

# Hong Kong--Richest Colony of the World

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**HONG KONG,** Dec. 13, 1900. (Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Hong Kong is the little Chinese giant of John Bull's colonial creations. If Uncle Sam can do as well with the Philippines he will have the greatest empire of the far east, and will control the trade of the western Pacific. This rocky little island is so small that you can walk around it in a day. It is only eleven miles long and on the average about three miles wide. When John Bull got it it was so barren that weeds would not grow upon it. It was infested by pirates, and its only inhabitants were a few fishermen, who lived in huts on the shores. The Chinese laughed as they gave it away. This was less than sixty years ago. Now Hong Kong is one of the chief ports of the world. The British empire has only three which surpass it. Eight million tons of shipping enter its harbor every year, and its annual trade amounts to 250,000,000 gold dollars. Fifty thousand Chinese vessels visit it every twelve months, and it has great steamers connecting it with North America, Australia and Europe and all parts of the Pa-

along streets which are so shaded that you can climb the hills and keep out of the rays of the sun.  
 The population of Hong Kong is about 250,000, of whom less than 5,000 are whites, the remainder being Chinese. There are 3,269 Europeans and Americans, not counting the Portuguese, 2,263 Portuguese, 1,318 East Indians and 272 Eurasians. There are 2,374 British, 223 Americans, 366 Germans, 118 French, 165 Spanish and 163 Jews. The Chinese quarter is down near the water, although a great part of it surrounds the English business sections, and you find Chinese merchants and factories everywhere. Just beyond the postoffice is one of the most densely populated parts of the world. There are 150,000 people living and doing business there on an area smaller than a 100-acre farm. There are more than a thousand to the acre, or 250 to a village lot. They are Chinese, and as busy Chinese as you will find anywhere in Asia. They do everything under the sun. Some of them have large stores. Some have rice factories. Some are silversmiths, others are bankers, and there are laborers of every sort, both men and women.

### Human Muscle at Low Prices.

I am surprised at the work done by women. Human meat is the cheapest meat in Hong Kong and human muscle the cheapest muscle. This town has been made out of the muscle of the Chinese. They are the pack animals, the beasts of burden, the drays of the city. All the building stone and bricks, all the clay, mortar and sand for putting up the big houses on the hills are carried up in baskets by women and girls. I see long processions of this kind going all day long from the boats up the mountains. Every woman has a pole on her shoulders with a basket fastened to each end of it and the baskets are filled with bricks or stones. She carried from fifty to a hundred pounds at a load, and her wages are 10 cents a day.

It makes one feel like a king to travel about Hong Kong. You get so much for your money. I am hauled about in jinrikshas for 2½ cents a trip and for 10 cents I can have a man pulling me through the streets for an hour. I am frequently carried about in a chair on the bare shoulders of two big Chinese. The regular charge is about 5 cents gold for fifteen minutes, but by the law the charge is 25 cents for three hours, and you can have a chair all day for \$1. The men want more when they pull up the steep hills, and the generous Hong Kong residents sometimes add 2½ cents for good measure. There is a regular charge for boat trips in the harbor and the coolies on the street work for 2½ cents an hour, or 17 cents of our money, a day.

### Factories and Chinese Cheap Labor.

Hong Kong is fast becoming a manufacturing center and its condition in this regard is an example of what might be done in the Philippines with Chinese immigration. Ordinary labor in China costs from 3 to 10 cents a day and skilled labor ranges from 18 to 22 cents per day. The wages are higher than this at Hong Kong, but still low enough to make a good bargain for manufacturing.

There are already three large sugar refineries here. They use the raw sugar from the Philippines and refine it for the markets of the far east. There is a big rope factory, which consumes a quantity of Philippine hemp, and there are rice factories, cement works, glass factories, match factories and several engineering works. A paper mill, fitted out with the best of English machinery, is in operation and there is a large cotton mill with 50,000 spindles. Much of the cotton used is imported from China, some from India and some from the United States. The Chinese make soap and dyestuffs. They have rice mills, bean curd factories, tooth powder factories and cigar works. They also do considerable boat building, furniture making and glass blowing.

