

# “A Servant when he Reigneth”

Chinese Servants in British Columbia, 1867-1924



Curated by Chris Willmore

Dedicated to

FLADE AN,

inspiring student  
and determined historian

*Preface to a public letter<sup>1</sup> about Chinese servants in British Columbia:*

“Three things make earth unquiet,  
And four she can not brook;  
The pious Agur counted them  
And put them in a book –  
These Four Tremendous Curses  
With which mankind is curst:  
But, a Servant when he Reigneth,  
Old Agur counted first.

A Handmaid that is Mistress  
We need not call upon;  
A Fool when he is full of Meat  
Will fall asleep anon.  
An Odious Woman married  
May bear a babe and mend –  
But a Servant when he Reigneth  
Is Confusion to the end.

His feet are swift to tumult,  
His hands are slow to toil;  
His ears are deaf to judgment,  
His lips are loud in broil:  
And, if his folly opens  
The unnecessary hells,  
A Servant when he Reigneth  
Throws the blame on some one else.

His vows are lightly spoken,  
His faith is hard to bind,  
His trust is easy broken,  
He fears his fellow-kind  
The nearest mob will move him  
To break the pledge he gave –  
Oh, a Servant when he Reigneth  
Is more than ever slave!”  
-Rudyard Kipling

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<sup>1</sup> Kipling, R. (1908). *Letters to the Family*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited. I've transcribed the final stanza, which appears to be a later addition, from Kipling, R. (1922). *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*. Garden City, New York and Toronto: Doubleday, Page & Company.

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Transcribed, annotated and curated by Chris Willmore

Victoria, B.C., Summer 2022

A Skeride Publication



This is an updated version of the work of the same title with  
ISBN 978-1-9992295-4-2

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*Cover Image: A Chinese doll from Victoria, B.C., c. 1920  
In the collection of, and photographed by, Chris Willmore.*

## Introduction: Domestic servants in British Columbia<sup>2</sup> (1902)

As reported by the *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*.

White domestic servants are very hard to obtain in British Columbia, and the Chinese largely fill these positions. In Victoria there are employed as cooks and domestic servants, 530; in Vancouver, 262; in New Westminster, 65, and in Nanaimo, 42. They are also employed almost exclusively in the lumber camps, on steamboats, and in the various towns and villages, and to a certain extent on the farm as cooks. For instance, in Kamloops there are 30 employed and in Rossland 120. In short, they are employed to a greater or lesser extent as cooks and domestics throughout the province, except in the towns of Phoenix and Sandon, where they are not employed and not permitted to come.

The wages range from \$10 to \$30 per month in private families, and from \$25 to \$45, and in some cases even higher, in hotels.

Their efficiency, it is said, largely depends upon their instruction when first engaged. It is difficult to get them to change or adopt new ways. Their service differs from that of the ordinary white servant girl in this: that in addition to doing all kinds of housework they frequently cut the wood, look after the garden, and do general choring about the place, such as is generally done by a man servant, and this feature of their service accounts for the fact of their employment in many cases.

The wages given above have application where they have received a certain amount of instruction. On their first arrival many work for even less.

While, as among whites, there are good, bad, and indifferent, yet the weight of evidence indicates that they give general satisfaction, and many of them are exceptionally good servants. We think it may be said that the larger number are found to be honest, obedient, diligent and sober. The care of children, however, is seldom entrusted to them.

### [TESTIMONY OF MAJOR DUPONT]

Probably the strongest certificate of character they received was from Major Dupont,<sup>3</sup> of Victoria, who said: I find them most faithful and most obedient. They are just as zealous to serve us and make us comfortable as on the first day I employed them. It is most unwarrantable to say they are not considerate and respectful to white women. I find them quite cleanly. There is lots to be said about his unsanitary condition in his own quarters. Chinese quarters with me are as tidy as bachelors'. I don't think they crowd out white girls. Any white girl can get a situation at from \$15 to \$20 a month. I never lock a door in my house. I never knew a Chinaman who took

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<sup>2</sup> From The Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration. (1902). *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*.

<sup>3</sup> "Dupont, Major Charles T., h 'Stadacona,' Cadboro Bay Rd." *Henderson's B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, his family employed two live-in male Chinese servants, Ah Yuen and Ah Fou. In 1901 the former earned \$280 and the latter, \$260, for 12 months of work. The honorific 'Ah,' mistaken for a name by the census taker, suggests they spoke a southern Chinese language, such as Cantonese.

my wines or liquors. I have been gone eighteen months at a time, and I would be most ungrateful if I did not bear testimony to their honesty, zeal and capacity as servants. I have had one for 24 years and one for ten years.”

[TESTIMONY OF SAMUEL M. ROBINS]

Samuel M. Robins,<sup>4</sup> general manager of the New Vancouver Coal Company, Nanaimo, said:

“I never employ Chinese as domestic servants. I have heard there is a difficulty to get white girls, but I have not experienced any. There is difficulty by certain persons and no difficulty whatever by others. It is a difficulty with the mistresses. I think the employment of Chinese as domestics more injurious than their employment in any other calling.

[TESTIMONY OF CLIVE PHILLIPS-WOLLEY]

Clive Phillips-Wolley,<sup>5</sup> of Victoria, who lived in China for many years, says:

“You cannot get the same deference from a Chinese servant to a white woman that a white servant will give, but a Chinese is always deferential to men.”

Q. “You know from observation of cases where the ladies of the house would not part with a Chinese on any account?”

A. “I believe there are cases of the kind.”

Q. “They bear a character for honesty?”

A. “I do not know of them bearing that character. I know of a Chinese servant who was in one employment for many years, and was trusted by his employers, and was found to have been a persistent thief during all the years he was in the service. He was so clever a thief that it was hard to discover. He could cover up his tracks better by far than any white man I have ever heard of, or read of. You want me to say whether Chinese remain a long time in one employment; the Chinese I know of the longest in one employment was one of the biggest thieves I have ever known or heard of in my life.”

[TESTIMONY OF GEORGE ALLEN KIRK]

George Allen Kirk,<sup>6</sup> Manufacturer, of Victoria, who came to the Province in 1885, said:

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<sup>4</sup> “Robins, Samuel M., J.P. Superintendent. New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Co., Ltd., Res. Cor. Esplanade & Fry.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901 According to the 1901 census, he lived alone with four servants, none of them Chinese. They were an English cook, a Canadian servant originally from Belgium, a Japanese servant, and a Canadian housekeeper originally from “New B. W.” All earned \$300 for 12 months of work in 1900, except for the Belgian-Canadian servant, who earned only \$180. Robins himself reported earning \$10,000 for 12 months of work in 1900. The Japanese servant is recorded as male, and the other servants as female.

<sup>5</sup> The 1901 census lists Clive Phillips-Wolley, barrister, as living in the Cowichan sub-district of the Vancouver census district. He does not show up in the 1901 *Henderson* directory, in either Cowichan, Vancouver or Victoria. According to the census, he lived with his wife, two daughters, and a Japanese cook named Yoshikawa, who was paid \$120 for 12 months of work.

<sup>6</sup> “Kirk, George A., of Turner, Beeton & Co., h 12 Scoresby.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. He appears in neither the 1891, 1901 nor 1911 censuses. Kirk is described as “the late George Allen Kirk” in his widow’s 1928 obituary.

Q. "Would it be possible, if there were no Chinese cooks here, to get cooking done in the private homes of the city?"

A. "Certainly not at present."

Q. "Is the Chinese a good or bad servant?"

A. "I think he is a good servant. I have found if you give them decent rooms to sleep in they are cleanly. If I could get white people as good, I would take them."

[TESTIMONY OF DANIEL McFADYEN]

Daniel McFadyen,<sup>7</sup> of Vancouver, contractor and carpenter, said:

"In connection with household help, we kept a lodging house in this town and we kept Chinese help from time to time. In regard to their being a desirable help, they are not. They must be taught first, and then they get so independent they will not do the work. I found them unsatisfactory. We gave from \$5 to \$10 a month. Then they want more and try to run things. I have seen some good servants. Servant girls are rather scarce, but I think more could be employed at present. I say if servant girls had been encouraged to come to the country there would be many more of them than there are. A \$10 Chinaman is not equal to a white girl. There are girls who would come from Nova Scotia. I am from there."

[TESTIMONY OF TIM KEE]

Tim Kee,<sup>8</sup> Chinese Tailor and employment agent, of Victoria, said:

Q. "Do you think white people could get along here in business without Chinese? How would white men get along without any Chinese in Victoria?"

A. "They would get along all right."

Q. "How would they cook?"

A. "They would get other cooks, white cooks. Suppose there were no Chinese here; white people would do all the cooking and washing."

[TESTIMONY OF LEE CHEONG]

Lee Cheong,<sup>9</sup> Chinese merchant, president of the Chinese Board of Trade of Victoria, says:

Q. "Do you think we would have no servants at all if there were no Chinese immigration?"

A. "Certainly [not]. If you had no Chinese here, you would have white servants."

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<sup>7</sup> I could not find him the 1901 *Directory*, either. While a number of B.C. McFadyens were listed in the 1901 census, there was no Daniel among them, and a "Neil McFaddyen," teamster, is originally from Ontario, not Nova Scotia. (That McFaddyen earned \$700 in 1900, and his household kept no servants.)

<sup>8</sup> "Tim Kee, emp agent, 23 Store." *Henderson's B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census he lived with his son and one male Chinese domestic, "Wong Kwun," who was paid \$240 for 12 months of work in 1900. Kee's employment office dates back to at least 1886: "Tim Kee, merchant tailor & tent maker, and employment office, has the best employment office in the city, and is prepared to furnish the best men for any branch of employment." EMPLOYMENT OFFICE [Ad.] (1886, May 12). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Listed as "Lee Cheeog" in the original. "Lee Cheong, of Tai Yueng [sic.] & Co., 135 Government". *Henderson's B.C. Directory*, 1901. He is listed in the 1901 census as a 48-year-old opium merchant. He lived with his wife, son, daughter, three (Chinese) lodgers and one female Chinese domestic servant, "Chu Gook". No details regarding income are recorded.

Q. "How do our people in eastern Canada, in Manitoba and other places, get along where there are no Chinese?"

A. "Your people would have servants to look after the houses. Some few years ago our people were not here, and you had servants then and you could have the same now."

[TESTIMONY OF W. JOHN TAYLOR]

W. John Taylor,<sup>10</sup> barrister-at-law, of Victoria, accounts for the difficulty of getting cooks by the presence of Chinese.

[TESTIMONY OF HENRY CROFT]

Henry Croft,<sup>11</sup> of Victoria, engaged in the lumber and mining industries, said:

Q. "Have you had any experience with Chinese as cooks?"

A. "I have had them in the house."

Q. "Are they good or poor cooks?"

A. "It depends on their training. Some of them I know are very bad cooks. I have had three Chinese cooks in one day and discharged the whole of them."

