

had lived in the days of Oom Paul. For this impertinence they were left, after the war, to starve like ownerless dogs in the streets of Johannesburg. Even black labor was too dear for the purses of the mining millionaires. And so 'Chinese cheap labor' was struck upon as a sure means of turning the Transvaal into a money-making paradise of hard-fisted monopolists.

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The vanguard—a thousand strong—of the yellow invasion reached the Rand some time ago. The slant-eyed slaves were packed off to the mines close prisoners and sent to pig together in the stockaded gaols known as compounds. Lord Van Clutterbuck Milner is not yet quite able to say that the Yellow Balsam has been successfully applied, but he avers that it 'apparently' promises to be successful—by-and-by. 'The Chinese laborers,' he says, 'are apparently keen to become efficient miners. They neither fear nor dislike working underground.' But there is another side to the story. So, at least, the papers say. The Johannesburg correspondent of the 'Otago Daily Times,' for instance, says: 'Our first experience of Chinese labor is not reassuring. . . . The labor problem is by no means solved by the introduction of the yellow man. Despite inspired reports of a few individual cases, in which Chinese have performed so much rock drilling in a given time, the aliens now working on the Comet mine are found to be in every way inferior to the Kaffirs. This is not surprising to those who have all along contended that on account of the physical superiority of the black it would require a far greater number of Chinese to do an equal amount of work. Not only as workers have the aliens so far proved a disappointment, but their docility is not what it was lauded. They were to be comfortably compounded and kept quite isolated from the white (also the black) community. Whether the comforts provided are not up to the standard of the tastes of our Celestial visitors, the talked-of isolation is a farce. Out of the 1000 Chinese that have reached the Rand, a tenth have been reported as deserting. Most of these have been apprehended, but there are still some of the number roaming about looking for more congenial occupation than underground mining. The Kaffirs have shown no open or combined hostility to the aliens, but all the same they are bitterly incensed against the co-workers, and express resentment to any white "baas" that will care to listen; moreover, there is a tell-tale falling off in Kaffir recruits.' The mining houses (we are told) are 'in despair over the outlook.' The pig-tailed serfs from the Iiwa Kwo or Flowery Land were to have sent the share market up. Instead, 'values are sagging away'; 'there is another slump'; the gold output is falling off somewhat; and 'the days of tribulation are not nearly over.' And for this New Zealand sacrificed so many useful lives, the British and Irish taxpayer spent £260,000,000 in good minted gold, without counting the Empire's loss in money, blood, and prestige.

The placid slave from Far Cathay may yet prove a 'yellow peril' to the pro-Chinese British Conservative Party as well as to the millionaires who engineered the war. If the Heathen Chinese may displace the British worker on the Rand, why not in England as well? At the Chertsey election this point of view received effective prominence at the hands of the Liberal party. One of their placards ran as follows: 'Wanted for employment in the coal mines of Great Britain, 200,000 Chinese; salary 30s a month. Deities of the best Birmingham make and chopsticks provided. Genial overseers. Gentlemen will be expected to bring their own birds' nests. Opium allowed. Beriberi discouraged, but all corpses returned at owner's risk to China.' The Sydney 'Freeman,' reading the signs of the times, says: 'The chances are that the Liberal Government when it attains office will bundle the Chinese out of South Africa and frame decent conditions for the coy Kaffir.'

Incidentally the anti-Chinese cry in England is hastening the return to power of a Home Rule majority.' And thus the whirligig of time may bring in his revenges.

A Burning Question

A correspondent, writing on behalf of himself and others, asks for 'a statement of the reasons why the Church discountenances cremation.' The subject has been debated in all the moods and tenses from the days of Julian the Apostate down to Erichsen. Since 1874 over three thousand books and pamphlets have tortured it from the sanitary, the legal, the economical, and the religious points of view. Siemens's and Gorini's furnaces undoubtedly minimised the sickening exhalations that arose from funeral pyres and from the old forms of crematorium. But the process is expensive, and the great majority of people regard the process of incineration as unsightly and repulsive. 'The legal objections to cremation—as in cases of poisoning, etc.—have never yet been satisfactorily answered. It has, moreover, yet to be shown that the revival of the old pagan practice is, on hygienic grounds, preferable to a proper grave-burial with perishable coffins, and the avoidance of such abuses as leaden caskets and such other hindrances to the antiseptic action of mother-earth. What is wanted is not an overthrow of the ancient system, but a reform in the direction of greater simplicity. The present abuses are partly intended to inflate the vanity of the living, but chiefly in the interests of the undertaker. They are not inherent to the system of earth-burial. Exceptional cases sometimes arise in which cremation is preferable to inhumation—as, for instance, in seasons of pestilence, or on battle-fields (as recently happened in Manchuria), when large numbers of fostering bodies corrupt the atmosphere. In such exceptional cases the Church not alone permits, but urges (as she did in the great plague at Milan) a departure from her ordinary rule and sanctions the use of fire or wholesale calcination in pits of quicklime in order to avert the spread of disease.'

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For the rest, the Church looks upon even a lifeless Christian body as something different in nature and destiny from the remains of a horse or a chimpanzee. It is, in her eyes, something sacred. It was once the temple of the Holy Ghost; it was washed with the waters of Baptism and anointed with the Holy Oils. It is not in every sense dead. Like Lazarus, it 'only sleepeth'—awaiting the wondrous hour of the resurrection. That doctrine is, of course, in no way impaired by cremation. The least instructed Catholic need not be told that the burned body is not thereby rendered less fit for its rising—identical as to substance, but (as St. Paul says) 'a spiritual body'—on the last day. From the Church's standpoint the chief objections to cremation are: (1) The canonical processes required regarding the mortal remains of her saints, some of which—as those of St. Teresa, St. Charles, and St. Catherine of Bologna—have been preserved in a wonderful way; (2) her practice of venerating their relics; (3) the fact that earth-burial has been accepted from the first dawn of our era as part and parcel of the most solemn and touching rites of the Christian faith; (4) the feeling that the bodies of our dead are treated with greatest respect when consigned to mother-earth with placid face to await their resurrection. Finally, (5) there is the fact that cremation is a pagan system of disposing of the dead; that it has been, since the days of Julian the Apostate, adopted by many as a public repudiation of belief in the resurrection and the future life. Such is the case with the atheist and Freemason sectaries of Continental Europe. It is chiefly for the last-mentioned reason that cremation was formally forbidden to Catholics by a decree of the Holy Office dated May 19, 1886. Curiously enough, a similar prohibition was issued to the Jews of Italy, about the same time, by the General Consistory of Rabbins at Turin. In the cir-