Hong Kong is one of the financial centers of the far east. It has half a dozen banks, all of which have large capital. The Hong Kong and Shanghai bank has a paid up capital of \$10,000,000 and a reserve of \$12,000,000. It has about \$80,000,000 of deposits and its stock is quoted at 314 per cent premium. The bank has recently established branches in the Philippine islands and is doing an extensive business there. Another large bank is the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, and others are the Bank of China and Japan, the National Bank of China, the Agra bank, the Bank of Indo-China and the Imperial Bank of China.

Victoria has its chamber of commerce or stock exchange where the local shares are bought and sold. I see that many of the stocks are worth several times their face value. The tramway stock is 70 per cent above par. The Hong Kong hotel shares of a face value of \$50 sell for \$118. The Hong Kong Ice company, face value \$25, is worth \$170, and one of the chief of the dock stocks sells at a premium of 545 per cent. The insurance stocks are all high, several of them being quoted at three times their face value. There is a Luzon Steamship company on the list and half a dozen sugar companies. The cigar stocks are all above par, and it is the same with many other stocks. The list takes a full column of the Hong Kong Press, showing that there is a great deal of business.

I have spent some time in learning about the government of Hong Kong. The colony is as well managed as any in the British empire. Life and property are safe, and

this notwithstanding there are less than 5,000 white people here and about 240,000 Chinese, including some of the roughest elements of this part of the world.

The head of the colonial government is Sir Henry A. Blake, formerly governor of Jamaica. He was appointed by the queen three years ago, and will remain here during her pleasure. He receives a salary of \$32,000 per annum, and has his house rent and other perquisites. He is practically supreme, although there is a legislative council, a governor's council and a number of other officials. All officers are held only at the pleasure of the queen. The legislative council can be dissolved by her, and she has the right to change any appointment.

The laws are made by the legislative council, and they are enforced by the police and the courts. There are 900 policemen, of whom 156 are Europeans, 350 Indian Sikhs and 400 Chinese. There is a supreme court, a police court and a marine magistrate's court, all of which have plenty to do.

Many of the Chinese who come here are bad characters, and Hong Kong has as bold thieves as any part of the world. In our country the criminal classes are careful to keep away from the court rooms. The other day two Chinese thieves entered the chief hall of justice in Victoria while the court was in session. One of them had a ladder, which he placed under the clock. He held it there while the other climbed up and took the clock off the wall. One of the policemen asked the men what they were doing. They replied: "Wankee makee fix." The policeman thought they had been ordered to take the clock away for repairs and did not object. Since then neither clock nor Chinese have been found. This is the next thing to stealing a red hot stove, a thing that I doubt not the Chinese could do if they knew the virtue of asbestos gloves.

The courts of Hong Kong have their own codes of procedure. They have regular



VICTORIA A CITY OF CLUBS—BUILDING OF HONG KONG CLUB—IT COST \$350,000.

has also subsidiary coins imported from England; the most beautiful of these is the 5-cent piece, a little disc of silver worth 2½ cents in gold.

### Some Queer Postal Methods.

Hong Kong is the center of the British postal service for China. The postoffice is on Queen's road in the very center of the city. There are mail boxes at the corners of the streets and collections and deliveries are regularly made. There are private mail boxes in the office, which are rented for \$10 a year in advance. Every box holder has to provide himself with two stout bags marked on both sides with his name in English and Chinese. These bags are for the coolies, who are sent after the mail. Each coolie must have his

an important naval station, Hong Kong being the headquarters of the China squadron.