Q. "Have you had other Chinese cooks that were more satisfactory?"

A. "Yes, some stayed a little while. I would sooner have a white cook in a house myself, because I have been used to a white cook."

Q. "Can you get women in this country for domestic service?"

A. "You can get them but they are not at all plentiful."

Q. "Then you have to pay them a very high wage?"

A. "Oh, not at all. You pay them a reasonable wage and a white girl will stay with you for a long time and give you no trouble. It is hard to get a good white servant at certain times."

[TESTIMONY OF EDWARD MUSGRAVE]

Edward Musgrave<sup>12</sup> of Cowichan, Vancouver Island, said:

"I don't see where the supply of domestic servants is to come from except the Chinese. I have never found a servant equal to the Chinese. They will do as much as three English servants."

[TESTIMONY OF O. MEREDITH JONES]

Dr. O. Meredith Jones<sup>13</sup>, of Victoria, says:

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<sup>10</sup> Incorrectly listed as "John W. Taylor" in the original. "Taylor, William John K. C., of Ebert & Taylor, h 12 Park road." *Henderson's B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived with 17 other people, probably in a lodging house. These included five waiters and one bell boy, all English Canadian, and six Chinese cooks. It's unclear if these cooks worked, lodged or both at 12 Park Road. They earned \$150, \$180, \$240 (x2), \$300 and \$480 in 1900 for 12 months of work. Taylor himself did not report his income to the census taker.

<sup>11</sup> "Croft, Henry, mgr. the Lenora Mount Sicker, C. M. Co., Ltd., 2 View, res. Mount Adelaide, Esquimalt Road." *Henderson's B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census he lived with his wife, and no live-in servants.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Musgrave, of Cowichan, is listed as a 66-year-old farmer in the 1901 census. He lived with his wife, three children and one male Chinese domestic servant, "Ah Tai," who was paid \$300 for 12 months of work in 1900.

<sup>13</sup> "Jones, Owen Meredith, Physician and Surgeon. 81-83 Fort[.] Phone 244." *Henderson's B.C. Directory*, 1901. I could not find him in the 1901 census.

“I have heard it said people could not get on without Chinese domestics. I suppose people would be put to a little inconvenience at first. In the course of time, you could get the same comfort from white servants as Chinese give. It would be difficult at first. There has been no organized effort of getting white girls. I think if there was an organized effort to bring girls out there would be very little difficulty, for they could be got from eastern Canada. I should say England would be the best place. There are lots of women willing to go into domestic service. The girls here are not inclined to go into service. They prefer other positions for half the wages. They could get employment if they wished.

“The majority of white girls here are employed as nursemaids, and people have difficulty in getting girls as nursemaids. People won’t have Chinese attend to children. Where they have no nursemaids, the Chinaman does the housework and the lady of the house looks after the children.”

Q. “Is that conducive at all to home life?”

A. “No, I think not, but the fault in many cases lies with the employers. If they were to take the same interest in white girls as they do in the Chinese, and put the girls through a course of training in cooking, matters would be improved greatly, or girls could go into some cooking school, and it would be very good thing for them if they did know how to cook. If they were good cooks it would tend to make a good many homes happier. A good cook is very much sought after. They don’t like to go into any kind of work the Chinese do. They think it degrading.”

[TESTIMONY OF ELLIOTT S. ROWE]

The Rev. Elliott S. Rowe,<sup>14</sup> Methodist Minister of Victoria, said:

“The problem of domestic service is not confined to this province, but the presence of Chinese may aggravate the conditions here; I think better wages are paid here for domestic service than in places with which I am familiar; but those people who have Chinese servants have various opinions as to their work and desirability. I have had no experience in that line here; but the domestic servant problem will exist as long as the conditions affecting domestic labor are retained.

“I heard two medical gentlemen discussing the question this afternoon, and the views they expressed were entirely in accord with my own views. There was a time when medical nursing was looked upon as menial; but schools were established in connection with our various hospitals for the training of nurses, and now the ranks of medical nursing are filled with the finest of our young women. The question of work done in the kitchen and of work done in a hospital has a more intimate connection than many would suppose; it is just as honorable to keep a man out of the doctor’s hands by cooking food properly, as it is to care for him after he has got sick.

“Probably there would be less trouble in domestic service if such methods were adopted in domestic economy as have been adopted in the study of medical nursing. It would be well if there were established some institutions, as I believe have been

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<sup>14</sup> “Rowe, Elliott, S., pastor Metropolitan Methodist Church, h. 107 Quadra.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived with his wife, two sons, and one live-in Irish Canadian domestic servant, Amy A. Burchill, who was paid \$120 for 12 months of work in 1900. No information was given about the Reverend’s own income.

established in some parts of the United States, where degrees or certificates of efficiency would be granted to students, when the degree of Mistress of Domestic Science will be looked upon with as much pride as a degree from our schools where sick nurses are trained. Then girls will readily enter into domestic service in place of looking after situations in shops and offices; there will be institutions established for instruction in cookery and other domestic work, and the degree of Mistress of Domestic Science will be as much prized as that certifying efficiency in sick nursing. To my view that will be the solution of the domestic service question; then the rush for positions in shops and offices will be less than it is now, and the home and home life will be vastly improved.

“The presence of the Chinese domestic creates difficulty. My experience in reference to getting employment here for people anxious and willing to work is very different from other places I have been in.<sup>15</sup> I have not been called upon to seek employment for a girl here.<sup>16</sup> I used to conduct a small employment bureau in some of the places I was in. Under the Utopian conditions I have suggested, I think work could be obtained in the near future, but I think it might be difficult to obtain employment now.”

[TESTIMONY OF ALEXANDER G. McCANDLESS]

Alexander G. McCandless,<sup>17</sup> of Victoria, clothier, said:

“In regard to domestic servants, I think we can get along first rate even if there wasn’t a single Chinaman in the country. It is [the] mere fact of the Chinese being here that prevents white girls wanting to occupy these positions. I believe I could go east and could get good white girls to come here and work for \$15 and \$20 a month in domestic service were there no Chinese here; and with no Chinese here, were white girls offered the same wages as they now pay to Chinamen, there would not be the least difficulty in getting all the domestic servants we may require. I hold strong views on this question, as I have had reason to consider it, but I do not wish to weary the Commission by presenting them at length.”

[TESTIMONY OF A. R. MILNE]

A. R. Milne,<sup>18</sup> C.B., Collect of Customs at Victoria, said:

“I think the supply of Chinese domestics is equal to the demand. Domestic servants are always certain of employment. Good mistresses are always able to get good domestic servants; white girls, I mean. With a little thoughtfulness on the part of employers there would be enough of white domestic servants to fill all the demands. I think some ladies prefer to have Chinese as domestic servants, I suppose because they have got into their ways and have learned to do the work. They all come from

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<sup>15</sup> Rev. Rowe was active in Toronto in the late 1890s.

<sup>16</sup> Rev. Rowe’s domestic servant was 22 years old in 1901.

<sup>17</sup> “McCandless, Alex. G., of McCandless Bros., h 9 Queen’s ave. McCandless Bros., furnishings and clothing, 37 Johnson.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived with his wife and three children, and had no live-in servants.

<sup>18</sup> “Milne, Alex. Roland, C.M.G., Collector of Customs, Res. 17 Queen’s Avenue.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census he lived with his wife and three stepchildren. The household had no live-in servants.



the coolie class. Many of them, I find, are fairly intelligent, and they adhere strictly to their contracts. Mistresses are not at all considerate of the feelings, either physically or otherwise, of the girls who go into domestic service. The girls are driven to take other work because of the long hours and inconsideration on the part of their employers.”

[TESTIMONY OF ROBERT E. McKECHNIE]

Dr. Robert E. McKechnie,<sup>19</sup> of Nanaimo, said:

“I have two Chinamen in the house. One is moderately good and the other is poor. They demand fairly high wages. I employ them because of the impossibility of getting suitable white help. I think it is more difficult in Nanaimo than in Victoria, because you may say we are quite a distance from the center. We have to obtain white domestics from Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster, and some efforts have been made to obtain that help as far east as Montreal. Servants did not like to leave large cities to come to a coal mining town. The men of this town earn fairly good wages, and as soon as they are able to give their children a good education they do not care for their girls going out to domestic service. A large proportion of the girls under eighteen and nineteen are fitting themselves for better positions than domestic service, because of the Chinese being employed in that service. Very few girls are available from the white population here. It is very difficult to get white girls as domestic servants. I think there is a reason for it; very few white families come to the country, and girls do not care to go far from home or from the centers in the cities, and between the two we fall. There is a difficulty. The Chinese fill the gap to a certain extent, but we would be better with white people, and have the Chinese out of service altogether.”

[TESTIMONY OF JOHN MATHEWS]

John Mathews,<sup>20</sup> mine manager, Cumberland, said:

“We have Chinese as domestic servants here. There are no girls to get a supply from. There are few, if any, girls in domestic service here. The miners are quite able to keep their daughters without going out to domestic service. Hotels have Chinese and Japanese, principally Chinese. I know of only one girl employed here. Wages for a girl from fourteen to sixteen years of age [are] \$12 to \$15 a month, usually.”

[TESTIMONY OF BENJAMIN T. ROGERS]

Benjamin T. Rogers,<sup>21</sup> manager of the Sugar Refinery, Vancouver, says:

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<sup>19</sup> “McKechnie, [sic.] R. E., M.D., health officer, res. Prideaux”. *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census (where he is listed as Robert N.), Dr. McKechnie lived with his wife, son, brother, and two male live-in servants. One servant, 59-year-old “stable boy” James Parker, was English. The other servant, Sing Lee, who emigrated from China to Canada in 1898. No income information is available for the servants, but Dr. McKechnie reported \$3,000 income for 12 months of work in 1900.

<sup>20</sup> “Mathews, [sic.] John, asst. supt, W. C. Co.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census he lived with his wife, three children, and no live-in servants.

<sup>21</sup> “Rogers, Benjamin Tingley, mgr. Sugar Refinery, h. cor. Davie and Nicola.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived with his wife, four children, two nurses and two cooks. The nurses were English women. Mary Johns, 35, emigrated from England in 1894 and was paid \$240 for 12 months of work in 1900. Edith Ancock [sic.], 28, emigrated the year of the census,

“I think Chinese domestic servants are a perfect godsend to the country. I have had women cooks, much to my sorrow. I have two Chinese servants, and two white servants. I would not have white girls to take the place of Chinese, if they worked for nothing, if they wanted to work. The Chinese does not waste anything and the white cook will waste more than his salary is worth in a month. I would not favor exclusion because we need them as cooks. I pay one Chinese cook \$37 a month. I think there are enough Chinese in the province to-day for domestic purposes.”

