulating. Gives massive headaches and runs in to knees if too freely used.

Streets very cleanly swept. New York's a pig sty in comparison. No liberty poles. All flag staves sticking out of church steeples. Economy of space in burying grounds. One grave holds entire family. Twelve feet deep at first. One coffin atop the other. One tombstone does for the family. Epitaph spaces left for those who are to follow. No room for long verses. Piethora of sepulchral and ghastly taste. Skeletons in stone carved over old church doors.

Pomp at funerals. Coffins black. Hearse horses ditto. With manes two feet in length. Tails sweeping the ground. Peculiar breed. Raised for funerals. Broke to hearse. Pirates' flag half yard in length from hearse driver's hat. Plug hat. Hired mourners. Clad in rusty black. More plug hat and red noses. Will mourn for you at so much per hour. No matter who you are, where you came from, what you've done or where you're going to. Afterward adjourn to tavern near cemetery, and refresh on beer and cheese. Ruby tint on end of nose renewed. Ready for next mourn. Business of a prolonged perfunctory mourn. Advertising posters with scale of prices for funerals common on streets. Four or five grades of funeral. Lowest fifteen to twenty dollars. Highest one hundred. Burying a big business in England. Everybody dies there some time in their lives.

Copied following epitaph from a Woolwich grave yard:

Weep not for me, my parents dear,
There is no weakness wanted here.
The hammer of death was given to me,
For eating the cherries off the tree.

PRENTICE MULFORD.

The Day of the Month.

"Let's see, what day of the month is this?" That question is heard in the hotel writing rooms hundreds of times a day. One man after another sits down to write a letter and has to ask his neighbor. His neighbor likely does not know unless he has asked some one else before the questioner came in; and the man who originally stated the date was probably able to do so only by referring to a newspaper which he was lucky enough to have with him. Out of ten business men who sit down to write a letter there is not more than one who dares to date a letter from memory; and this is probably as true of business men in general as of those who are found in the hotel writing rooms.—Tr. Times.

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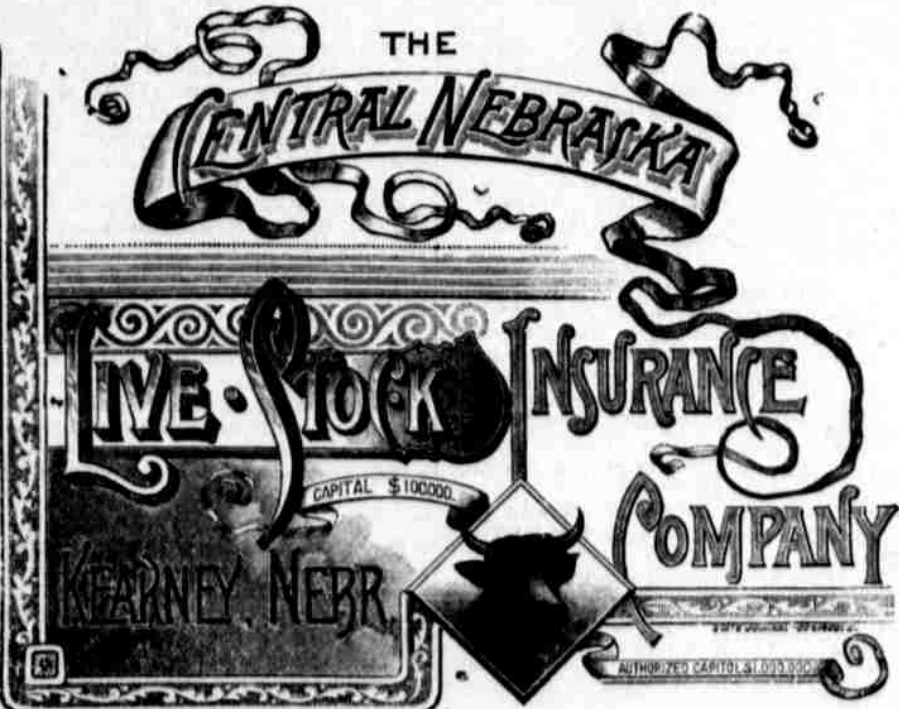
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