In the harbor are magnificent dry docks, in which not only English, but American and other men-of-war are laid up for repairs. The rates for such work on foreign vessels is exorbitantly high, the expense often running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The foreigners live well in this part of the world. Many of them make a deal of money and all spend a great deal. Victoria is a town of clubs. There is a cricket club, a foot ball club, a polo club, a golf club, a hockey club, a rifle club and a yachting club. The Portuguese have their association club, the Germans have a club and the English have clubs of every kind. Even the women have clubs. They have their tennis courts and pavilions, in which they periodically go to carve up their neighbors. Hong Kong has its annual races, its regattas, its athletic exhibitions and its swimming matches. It has an amateur dramatic club, which gives regular performances in the city hall, and it has two large Chinese theaters.

It has big hotels, one of which has 150 rooms. It has gas and electric lights. It has good water works. It has churches, colleges and schools. It has three daily newspapers published in English and four daily papers published in Chinese. It gets its cables daily from all parts of the world, and it is on the whole as live and up-to-date a colony as can be found on the Lightning Express of Modern Progress, which is pushing its way through the dead civilizations of the far east.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## Reflections of a Bachelor

Every time a woman flatters a man she does it so he will flatter her.

No man has any respect for his brother-in-law unless he is married himself.

The only thing that is like falling in love after a man is 30 is being shot in the stomach.

The most useless husband in the world to a woman is worth sitting up nights and sewing buttons on for.

Lots of men spend a lot of time wondering why it is women always want to know the why of everything.

You can always get a woman mixed up in an argument by using some word that she doesn't know the meaning of.

The experience of most every married man is that he found his wife exactly where he hadn't expected to find her.

It's never safe to make up to a girl till at least six months after she has made up her mind that she has nothing left to live for.

When a girl is going to propose to a man she begins by telling him how terribly unhappy it makes her feel to have a man propose to her that she can't love.



THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AT HONG KONG.

terms of sitting, their fees are all fixed by law, and they are, I am told, reasonable.

### Finances of the Colony.

Hong Kong is a free port and the government has to raise its revenues chiefly by stamps and by taxing its citizens. There are stamps upon everything. You pay \$50 on every contract, \$2 on every deed and \$25 in stamps if you make your will. Every bank check has its 2-cent stamp, and the bank must pay 1 per cent per annum on the average amount of its bank note circulation. Bonds of all kinds pay 10 per cent taxes, and every broker's note pays 30 cents. Auctioneers are charged \$300 a year for their licenses, billiard tables must pay \$50 each, and every pawnbroker must give \$350 annually to the city if he would do business.

In addition to this the government gets something out of monopolies. It receives \$15,000 a month from its opium farms and less sums from other factories. With all this it is easily able to meet its expenses. Its revenues are about \$3,000,000 silver every year and its expenditures are considerably less. Its debt is less than \$2,000,000, and it pays an interest rate of only 3½ per cent.

And what kind of money do they use in this English colony? Pounds, shillings and pence? No. They use the silver dollar, which is worth just as much as the value of the silver it contains. Many of the dollars are made in Mexico and many of these in circulation have been plugged and sweated until they are worth less than par. Nearly every dollar that you get at the bank has a black mark stamped upon it guaranteeing its circulation by the last man who passed it. If you want clean Mexicans, that is new dollars, the Hong Kong and Shanghai bank will charge you 2 per cent extra for them. All kinds of Hong Kong money are at a discount in Shanghai. Even the bank notes of the Hong Kong and Shanghai bank are taken at a discount by the Shanghai branch of this same bank if presented at Shanghai.

There is a great deal of speculation in money. The silver dollar ranges in value from 43 to 50 cents gold, and it hobs up and down, according to the rise and fall of silver. Some Chinese merchants deal in silver in bulk, taking everything by weight. Their unit is the tael, containing one and one-third ounces avoirdupois and worth about 70 cents. Their copper coin is the cash, of which it takes more than a thousand to make one of our dollars. Hong Kong has a mint, where it now makes dollars and half dollars of its own. It

master's bag and also a ticket of wood or metal bearing his master's name in English and Chinese. Without this ticket he cannot get the mail. The local postage rates are equal to 1 cent of our money per half ounce. The chief officials in the postoffice are English, although the Chinese are the cashiers and handle the money. This is so in the banks, the Chinese clerks being the best accountants.