[TESTIMONY OF RICHARD MARPOLE]

Richard Marpole,<sup>22</sup> superintendent of the Western Division of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Vancouver, says:

“I find Chinese far ahead of any servants I have had. I pay \$20 a month for girls as cooks. I am trying to get them now at that rate. I am satisfied with what I have. Naturally you would prefer to have a white girl cook when you have to pay a Chinaman from \$25 to \$35 a month, but they turned out to be very much like some of the white laborers coming out here; they took advantage of us. We employ Chinese cooks on the Kootenay boats, for a good reason: we cannot get white cooks. These are the only places where we employ them. I failed to get servants from the east, and there are others who have failed in the same way. I will never close the door against getting good servants here. If they are scarce in Toronto, how can we get them here/ I think probably the distance they have to come and the cost of coming here, three thousand miles, has something to do with the difficulty of getting white girls for domestic service.”

[TESTIMONY OF JOHANNES BUNTZEN]

Johannes Buntzen,<sup>23</sup> manager of the British Columbia Electric Railway Co., Vancouver, says:

“As to Chinese domestic servants I found one or two very good.”

[TESTIMONY OF BERNARD MACDONALD]

Bernard MacDonald,<sup>24</sup> manager of the British America Corporation and the LeRoy group, Rossland, says:

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1901, and was paid \$180 for what was reported as 12 months of work. The cooks were young men from China. “Wah” (no other name given), 22, emigrated from China in 1890 and was paid \$420 for 12 months of work. “Look”, 16, emigrated in 1899 and was paid \$120 for 12 months of work. Wah’s religion is listed as Methodist, and Look’s as Confucian.

<sup>22</sup> “Marpole, R., Gen. Supt. Pacific Division, C.P.R., h. 801 Hastings.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census he lived with his wife, three sons, and four domestic servants. Irish Canadian gardener Michael Sullivan (male, 36), was paid \$410 for 12 months of work. Irish Canadian Margaret Sullivan (female, 49), worked 12 months in 1900, but her income was not reported. Chinese cook “Yen” (male, 35) was paid \$300 for 12 months of work. Japanese servant “Honda” (male, 15) was paid \$120 for 12 months of work.

<sup>23</sup> “Buntzen, Johannes, gen. manager B. C. El. Ry. Co., Ltd., h. 1369 Pender.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census he lived with his wife and a Chinese cook named “Nom” (male, 18) who was paid the oddly specific sum of \$204 for 12 months of work. Buntzen himself reported income of \$4,000 in 1900.

<sup>24</sup> “MacDonald, Bernard, general manager Rossland Great Western Mines Ltd., res. Nickel Plate Flat.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census (where he is listed as “McDonald”), he lived with his wife, 6 children and no live-in servants.

“We employ one Chinese as janitor in Rossland. We have a boarding house. The cooks employed there are whites, both cooks and waiters. I think Chinese necessary as domestic servants. My own personal experience is, they are more reliable as domestics and the consensus of opinion here among my acquaintances is that they are almost indispensable. It would appear white girls cannot be got. I know of Chinese being sent to Ontario to take domestic service there. In some cases it would keep families out, and other cases where families would come in, they would do their own service. There is a sufficient number of Chinese to give all the servants that are required. \$20 to \$30 a month are paid to Chinese. Very few girls are employed here. Chinese are more desirable here than Japanese.”

[TESTIMONY OF EDMUND B. KIRBY]

Edmund B. Kirby,<sup>25</sup> manager of the War Eagle and Centre Star Mines, Rossland, says:

“There are enough Chinamen throughout the west to provide domestic service and do laundry work, and, in short, work of the class that white labor is reluctant to undertake, and up to that point I don’t think they do any harm and are a benefit, and I find in private conversation that is the opinion of men all through the west, the reason being that there is a gap there for which there is no supply of white labor. The caste prejudice against domestic service is each year becoming stronger, and white girls seem to be more reluctant to undertake that class of work.”

[TESTIMONY OF SMITH CURTIS]

Smith Curtis,<sup>26</sup> M.L.A., Rossland, barrister, for the last two years engaged in mining, says:

“Take the case of domestic servants. Were there no Chinese available I have no doubt that there would be a fair supply of white domestic servants, were they paid the necessary wages. Give servant girls here the same wages given to Chinese and exclude Chinese from this service altogether, so that it will not be looked upon as a menial employment, as it is at present, from them being engaged in it, and a fair supply of girls would, I believe, come into the country. I lived fourteen years in Manitoba and we had more or less difficulty in getting servants, yet we pulled through, and British Columbia could do the same if Chinese were out of it. If I were in the British Columbia government and the Chinese were shut out, I would undertake to get servant girls in the country. Girls don’t look forward to domestic service where orientals [sic.] do that service. They look upon it as a more menial work than they otherwise would. If more servant girls here were married off it would greatly benefit the country.”

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<sup>25</sup> “Kirby, Edmund B., manager War Eagle & Centre Star Mines.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived in a lodging-house which kept no live-in servants. The lodgers were mostly engineers of Scotch, English and U.S. origin.

<sup>26</sup> “Curtis, Smith, M. P. P., Mining Operator, Res. Thompson ave., near Cliff.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived with his wife and two children, and kept no live-in servants.

[TESTIMONY OF HENRY E. CROASDAILE]

Henry E. [Croasdaile],<sup>27</sup> of Nelson, former manager of the Hall Mine sand Smelter, says:

“In domestic service the Chinese do not come in conflict in any way with the laboring classes here. I am quite willing to admit the majority of people here are opposed to employing Chinese, but I think they are made up of those who never employ Chinese, and never found any benefit from their service. If you took the employers I think you would find the majority in favor of keeping the restriction as at present. There is no doubt to anyone who knows the country and the scale of wages paid [that] if you had to depend on white women to do the drudgery, they would not do it at all, or only for very high remuneration, and if immigration was completely stopped, it follows that with an increasing population the number of Chinese servants must become less than the demand.

“I should say their presence has indirectly assisted development in a way: that is to say, people have come into the country and have become interested in it, who would not come if they had not Chinese servants, and the ordinary domestic comfort has been favored by the Chinese. They contribute to the comfort of the whites who are here. It is not because of the Chinese being here that girls cannot get employment; girls are not available.”

[TESTIMONY OF FONG WING CHONG]

Fong Wing Chong<sup>28</sup> says:

“Have resided in Nelson six years: twenty-one years in British Columbia; am a merchant, married, wife in China. I went home and married and left her there seven years ago; one child; not been back since. There are about 325 Chinamen in Nelson – 50 cooks and servants, 20 in laundries, 40 working for white men, 50 gardeners. The rest have nothing to do – 150; half I know have nothing to do.”

[TESTIMONY OF GUSTAVE A. CARLSON]

Gustave A. Carlson,<sup>29</sup> Mayor of Kaslo, says:

“I believe if we did not have the Chinese here we could have white servant girls, which would be much better. There is no encouragement now for them to come to this section. As it is there are only a few here, and they get lonesome.” [...]

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<sup>27</sup> Miss-spelled as “Creasdale” in the original. “Croasdaile, Henry Edward, mine broker and com. Agt., Victoria, nr. Stanley; res. Observatory.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, he lived with his wife and daughter, and kept no live-in servants.

<sup>28</sup> “Kwong Wing Chong, merchant”. *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. According to the 1901 census, where he is listed as “Kong Wing Chong,” he emigrated to Canada in 1889, was a lodger in a Chinese boarding house and had earned \$1,000 as a merchant in 1900. Most of the 18 other lodgers were cooks and laundrymen earning from \$100 to \$200 a year.

<sup>29</sup> “Carlson, Gustaf A., contractor, manager Valpariso [sic.] Mining Co., Ltd., and Mayor. Kaslo, Front street; res. 8th street.” *Henderson’s B.C. Directory*, 1901. I was not able to positively identify him in the census. The closest match to his name was “Gust. A. Carlson,” a gold miner who lodged at a boarding house.

## SUMMARY

The above fairly indicates the different views expressed on this subject. A number of witnesses stated that girls refused to take service where Chinese are employed, and doubtless there is some force in this.<sup>30</sup>

Many complain that after obtaining white servants at great expense and with difficulty, sometimes from the eastern provinces, and sometimes from the Old Country, they marry within a very short time, and after trying to supply their places with white servants are compelled to engage the Chinamen. The fact that Chinese servants are always to be had when wanted, and that white servants are difficult to obtain, accounts partly for the fact that Chinese are chiefly employed, although white servants would be preferred by many.

While opinions differ, it may be at once conceded that under present conditions it is exceedingly difficult to obtain white servants, and a large proportion of those who employ domestic servants are dependent upon the Chinese for a supply.

The cause of this abnormal scarcity of white domestic servants is not far to seek. The callings requiring unskilled laborers are largely filled by Chinese and Japanese, who have thus taken the places of fathers of families from which, under normal conditions, domestic servants would be drawn.

In Victoria, for instance, there are 3,000 Chinese engaged in various callings, or unemployed: 198 market gardeners, 48 sawmill hands, 886 cannerymen, 197 laundrymen, and over 800 laborers both employed and unemployed. Can it be doubted that if these positions were filled with white men, a large proportion of whom might be expected to have families, the difficulty of obtaining white servants would be greatly minimized? If callings usually filled by white men, with families from which domestic servants are usually supplied, are occupied by Chinese, is it surprising that there is a great scarcity of domestic servants? And how can it be expected to be otherwise, until these conditions are changed? This applies with greater or less force throughout the province.

In Nanaimo, for instance, with a Chinese population of over 500, only 42 are employed as domestic servants and cooks. In New Westminster, with a Chinese population of over 700, 65 only are cooks and domestic servants; and in Vancouver, where the Chinese number over 2,000, only 262 are so employed. The Chinese both create and fill the want. [...]

It is not suggested here that if there were no Chinese or Japanese in British Columbia there would be no difficulty in obtaining domestic servants, but it is believed that if the positions now occupied by Chinese were filled with white men, the conditions would be much the same as in the east. At present there seems to be a surplus of both Chinese and Japanese, some of whom doubtless will take to domestic service, and should no more Chinese come into the country, with the present supply already there, this question, like others, will adjust itself to the new conditions.

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<sup>30</sup> The reader may wish to keep in mind that no women or servants were interviewed.

## Life, Work and Public Perception

### “A haunted house”<sup>31</sup> (1867)

**One of the first mentions in the press of a Chinese servant in British Columbia regards an allegedly haunted house. The account is typical in referring to a male Chinese person as “John,” or “John Chinaman,” and writing parts of the servant’s speech phonetically.**

A dwelling-house in the suburbs [of Victoria] has the reputation of being haunted. The Chinese servant reports that he has heard strange noises, footsteps, groans and knockings, and that on one occasion a lighted candle which he held in his hand was blown out by some invisible agency. John’s pigtail has stood on end every since the light was put out, and when he leaves the house for an errand he sets his hat on the point of the tail instead of on his head. A gentleman occupying the house scoots the idea of the place being haunted; but John declares that a personage he dignifies with the title of the “debbil” has taken possession of the kitchen, at least. We understand that a young gentleman of this city, who is noted for his courage, offers to stay one night in the house, and pledges himself that if the spirit makes his appearance he will “lay” it with “a blow between the eyes.”

### “Works hard and works steadily”<sup>32</sup> (1877)

John Chinaman is a large element in the population [of Victoria]. One thousand was the number of Chinamen given to me by a trustworthy informant; about the same number or perhaps a few more than the Indians who make this neighborhood their home.

John is a very active and useful member of society here. He works hard and works steadily. [...] John is employed in all capacities, save that of ladies’ maid, by the inhabitants of Victoria. He is a good cook, he makes a capital housemaid, [and] he is docile and obliging. At times he is a little trying, but until angels take to ministering in domestic service “the missuses” must remain subject to trials. Besides, the graceful solution of household difficulties is one of the highest triumphs of a gentlewoman, and who would deprive the sweeter sex of a legitimate field of womanly occupation at the risk of driving them into some new branch of manly art?

I heard three ladies discussing “John” one day, and learned to appreciate their trouble. In the one case my friend complained that “Sing” had contracted a friendship with another Chinaman, who came to the house to gamble with “Sing” when the latter ought to be cooking the dinner. The consequences in some cases had been frightful, and repeated warnings had been in vain. At last she turned the friend out of doors, and taking “Sing” by the shoulders she shook him as hard as she could, threatening

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<sup>31</sup> From A HAUNTED HOUSE. (1867, October 11). *The British Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> From St. John, M. (1877). *The sea of mountains: an account of Lord Dufferin’s tour through British Columbia in 1876*. London: Hurst and Blackett. Written by Molyneux St. John (1838 – 1904).

at the same time [that] on the next occasion she would beat him. At her hands the shaking and the beating were in themselves mere pleasantries, but “Sing’s” dignity was wounded, and he mournfully remarked, “Suppose you catch new cook. My no can stay.”

“Ah!” sighed another lady, “I couldn’t do that with ‘Yop’. He’s so big. And besides, the only fault he has is that he won’t let me go into the kitchen at all, and won’t let me have any dinner until my husband comes home, which on mail nights is very uncertain. Sometimes we get dreadfully hungry, but ‘Yop’ is inexorable.”

“My little wretch is always doing something he ought not to do,” said a third, a young unmarried lady; “I dare not have any poultry in the house, because he will insist upon plucking the fowls alive. My little sister told us about it at dinner the last time we had fowls, and it entirely prevented anyone from eating any more dinner. I felt as if I had been eating someone I had helped to murder. Yesterday when I went into the kitchen I found him making a skewer red hot, to run through a mouse which he had caught in the trap, and so as he is only a boy I boxed his ears.”

“What did he say to that?” I asked.

“He swore at me in bad French.”

“And you.”

“Oh!” replied my young friend, as the tinge of the rose mounted in her cheek, “I swore back at him, and then he got white with horror at finding I had understood him.”

### “A good machine”<sup>33</sup> (1878)

**The press occasionally worried that hiring Chinese servants in preference to white ones would have a less than positive effect on morality<sup>34</sup>.**

We do not say that a household should tolerate bad cooking, waste in the kitchen or badly washed clothes from the hands of a white servant, when a Chinese cook or laundryman will perform those duties to perfection. No. What we do say – what we have always asserted – is that where a white servant can furnish as good service as a Chinese servant, it is the duty of a civilized household to employ the white servant in preference to the Chinese – even at an additional expense in the way of wages. The trained Chinese servant is a good machine. He comes and goes at call. He fetches, carries and toils and – draws his pay. There *his* responsibility ends; and as the bond of sympathy between him and his employer is a monetary one, the latter feels that no moral responsibility attaches to him respecting his servant. But is the employer content to have about him continually mere machines, the motive power of

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<sup>33</sup> From NOW IS THE TIME. (1878, September 25). *Daily Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> This view was not universal: “This morning before the Chinese Commission, Dr. Helmcken was examined at some length. [...] He did not know of any cases in which Chinese servants had corrupted children. He knew that they were very fond of children. The same results did not follow their employment as did that of the employment of negroes in the south. He would say that the country had been benefitted by the influx of Chinese. [...] They had been very useful as domestic servants.” THE CHINESE COMMISSION. (1884, August 14). *Victoria Times*, p. 2.

whose existence he is utterly ignorant of? What hold has he upon them? What guard against them? What guarantee for virtue or preservation from vice? Vice which must affect him or his sometimes in the very closest way. Nothing is more remarkable than the foolhardiness with which some families put themselves at the mercy of Chinese servants, of whose antecedents they know nothing, or know only that they are capable of doing the work allotted to them.

**“You can do whatever you like with them”<sup>35</sup> (1884)**

**This article is notable in part for its details on the desire for education by Chinese immigrants (including servants).**

There being a great crowd of Chinese employed here, this circumstance has on several occasions given rise to some comical accidents in connection with the public schools. These people, contributing their quota to the school fund, think they have a right, irrespective of their age, to the full benefit of our educational system. Accordingly they have frequently applied for admission to the schools; for a month or two they ceased to trouble the teachers, but at one time their importunities were most vexatious. They would come to the school, bringing books<sup>36</sup> and slates, as if determined to force admittance, and were with difficulty got rid of on the ground that being above the school age, they were no longer entitled to education.

It may be asked, why, if they are desirous of learning, they do not form a class and pay a teacher. The explanation probably is, that these applicants are laboring Chinese who have not been long in the country, and have not yet emerged from slavery; their earnings are, no doubt, appropriated by the Chinese companies, who supply them as servants to their different employers.

This “pursuit of knowledge under difficulties” by the Mongolians may be very comical, but it suggests comparisons by no means flattering to our own race. How many British workmen are there, who, if they went to reside in a foreign country, like the Chinese, would seriously attempt to master the language? I doubt if there are half a dozen in the whole province. As we are always congratulating ourselves on being the superior race, it is well to notice this; it may tend to moderate our conceit.

But if these Celestials, battering in vain at the gates of knowledge, form a grotesque picture, the indignation of some of the white residents at the proposed invasion was even more ludicrous. According to them, the hitherto immaculate morals of this district were about to be irretrievably ruined; the Chinese would teach the children the most horrid vices, etc., etc.

Now, the Chinese are almost universally employed as domestic servants. Throughout this province the first step to respectability seems to be to hire a

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<sup>35</sup> From OBSERVER. (1884, May 22). The Chinese Question. *Daily Colonist*, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> “Officer Grant yesterday afternoon arrested the Chinese servant of Mrs. Solomon, Douglas Street, on a charge of purloining silver spoons, etc. On his being searched in Chinatown several of the children’s school books were found, but no silverware.” CHINESE THIEF. (1885, August 20). *Colonist*, p. 2.



Chinaman. In domestic service they live in intimate association with the families; yet there is no hesitancy, no fear felt or expressed that their depraved morals will corrupt the children. How, then, can it be seriously supposed that they can contaminate the school-children by merely sitting in the same public room with them two or three hours a day?

There is no evidence that the Chinese are more immoral than the Caucasian race. Their immorality is obviously inferred from the unnatural state in which they exist in this country. Living, as they do, all huddled together, without families, it is assumed that they must in some respects be depraved. If they are, on whom rests the responsibility? Evidently the wealthy and middle classes of this coast who have indirectly forced them into this condition are alone responsible.

Some slave dealer at Canton buys a Chinaman for so many years, who then perhaps sells him at an advanced price to another merchant of the same class. By him, the slave is shipped to a Chinese company on the Pacific coast, who finally hire him out to white employers.

It has been abundantly shown that the most of the laboring Chinese are brought to America on such terms; yet the people, who used to lift up their hands in horror at the slave trade, have no hesitation in accepting help that has been produced for them in this way.

Fortunately there are not many Chinese children in this country, nor are there likely to be, considering the manner in which the Chinese are brought here. If there was, I think our ferocious anti-Chinese legislators would be inclined to treat them somewhat after King Herod's fashion. But, if the Chinese are of proper age, they have manifestly a perfect right to public education.

The objection on account of their vicious habits, I take to be utterly insincere. The real reason of our repugnance to admitting them appears to be that we are accustomed to regard them as an inferior and degraded race, and it is like putting them on an equality with us to allow them to be educated with our own children.

There is this comfort for the Chinese. If our contemptuous dislike is rather prejudicial to those who desire education, our habit of regarding them as a servile race is highly advantageous to the immense majority, who simply want employment. It is not so much, I am convinced, on account of their cheapness that the Chinese are preferred, as because they display certain characteristics of slaves. They are more patient under affronts, less irritable, [and] less prompt to resist injustice and oppression than the white race. These traits secure them the preference in every employment of which they are capable.

The ladies sometimes express themselves on this subject with charming frankness. One of them told me she preferred the Chinese servants "because you can do whatever you like with them;" that is to say, whenever she felt particularly ill-tempered (which I suppose was very often), here was a non-combatant in the person of her Chinaman, who could be slapped, kicked, cuffed and otherwise maltreated without fear of unpleasant consequences. In this respect the Mongolians are peculiarly useful. They serve as lightning conductors to divert this domestic

electricity, the stored-up wrath of these excitable dames from more sensitive objects – from their own families whose happiness is thereby largely increased.

### **“Mere children”<sup>37</sup> (1884)**

**Some of the Chinese servants hired were very young.**

It is astonishing what poor service a Victoria housekeeper has to put up with. They are wholly at the mercy of Chinese servants, and of these very few are efficient. The majority of those to be had are mere children, some of them not able to speak a word of English and all of them requiring a great deal of teaching and watching.

### **“Thoroughly trustworthy”<sup>38</sup> (1884)**

Mr. Jones took us to his house [in Victoria] for dinner. We found that the Chinaman who waited at table was also cook; he cooked and served our dinner at the same time, and that without any help. Upon inquiry we were told that this man “runs” the whole of the lower part of the house, doing all the family’s washing! His wages are £75 per annum. I caught his eye after he had placed a dish of curry and rice on the table, with the manufacture of which he seemed much pleased, probably on account of his own partiality for rice. The Lieutenant-Governor had told us he had to give his “Chinaman” cook £100 a year, and an underling to help in the kitchen. The general opinion here is that it would be impossible to get on without Chinese servants, and that, if left alone to do their work, they are thoroughly trustworthy.