Hong Kong is defended by a garrison of British soldiers. The city and island has, in ordinary times, about 4,000 men, and more now on account of the war. There are three companies of garrison artillery, a corps of engineers and a battalion of infantry. There is also a volunteer corps, consisting of a battery of light field artillery, three machine gun companies, an infantry company, an engineer company and a band. The approaches to the harbor are well fortified, the batteries consisting of well constructed earthworks armed with the latest of breechloading guns. The colony is

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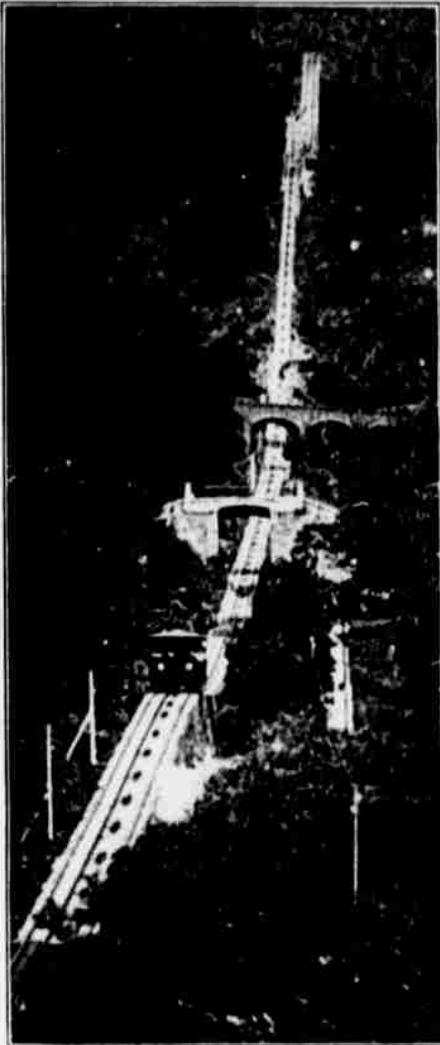
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CABLE TRAMWAY UP THE MOUNTAINS BACK OF HONG KONG.

cific and Indian oceans. You may count fifty ocean steamers at anchor at one time in its harbor, and it is perhaps the busiest port of the world.

Just now there is a big North German Lloyd steamer at the docks loading for Europe. One of the French mail has just left for Saigon and Singapore, on its way to Marseilles, and a P. and O., carrying the English mails, left today for Shanghai. Hong Kong has five lines of steamers connecting it with Vancouver, Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, and it will soon have one to San Diego. There are many ships which go regularly from here to Manila, and two lines which visit Manila on their way to Australia. The fare to Manila is \$30 gold, to San Francisco \$200 and to Europe \$300 and upward.

The world knows this port as Hong Kong, and you frequently see mention of the city of Hong Kong. There is no such thing. Hong Kong is merely the name of the island and colony; the name of the city and port is Victoria. It was so named when the land was taken over by the English in 1843 in honor of Queen Victoria, who granted the charter. Victoria is a beautiful city and a curious one. If you will imagine mountains, 1,800 feet high, rising upward at an angle of about forty-five degrees from a hill-locked harbor, you will have an idea of its site. The city runs around the shore and rises in terraces up the sides of the mountains to a distance of 400 feet. Thus far it is solidly built. Beyond are scattered residences of the well-to-do English clear to the top of the peak. Running up through the houses and extending to the great hotel on the peak you see two black iron tracks. These belong to the Peak tramway, which carries passengers up and down every few moments during the day.

### Business End of Victoria.

The business end of Victoria is at the foot of the hills. Much of it is on land reclaimed from the sea. Great stone docks wall out the water and the mountain has been cut down to fill in and form a foundation for magnificent buildings. The central part of the city would do credit to London or New York. There is not a finer bank building in the world, I venture, than that of the Hong Kong and Shanghai bank. The Hong Kong club cost \$350,000 and the Hong Kong hotel would be a big hotel anywhere. Back of these buildings are many fine residences. They rise out of the trees