### **“White immigration has been assisted by it”<sup>39</sup> (1885)**

**The Commission referred to is the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration.**

*Synopsis of the opinions of Hon. Mr. Justice Crease, as published in the Commissioners’ Report. [...]*

Instead of being retarded by Chinese immigration, I am fully persuaded that white immigration has been assisted by it. I know of retired officers and persons of settled incomes who would not have thought of coming here had they not known that Chinese servants could be had here, though very indifferent compared with those one can obtain in China itself.

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<sup>37</sup> From WHAT WE WANT. (1884, July 26). *Daily Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> From Barneby, W. H. (1884). *Life and labour in the far, far West*. London: Cassell & Company. Written by William Henry Barneby (1843 – 1914).

<sup>39</sup> From THE CHINESE QUESTION. (1885, March 14). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 2.

## Hing, the Chinese Servant<sup>40</sup> (1885)

**British Columbians were known for valuing Chinese servants. This story is a rare, detailed look at one such individual. Hing worked for a family in Victoria.**

Twenty dollars a month are the average wages given to a good Chinaman who can cook fairly well and undertake washing. First-rate cooks get as much as 30 and 35 dollars a month; while boys can be had from five dollars a month upwards, according to their age and experience. They are usually very neat and clean in their persons and attach a good deal of importance to their appearance. Before Hing goes outside the house to clean the windows a fresh apron has to be tied on, and his hat is carefully brushed and pulled into as good a shape as possible. Hing had a little outfit provided for him by the “cousin” who brought him from China; and by and by he is to repay the money advanced for this, as well as for the journey from Hongkong. His working costume consisted of blue cotton trousers, which, after every washing, grew a shade lighter in color, and soon became perfectly white at the knees, a blue and white check shirt, and a short Holland apron or bib. As winter approached Hing began to talk of the “insides” he was going to buy for himself. He had several times asked for my husband’s “insides” to wash; so I understood it was the purchase of some flannel underwear he was contemplating. One day he appeared in his winter coat, which was made of a dark blue cotton cloth, but had several layers of cotton wool between it and the glazed lining. This quilted blouse stood out from his figure all round, and made him look very much like an animated tea cozy. He told me his mother had made it, and pointed out with pride the gilt buttons and the pockets, out of which rolled the usual boy’s collection of worthless odds and ends.

Hing comes from Southern China, and when the first snow of the season began to fall in early December, he ran into the dining room in great excitement to ask, “What do you call him?” Ice, too, was a great wonder to him. The water had frozen in a washing tub, in which some clothes had been put to steep, and Hing attacked this ice with a knife as intrepidly as Don Quixote rode at the windmills. Afterwards, he amused himself with making a set of crystal dishes by freezing water in plates and saucers. By this time he had made such rapid strides in knowledge that he placed the plates, etc., for one minute on the stove before turning the ice molds on to the kitchen table.

Nothing in the house interested Hing so much as a travelling clock that stood on our dining-room mantelpiece. Whenever he was in the room his eyes would wander from the work he was doing and fix themselves on the clock, and “What time?” was his constant inquiry until he had learnt to answer the question for himself. One night we forgot to wind up this clock, and the next morning Hing came to us in great dismay to say that the clock did not “savvy<sup>41</sup> talk.”

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<sup>40</sup> From Victoria in English Eyes. (1885, June 17). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> From the French *savoir*, ‘to know’. This word was often used by non-Chinese writers of the time when setting down stereotyped English as spoken by Chinese people.

The Victoria ladies are in the habit of giving frequent lunch parties among themselves, but Hing expressed his unqualified disapproval of such entertainments the first time I told him I had invited some ladies to “eat at my house,” and his opinion has never altered. “Too much woman talk, no good,” is his verdict. On the other hand he is delighted if men come to dinner, and the younger, and taller, and smoother-faced they are the greater is his admiration for them. But since “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery,” he must also admire one or two of the girls who visit at our house. One day I went into the kitchen and found him standing with his left hand placed flat on the table, while with a brush in his right hand he was scrubbing it with tremendous energy. “I no savvy what for,” he said when I went in. “My hand clean. I rub and scrub ten minutes, and it no more white; no more all the same Miss ——’s hand. I no savvy what for?”

John is the name given to a Chinaman until his real name is known. These names are sometimes very odd. I have known a Wing and a Boo; and a friend of mine had first a Wy and then a Not. When she was engaging the third boy, and asked his name, he referred her to the friend that had accompanied and introduced him. “He knows.” “His name is Snoozer,” said the interpreter. “Oh!” said my friend, “but I cannot call him by such a name as that. What is your real name?” “Taw,” said the boy, “but me like Snoozer.”

Such servants as these introduce a novel element into housekeeping and home life. The widest difference of opinion exists as to their merits, and one hears the most contradictory statements about them. Their collective appearance is certainly not prepossessing; and after walking through the Chinese quarter of the town, and inhaling the various odors peculiar to that district, the thought that we should be obliged to take one of them into our house was very repugnant to us. Individually they are not so repellant; and I must admit that the dozen China men with whom I have had business to do contrast favorably with white men of the same class. Towards a boy more kindly feeling is impossible, and daily intercourse for nine or ten months has caused a real attachment to spring up between Hing and us.

There are ten merchants in Victoria who pay \$500 (£100) a year for a license to import opium. A boy like Hing, however, only indulges in a mild cigar now and then, when he has grouse<sup>42</sup> to pluck or work to do which offends his nostrils.

The Chinese merchants are not the only ones who are taxed. Travelers from the eastern cities, Quebec, Montreal and Toronto, have to pay a heavy tax for liberty to sell here, the theory being that, having no warehouses, they compete with those who have large establishments in the city to keep up. This tax is not peculiar to Victoria. It is exacted in most American towns. We first heard of it in Savannah.

Society in Victoria is thoroughly English in tone, although, owing to the early settlement of the country by the Hudson Bay Company, the Scotch element is very strong. But at a dinner party or ball in a Victoria house one is only recalled to the remembrance that one is far away from England by the presence of the white robed

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<sup>42</sup> “In the autumn great quantities of game are brought into Victoria by the Indians, principally grouse and snipe and wild ducks and geese.” VICTORIA AS SEEN BY A VISITOR. (1885, June 12). *Daily British Colonist*, p. 1.

and calm, impassive Celestials. On dress occasions the blue working shirt is exchanged for a white, well-starched blouse, with wide hanging sleeves. At Government House alone is it possible to mistake the butler for a guest.

### Hing Celebrates the Chinese New Year<sup>43</sup> (1885)

For the next few days all Victoria will be *servantless*<sup>44</sup> – if there is such a word. Hing went off about 10 o'clock this morning, turning back at the gate to give my husband his last directions about the winding up of the kitchen clock and the 'little wood' which had to be cut for to-morrow's fires. The Chinese are all busy celebrating their New Year, and the festivities extend over several days, during which time they entertain their friends<sup>45</sup>, give presents all round, and fire off crackers<sup>46</sup> whenever they are allowed.

Yesterday morning, to our intense astonishment, Hing presented Mr. ——— and me with large crimson silk handkerchiefs and with a dish of Chinese sweetmeats. He blushed all over with shyness and embarrassment as he placed the parcels beside our plates. It was a curious state of things, to be *receiving* instead of *giving* presents to a servant. He does in words recognize me as his "boss," but his footing is that of an independent power and our communications resemble those which might pass between two sovereigns. The handkerchiefs cost a dollar a piece. Mr. ———'s is a plain silk, but mine has embossed flowers on it, because, as Hing explained, I am a woman! Of course we are sorry that the little fellow should have spent so much of his money upon us, and it was very difficult to know how to make it up to him, for a gift of money would have insulted him – he is a proud monkey! However, an idea occurred to me, and to-day I told him that, as he was not going to "eat" at our house for three days, it was only fair that I should pay for his meals elsewhere. After a little hesitation he acquiesced in this arrangement.

It is the custom here to speak of the Chinese as if they were the scum and refuse of the earth. But the dozen Chinamen with whom I have had any dealings compare very favorably with white men of the same class. I do not know whether

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<sup>43</sup> From AN INSIDE VIEW. (1885, March 18). *Daily Colonist*, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> "The majority of the stores are closed, and BUSINESS SUSPENDED for at least two or three days. Business men are too busy making their New Year calls to attend to the call of the occasional customer. Every Chinese gentleman is supposed to call on New Year's Day." "KUNG HAE FAT TSOI." (1885, February 14). *Daily Colonist*, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> "As soon as he enters he is received, not by the ladies, but by the young men of the house, and immediately commences a series of ceremonies. [...] After these ceremonies and wishes are over, the caller is politely asked to be seated, [...] and then sweet-meats and melon seeds [...] are served, accompanied by DAINTY LITTLE CUPS OF TEA of the most delicious flavor. [...] Then follows a short conversation which must be on the most lucky topics of the day, at the end of which the caller takes his leave with a polite bow and a "tsing, tsing" – "good-bye, good-bye," to repeat the ceremonies next door." *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> "Another very strong circumstance showing that something extraordinary is happening in Chinatown is the fact that the BURNING OF FIRE CRACKERS is most freely indulged in. The Chinese have an idea that the sending off of a string of fire crackers has the sure effect of driving away all evil spirits and influences, and at the same time of preparing the place for the good spirits." *Ibid.*

Hing is an exceptional boy or not, but he is a thoroughly good boy – full of fun and humor, and very provoking at times, but honest and truthful, and as sharp as a needle. A little while ago he made me a serious offer of two dollars a month if I would teach him for an hour every evening.

### **“Why don’t you stick up for them?”<sup>47</sup> (1886)**

In public you hear on all sides that “the Chinese must go.” Public men denounce them, the laboring man drives them out, governments tax them as they do foreign cattle or goods, and regulate them, so far as they can be regulated. John seems to have every man’s hand raised against him, and you would imagine he hadn’t the ghost of a show in this free America of ours against all such opposition. That is how it reads on the outside. But there is another side to the question. I interviewed several gentlemen on the question, and they said that Chinese servants were far superior to those of home manufacture. “Why,” said one, “my man gets up in the morning, lights the fires, gets breakfast, sweeps out the house, makes up the beds, tends on the doors, runs errands – in fact, does everything. I pay him \$18 per month, and I wouldn’t trade him off for a dozen white servants.”

“Don’t they ever leave you?”

“Once they get attached they do not, and if one wants to get away on a spree or for a holiday he always puts a reliable person in his place.”

“As business men, how are they?”

“They are sharp and shrewd, but as honest as the average white man.”

“But they have filthy habits?” I said.

“So have some whites. As a rule, however, the Chinese are clean.”

“Well, why don’t you stick up for them?”

“Because public opinion is against them.”

#### AT VANCOUVER

one Sunday evening a Chinaman spoke to a leading real estate dealer about buying a lot. After the conversation was over, this gentleman said to me: “There is an honest and hard working man if ever there was one. He wants to buy a lot from me, but I won’t sell him one.” “Why not?” I innocently enquired. “Because we don’t want them here, and have agreed not to sell them lands.” “But you would sell lots to some of those infernal anarchists who assassinated seven men in Chicago, and you would sell to a socialist, to a Fenian cut-throat, wouldn’t you?” And he admitted that he would, and he couldn’t convince any unbiased man that one of the class was preferable to even a heathen Chinese.

It is a fact – it might also be mentioned – that without the Chinese the people of Vancouver and other points of British Columbia would have gone mighty short of vegetables this year, for they are the only ones that raise enough to sell. I spoke to others, and they said that while publicly they were forced to be “agin” the Chinese,

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<sup>47</sup> From Hamm, G. H. (1886, October 13). CHINESE IN VICTORIA. *The Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1. Written by George Henry Hamm (1847 – 1926).

they privately believed that in small quantities they would be a valuable acquisition to any country. The only trouble was they didn't come in small numbers.

### **An anti-Chinese servant editorial<sup>48</sup> (1887)**

**The claims made in this editorial are in stark contrast to the brief accounts of incidents from Hing's life, above.**

Housekeepers bewail their unfortunate fate in not having the benefit of trained servants – of a class that are servants by inheritance and have no aspirations to be anything else. When the meek-appearing Chinese came among us, silent and docile, his appearance was hailed as a relief. The harassed housekeeper said not to herself, but openly, that a race so servile at home, so clearly divided into classes, and so patient through a long inheritance of drudgery, would ultimately make the best servants in the world.

While there is no escape from the class conditions in China, the Chinese are quick to learn that they are not so bound down in this country. They see the opportunities offered to their countrymen, and soon cease to regard domestic service as a permanent occupation. The restraints of despotism removed, they are in one sense at liberty to do as they will, without the mental and moral discipline which, in a measure, restrains the passions of a corresponding class of the Caucasian race.

It is pretty clear that the average Chinaman has little or no moral sense. He may have superstitious fear, but has little of the sense of responsibility which regulates conduct from an individual standpoint.

As a rule they have no real affection for members of another race. A Chinese boy brought up in an English family and treated with the consideration most English people have for their own servants, does not appear to become attached to the family. He shows none of the devotion of other races in subordinate positions. The colored servant is invariably attached to a family in which he lives and is kindly treated. Their devotion has often reached the point of self-sacrifice. Indians have sometimes shown genuine attachment to a white family. If there are any instances of similar devotion on the part of Chinese, they are rare. On the other hand, the murders and robberies that Chinese domestics have planned and executed on their employers and benefactors warrant the conclusion that they are deficient in the qualities of heart which good servants should possess.

### **“Sunday work”<sup>49</sup> (1888)**

An amusing incident of the impressions made upon the Chinese mind by Christian teachings may be gathered from the following. A well-known clergyman employed a China boy to help in the kitchen, and Sunday being the former's heaviest day of labor, there was naturally plenty of work on that day in the culinary

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<sup>48</sup> From CHINESE SERVANTS. (1887, April 21). *Daily Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> From Too Muchee Sunday Work. (1888, December 29). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 4.

department. It was the first Sunday the Celestial had been in the house, and after the dishes had been cleared and cleansed from the afternoon dinner, Ah Got went over to Chinatown, but failed to return. He had learned a little English and writing in the mission school, and left the following note on the kitchen table: "Too much Sunday work no good. I go. Lamb of God. China Boy." He had appropriated the liberal meaning of the third commandment.

### "Adrift in the straits"<sup>50</sup> (1889)

**The reader should keep in mind that this article was the subject of a libel suit, reported on below.**

On Tuesday afternoon, one of the Indians at Foul Bay saw something floating on the water which in the distance seemed but a black speck rising and falling with the swell. His curiosity was excited, and he started in his canoe to see what the object might be. As he came nearer its outlines became more distinct, and he finally saw that it was a small, rudely constructed raft, tossing and drifting on the waves. Two human beings were its passengers. The one, a Chinese woman, lay unconscious, bound to the floating logs with ropes, while the waves washed over her inanimate form. The other, a man, was still conscious, but speech had gone. The red man placed the castaways in his canoe, and in a few minutes they were in his cabin, with kindly faces around them, and kindly hands ministering their wants.

Not being able to understand the story which the unfortunates, when life and speech came back to them, wished to tell, the Indians took them to the home of Hong Yuen, a market gardener who lived not far away. Here they were cared for by their own people, and the pitiful narrative of their suffering was told.

The man was named Loo Ying. The woman was his wife. They state that about eight months ago, at their home in Foo Chow, in the Flowery Kingdom, they met Capt. H. J. Robertson, of Moresby Island, [British Columbia,] then a resident of the Celestial Empire. The captain wished to hire the man and his wife as his servants, and a verbal agreement was made for three years, the couple to receive \$20 per month and their passage to Moresby Island and back to China when the three years were over. They came to the captain's home, and for the past eight months have served him faithfully.

Their wages were not paid at all, according to the agreement, and the man finally asked Mrs. Robertson for them. He was told that he could work for her no more and would be sent back to China while his wife must stay. She at first refused to let him leave her, but finally consented, if she would be allowed to go as far as Vancouver to see him safely on board the steamer. This Mrs. Robertson would not consent to, and the wife then said that she would stay with her husband, and if he was turned adrift in the strange land, she would remain with him come what would.

Both were told to go – they would get no more food or shelter at the home of their employer. Their wages were refused them, and they were turned out of the

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<sup>50</sup> From ADRIFT IN THE STRAITS. (1889, February 22). *Daily Colonist*, p. 1.



house. They asked to be allowed to take the boat and cross over to Saanich, where they thought they might get something to do, but were again met with a refusal. Neither would anything be given them to eat, and finally driven to desperation, they decided to make a raft and cross on it to Saanich. The raft was made and the unhappy couple embarked at about 9 o'clock on Sunday morning. But a little way from shore the current caught them and they drifted down the straits.

For two terrible nights and three long weary days they were tossed hither and thither, helpless, at the mercy of the waves. Maddened by thirst, starving, exposed to the cold and drenched by the sea, which washed over them, they drifted with the current down the coast, watching with eager eyes for help, until, despairing, they resigned themselves to death. Resolved to fight to the last, they lashed themselves to the raft, and so were found by the Indian on Tuesday afternoon. Their sufferings during those awful days and nights no tongue can tell.

When talked to by THE COLONIST representative last evening, they were still weak, but in a fair way to recovery. They intend to take action against their late employer for the wages due them. The unfortunates are now being well cared for by Hong Yuen at his home on Cormorant street. They are highly intelligent and respectable in appearance, although their faces still bear traces of their terrible voyage. The story of their suffering, if true, is but another example of man's inhumanity to man.

### The libel case<sup>51</sup> (1889)

Robertson vs. Ellis and Co. – This was an action brought by the plaintiff against [the] defendant to recover the sum of \$25,000 for libel, the alleged defamatory article having been published in the *Colonist*.

The following jury were sworn: Henry Brown<sup>52</sup> (foreman), J. C. Englehardt<sup>53</sup>, Andrew Gray<sup>54</sup>, H. Mansell<sup>55</sup>, M. W. Waitt<sup>56</sup>, J. R. Wilson, P. T. Johnston<sup>57</sup>, [and] Geo.

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<sup>51</sup> From ROBERTSON VS. COLONIST. (1889, June 1). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Probably Henry Brown, "of Brown & White, res. 239 Fort". From *Henderson's B.C. Directory* for 1889.

<sup>53</sup> Probably "Engelhardt J. F. E., Customs broker and com merchant, [?]1 Fort, res 19 Burdette av". *Ibid*.

<sup>54</sup> Probably "Gray Andrew, of Spratt & Gray, res 17 Work. Tel 570". "Spratt & Gray, Victoria Machinery dept, consulting engineers, etc., 19 Work. Tel 570". *Ibid*.

<sup>55</sup> Probably "Mansell Henry, boots and shoes, and shoemaker, 95 Government, res 96 Pandora". *Ibid*.

<sup>56</sup> "Waitt Marshal W., of M. W. Waitt & Co., res 109 Quadra cor Frederick". "Waitt, M. W., & Co., booksellers and stationers, 77 Government, Tel 92, dealers in pianos and organs, H. Kent, mgr, 64 Government." *Ibid*.

<sup>57</sup> "Johnston P. T., Victoria seed store, 28 Fort". *Ibid*.

Maynard<sup>58</sup>. L. Erb<sup>59</sup>, W. H. Redmond<sup>60</sup> and John Russell<sup>61</sup> did not answer to their names, and a fine of \$20 was recorded against them till they should show cause why it should not be enforced.

Messrs. Erb and Russell arrived and gave a reasonable excuse and were excused.

Mr. Eberts<sup>62</sup> appeared for the prosecution, Mr. Pooley<sup>63</sup> for the defense.

Mr. Eberts in opening the case for the defense, stated that Capt. Robertson had been for many years engaged in business in China and had last year removed to this country, where he purchased a farm on Moresby Island. Among his hired help were two Chinese servants. On the 22nd day of February, the *Colonist* newspaper published an article relating how the two Chinese servants had escaped from the island on a raft, were picked up adrift at sea, and gave a touching tale of ill usage on the part of their employer. The article concluded by saying that the story of the Chinese "if true was another evidence of man's inhumanity to man."

A peculiarity of this case, said counsel, was that the plaintiff was a large owner of property in China in a very insecure position. It was very clear, judging from past experience, that if said reports as these reached the ears of those in authority, reprisals would be made on Mr. Robertson and other British residents. Everyone who knew Captain Robertson and his wife know that they would not be guilty of the allegations in the libel. [The] defendants claimed that the information was published without malice, but the law presumed malice in cases of libel.

H. J. Robertson, sworn:

"I have read the article 'Adrift in the Straits' published in the *Colonist*. I own Moresby Island and am the Capt. Robertson referred to in the article. There are 1400 or 1500 acres in Moresby Island and I own 3000 acres of adjacent islands. [I] arrived at Vancouver from China in 1887, and went to live on Moresby Island in Oct. 1888. Before coming here I lived at Foochow, China. I was engaged in river engineering, as captain of Chinese warships, coast pilot of the war-ships, etc. [I] was there from 1853 to 1887. My own and my wife's property at Foochow has been valued by outsiders at \$500,000. I am engaged in tea importation. The first lot was valued at between five and six hundred dollars. The Chinese man and woman referred to were with me about nine years."

To Mr. Pooley:

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<sup>58</sup> Probably "Maynard George, plumber, res 34 Fernwood Road end of Johnson," but could also be either George H. Maynard, a boot and shoe merchant, or George Maynard, farmer, both resident at Burnside rode. *Ibid*.

<sup>59</sup> "Erb Levi, of Loewen & Erb, 283 Douglas Tel 151". "Loewen & Erb, props Victoria Brewery, Government cor Discovery". *Ibid*.

<sup>60</sup> "Redmond, W. H., traveler Ames, Holden & Co., res 14 Douglas". "Ames Holden Co. (Ld), wholesale boots and shoes, A.C. Flummerfelt, mgr, 72 Wharf". *Ibid*.

<sup>61</sup> The 1889 directory lists two John Russells, one a stonecutter and one a bricklayer.

<sup>62</sup> "Eberts D. M., of Eberts & Taylor, res 37 Cadboro Bay road". "Eberts & Taylor, barristers and solicitors, 30 Langley. Tel 70". *Ibid*.

<sup>63</sup> "Pooley Hon. Chas. E., Q.C., of Davie & Pooley, Speaker House of Assembly, res Fernhill, Esquimalt Road. Tel 516". *Ibid*.

“I was in Vancouver when the Chinese left my house. The woman was hired at Foochow by Mrs. Robertson, and the husband joined the ship at Yokohama. They were to receive \$10 per month each for three years. The head tax and passage were to be deducted if they did not remain three years. There is therefore about \$40 due them.”

Mr. Pooley here read an article<sup>64</sup> appearing in the *Colonist* on the 23rd of February, the day following the publication of the alleged libel, which stated that the story of the Chinese was not believed by Capt. Robertson’s friends, who said the Chinese had left because they thought they could get better wages. Counsel read also another item<sup>65</sup> published on the 2[8]th, after [the] plaintiff’s arrival in Victoria, with Capt. Robertson’s explanation of the affair, and stating that the Chinese already told another version of the affair.

To Mr. Pooley:

“Mr. Ellis called on me at the Driard two days after my arrival. I think he called on the 29th. [I] told him the matter was in my solicitors’ hands. [I] went to see the woman when I came to down. [She] did not say she had been taken away by a white man in a boat. I do not believe part of their story yet. [I] do not believe they left on a raft. They could not go against wind and tide. [I] remember Mr. Lindley speaking to me about the libel. I did say if the whole of Victoria were placarded with apologies it would do no good in China. There was no difficulty between me and the Chinese. The Chinaman was going to go back to China. I was at Vancouver to arrange about his passage.”

To Mr. Eberts:

“The Chinaman wanted to go back to China because he did not like this country, and there was continuous trouble between him and his wife. They are indebted to me about \$160 for the passage money and head tax.”

To Mr. Pooley:

“There is about \$40 due for wages.”

To the Court:

“There was no written contract. There was a verbal agreement.”

To the foreman of the jury:

“They worked with me from July to the time they left in February. They received \$10 per month each, Chinese currency. They wanted it, and there was a balance of \$40 due them for wages.”

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<sup>64</sup> “Friends of Capt. Robertson state their belief that the story told by the Chinese of ill-treatment is untrue, and that it will be found that they made their escape from Moresby Island because they learned that they could make better wages elsewhere. The ways of the Chinese are past finding out, but if the two were under agreement with Capt. Robertson, and escaped on the raft, they have been richly punished for their dishonesty. The Captain is well-known in Victoria, Vancouver and Westminster, and no doubt he will be heard from in the matter.” *The Raft Voyageurs*. (1889, February 23). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> “Capt. Robertson, of Moresby Island, from whose place the two Chinese took a raft and were carried out into the straits, arrived in the city yesterday. He states that the story of ill-treatment and non-payment of wages told by them is simply a pack of lies, and that they are already telling a different version of the incident.” *The Raft Incident*. (1899, February 28). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

To the Court:

“\$10 Chinese currency.”

Witness left the box. [...]

Peter, an Indian (interpreted):

“[I] was out fishing about the 9th February last. The eddy took [me] round the island. [I] heard hollering and looked and saw a Chinese man and woman on a raft made of three logs with boards across. There was a trunk and a feather bed on the raft. The woman said, ‘Please take me ashore’. I took the woman to my house and told my wife to make a fire; the woman was freezing. She said, ‘you are a good man; but for you I would have been drowned.’ I gave them a good, square meal.”

[He] identified the woman in court.

To Mr. Eberts:

“The feather bed was wet. I took the trunk away. [I] live at Cadboro Bay and don’t know Moresby Island. The woman said they had been floating about for three days.” [...]

To the foreman:

“They were quite wet when I picked them up.”

Lucy, a Chinese woman (witness could speak English), sworn:

“[I] came from Foochow, China. [I] was a servant with Mr. Robertson. [The] two of us get \$20 one moon. Master was to pay passage to China, suppose we stop three years. Mr. Robertson’s boy trouble my husband, and then he trouble me. He no go to Mrs. Robertson. I talk her; she say ‘nonsense;’ she say my husband better go back to China. I want get boat, but Mr. Robertson’s boy and carpenter no let me have it. We got two logs and put sticks across and pushed it out with a pole to try and reach another island. Raft go every way; did not reach island. We were on raft two nights and pretty near three days. First night it was fine; the next night it blew hard and snow and rain. Raft go round and round, we pretty near get drowned. Indian man picked us up.”

To Mr. Eberts:

“I was with Mrs. Robinson a long time. She very kind. The boat was all ready to take my husband off to the steamer to go to China. I ask Mrs. to let me go too. She say no, you can’t go. We make raft, then go away. [I] did not see any boat come to Mrs. Moresby’s island that day. When we came to Victoria I told the newspaper man that Mrs. Robertson and her children did not treat me well.”

To Mr. Pooley:

“I wanted to go and see my husband off at Vancouver because he could not speak English.” [...]

The jury then retired and after an absence of an hour brought in a verdict to the effect that the article was a libel, but the plaintiff had sustained no damage.

## “The shrewdness of Chinese servants”<sup>66</sup> (1891)

**This article gives an example of a Chinese servant adjusting their productivity to the wages offered.**

A [...] young lady now married and living at Vancouver, B.C., [...] tells some interesting, as well as amusing, stories of the Chinese, with which article of humanity Vancouver is overrun. They are as numerous there as the negroes in certain of the southern cities [of the United States,] and no one would think of hiring a white servant, because they are not to be had.

A “tender-foot” family, she says, ought to set the price of their first domestic servant as moderate as possible, for, should they pay him \$25 per month to start on, they will never be able to hire another for a cent less. The Chinese servants of Vancouver are not organized into a labor union. They don’t need to be. They all know each other and all work together to the common end – to get as much as they can of the good things. The minute a newcomer strikes the town he is shown around. That, he will be told by his yellow-skinned brethren, is a \$25 house; this is a \$20 house, and so on, and he readily promises to do as the rest do.

Mrs. — tells of a servant she had. She had let a former servant, to whom she was paying \$20 per month, go, and hired in his place a Celestial from a “twenty-five dollar” house. The latter was the incarnation of solidity and stupidity. He could only do the simplest tasks and cook only the plainest dishes. Disgusted with him the lady went to see his former mistress, to whom she told all.

“He has simply been fooling you,” answered that lady. “Ling was the best servant I ever had – a good cook, who knew all about the choicest dishes, willing and active. I only let him go because he chased my daughter with a stick one day, with the avowed intention of beating her. But how much do you pay him?”

“Twenty dollars.”

“Ah, there’s the secret of his laziness. He is merely gauging his work to make it commensurate with his pay – according to his idea of the fitness of things.”

Mrs. — raised his pay \$5, and now gets the latest dishes, etc. She has come to the conclusion that the Chinese, especially the servants, are not such fools as they look.

They never steal, she says. But they will lease the household belongings just as though they owned them. She went to a birthday dinner at a friend’s house one day and was astonished to see three of her silver teaspoons and two damask napkins, all handsomely monogrammed, on the table. Her friend fortunately caught her eye at the critical moment, and noting the rising flush on Mrs. —’s face, took her aside and explained matters. She was satisfied and resumed her seat at the table, once more marveling at the mixture of shrewdness and independence in the Chinese character – and honesty, too, for these things are all religiously returned, cleaned, to their rightful owners. She had reasons later on to thank her stars this was the Chinese

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<sup>66</sup> From THE SHREWDNESS OF CHINESE SERVANTS. (1891, September 23). *Weekly News-Advertiser*, p. 7. Originally published in the *Detroit Free Press* of September 7, 1891.

custom. She gave a 6 o'clock dinner in honor of the visit of an eastern friend. She wanted to invite thirty guests, but hadn't the requisite amount of table wear from which to feed them all at table. In her dilemma she remembered the old trick, and acquainted Ling with the facts.

"All right, maybe. Me get him," promptly responded that worthy.

She and her guests entered the dining-room that evening, and of a verity Ling had kept his word, for upon that table was the most varied assortment of knives, forks, spoons, dishes, etc., she had ever seen. The ludicrousness of the scene flashed upon her, and laughing outright she explained matters to her eastern visitor, while the rest of the company looked on and laughingly nodded approval.

This is merely the Chinese servants' way of helping each other out, and the strong bond of fellowship guarantees the safe return of the property<sup>67</sup> every time.

### **"He but seeks to earn an honest living"<sup>68</sup> (1894)**

Most of the Chinese house-servants with whom I am acquainted get, not "considerably less wages" than "\$10 or \$12 a month," but somewhat more, and in hotels as high as \$35, and one gets \$50 a month. I am informed that good general servants, whether white young women or Chinamen, do not work in this city for \$10 or \$12 a month. Even if they did, no one could blame the Chinaman for being preferred. He but seeks to earn an honest living, as the young woman does, and the right to earn an honest living is a God-given one, as much to the Chinaman as to the white man, and cannot be taken from any honest man without injustice to the man and sin against his Maker.

The state of society that compels young women needing employment to seek in vain for it is a faulty one, but to say that the Chinese are the cause of it is to come far wide of the mark. [...] Suppose now that in the place of the 10,000 Chinamen in this province were taken to-morrow by 10,000 white persons: [if] a fair number of these would be young women, would there be no young women to walk the streets looking in vain for work in private houses? I fear there would.

Many, very many young women in Toronto and other cities of the east walk the streets looking for work at from \$3 to \$5 a week and board themselves, and only find it when they take the place of another young woman who, perhaps, leaves to get married, or it may be is discharged. The fact is these things exist at times everywhere,

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<sup>67</sup> It's possible this was occasionally mistaken for theft. An example: "Officer Abel placed under arrest yesterday a Chinese servant named Ah Yung, who is accused of helping himself to his employer's silver spoons, table napkins, etc. The missing articles were found under a mattress in an out-house on the premises. Yung claims that he only took them out for the purpose of cleaning them. Whether the excuse will be accepted remains to be seen." A Ready Explanation. (1893, January 3). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> From Coleman, C. A. (1894, February 23). THE CHINESE. *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4. Written by the Rev. C. A. Colman, a missionary who died before February 7 1940, when his widow's death was reported in the *Vancouver Sun*. "For 19 years Mr. Colman was a Presbyterian missionary in Canton and is a thorough master of the Cantonese dialect. His wife is also an expert linguist, being the mistress of several European languages, and she is now picking up the Chinese." ANOTHER SETTLER. (1895, September 12). *Vancouver World*, p. 8.

and are not dependent upon the presence of a few thousands of Chinese in our midst. This state of things is deplorable, but let us put the blame where it rightfully belongs, and not on the shoulders of the poor Chinaman.

### **“A real blessing to many housekeepers”<sup>69</sup> (1895)**

Much as may be said against the advent of the “Heathen Chinese” in our country, he is certainly a boon to the dwellers on the Pacific Coast, where white help is scarce and expensive, often impossible to procure. Soft-footed, quick to learn, stoical and bland, he is a real blessing to many housekeepers, who, but for his aid, would have to accomplish all the heavy housework without assistance, unless they were willing to pay exorbitant wages to inefficient and precarious female help.

A Chinaman is not hard to please in the matter of work; he never grumbles, he is not over-particular about his board, he never gossips nor carries tales, he minds his own business and does his work in a methodical way; he is tricky, I grant, but no more than nine out of ten white servants. He never complains if things are not to his liking. Like the Arabs, he “silently steals away,” if he wishes to change his place. No impertinence or altercation mark his departure. Ofttimes he becomes much attached to a family and remains for years in their employ. A good Chinese servant is scrupulously clean, honest, and industrious, he learns very quickly, and has a talent for cooking; but a bad Chinese servant is of all servants the worst, and combines every bad trait of domestic service with a craft and subtlety the father of evil might envy.

If proper care and discretion are exercised in the selection of Chinese as servants, the householder is not unlikely to experience the greatest comfort from their service, and very little of the discomfort of the present day domestic. For general work in a family a good Chinese is invaluable. He will undertake and do well the entire work of the house, going about it in a methodical, business-like manner, never pausing from his labor until each task is done. Noiseless and unobservant, he passes from room to room, from duty to duty, until all is in order, paying no heed to conversation in progress. Verily, the family skeleton is never so safe from outside comment as when a stolid Celestial performs the family drudgery.

There are two grades of Chinese domestic servants procurable on the coast. The experienced trained man, who demands his \$25 a month and gets it, and the China-boy, so-called, whose monthly wages range all the way from \$5 to \$12, according to his capability. The former will undertake even the catering for the family, and in many cases keeps an assistant (China-boy) selected by himself to perform the rough work and wait upon him generally. These assistants, if they serve for a time under the experienced men, and are bright and teachable, make valuable servants when they leave; as they invariably do, to obtain higher wages and take greater responsibility in families where but one servant is kept.

Money is the one motive for Celestial service. One dollar a month more than he is receiving will tempt a Chinaman to leave a situation, no matter what comforts,

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<sup>69</sup> From Holland, F. H. (1895, February 27). CHINESE SERVANTS. *The Globe*, p. 6. Written by Fidele H. Holland, alias Mrs. John Billings (d. 1899).

leisure and privileges he enjoys. The almighty dollar is irresistible; offer it, and he slips away from his employer like a thief in the night; no complaint, no warning<sup>70</sup> precede his departure.

Now I am going to make an assertion that may, perhaps, shock the readers of this article. The Chinaman in an un-Christianized state – the “Heathen Chinee” in his pristine ignorance of religion – makes the best servant in nine cases out of ten. I do not intend to insinuate that the effect of real religion and Christian enlightenment is injurious, far from it; but the Christian religion, as inculcated into the Chinese on the Pacific Coast by means of the Mission School, does not tend to improve them as religion should influence and improve the benighted heathen who comes to our shores.

It is the example of so-called Christians that counteracts the teaching received. John Chinaman is [a]cute in the extreme, he sees everything with those sharp little eyes of his; he notes everything in his shrewd mind – his very indifference to his employer’s proceedings is begot of stoical contempt of the man whom he serves but for filthy lucre, [and of] the country he comes to but to glean its dollars. He rapidly learns all the vices and tricks of his new associates; he becomes acquainted with the dwellers in Chinatown, from where the Mission Schools are recruited; he marks well that a semblance of acquired religion serves him to no small ends, and graduates from what ought to be his eternal salvation into that worst of all combinations, a seemingly converted Americanized Celestial, uniting the tricks and chicanery of both nations in the suave, bland personage. Every rule has its exceptions, so there are many cases where the subjects of the Mission Schools blossom into good Christians, and make honest, valuable servants.

Numbers of China-boys are brought from their native land by the Tyees or speculators, who advance money for their passage, place them in situations, and await the result of their labor to pay back their outlay. They remove them from place to place, should higher wages offer, going without any warning to the employer and walking off with their charges at any time they may see fit. These China-boys are procurable only through the Tyees. They are the most promising class; they generally learn quickly and become attached to the families they serve. As a general thing they leave the houses where they are employed in the evening and return to work in the morning. It is a much better plan, however, to make an agreement with the Tyeer to have your servant sleep in the house. They are more contented and less likely to succumb to the temptations of Chinatown, consisting chiefly of opium, gambling and women. A China-boy will ask for an outing once a week, when he goes to be shaved and procure any apparel he may require from his Tyeer. [...]

When the salmon canneries are in full blast many a Celestial steals away from his place in domestic service to obtain the extra pay for the season, leaving his employer to mourn his unexpected departure. A China-boy named Jun was an

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<sup>70</sup> “The sixteen-year-old China boy who was reported missing in these columns a few days ago has turned up again. It appears that the young chap was persuaded by a comrade to accept work in another position. The young man should be quite penitent over his escapade in view of the trouble and worry it caused his Celestial friends.” CITY NEWS IN BRIEF. (1900, September 17). *Victoria Times*, p. 5.



instance of this greed for pay. When the family appeared at breakfast one morning, no Jun was to be found. An inferior servant was procured, who served indifferently for two months, and was then discharged as hopelessly stupid.

The next morning the mistress of the house arose to prepare breakfast. She was astonished to find the table set and everything in course of preparation, while by the kitchen range stood Jun, grinning.

“I come back,” he said. “No like hard work.”

Nothing was said by the astonished mistress; she noted the fact that Jun, who was sleek and fat when he left, was looking lean and worn. Jun still holds the fort in that mansion, and has been seen kissing and hugging the family baby, of whom he is very fond. No canneries tempt him now. Sleek and fat, as of yore, he looks with suspicion upon alluring offers.

A lady employed a Chinese, to whom she paid \$10 a month; he had never asked for an increase of wages, and seemed quite contented with his place. One day this lady thought she would like a certain pudding for dinner that was rather difficult to prepare, so she asked Hip if he knew how to make it.

“Heap good,” he replied, “make him?”

“We will have him to-day,” replied the gratified mistress.

“No have him,” replied Hip, his little eyes sparkling. “Him \$25 Chinaman pudding. You give me \$25 a month, I make him. \$10 Chinaman no make him.” It is needless to say that Madame went without the valuable pudding.

A Chinaman is timid and cowardly; his sole idea is to hide or run away when danger threatens. Many instances are recorded<sup>71</sup> of burglaries occurring while John was in charge of the house. Curled up under a bed he let the intruders take what they wished, too horrified to expostulate with them.

### HIS AESTHETIC QUALITIES

The dress of a Chinese servant is very neat, and picturesque, a white coat and apron, broadcloth trousers and felt slippers (the real Chinese article). The head is partly shaved, the “pig-tail” wound neatly at the back of the head. They are a comforting sight to behold. For outdoor wear a dark blue cloth coat with wide sleeves takes the place of the white linen one, the apron is discarded and a soft black felt hat is worn. A good house servant can always be distinguished by his neat apparel.

As I write there comes before me a vision of a certain bright little China-boy who lives with a friend of mine in Vancouver. Placed with this friend by his Tyee he has proved himself a valuable addition to my friend’s menage. Quietly and methodically he goes about his work as only a Chinaman can. He speaks but little English, and has never frequented the Mission Schools, yet it is surprising how

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<sup>71</sup> One of many counterexamples, from the household of Emily Carrs: “On Tuesday night, a Chinaman was caught in the residence of Mr. R. Carr, near Beacon Hill, by Mr. Carr’s Chinese servant. A quantity of blankets and other effects had been collected for removal, when the thief was surprised. A tussle ensued between the two Chinamen, the servant being severely bitten on the hand. The thief jumped through the window, which he smashed, and made good his escape. A pair of shoes, a cap and a false pigtail were found outside.” BURGLARS AT WORK. (1886, April 2). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

intelligent he is, how readily he understands orders. He is extremely good-natured and willing; he dislikes to see his mistress do any of the work.

As it is a hard matter to correct him if his cooking does not quite suit the family, on account of his ignorance of our language, his mistress makes a point of going into the kitchen and making what he has failed in, to show him his error. On one occasion she pursued this course and the China-boy showed plainly that his feelings were hurt deeply, for shortly after, when she ordered the dinner, the following conversation took place:-

“Loy,” she said, “we will have turkey for dinner; you do him.”

“No, no,” replied Loy, with a dejected shake of his head, “no do turkey, no good.”

“Yes, Loy,” encouragingly replied the mistress, “you do him nice, make bread crumbs to stuff him.”

“No good, no do turkey, no good bread crumb, Loy no good.”

Compunctions were felt by the mistress at this point, poor Loy looked so dejected.

“Loy good boy,” [she said] very cheerfully. “Loy make nice pie, strawberry pie.”

“No, no make good pie;” then, with a sharp look at the mistress, “you make him.”

“No, Loy, you very good boy, you make him heap nice.”

The mistress departed. The dinner came on in due time; beside the master’s chair stood Loy, positively radiant, and the dinner – it was perfection itself. Loy’s hurt feelings were forgotten when his mistress said, “Loy very good boy. Dinner heap nice.”

Many incidents could be told about the Chinese servants, numbers of whom are a boon to the dwellers on the coast. While granting that the presence of John Chinaman in our midst does not aid to the moral atmosphere of our cities, while admitting that his natural habits and mode of life are not pleasant or acceptable to our refined tastes, I must confess to a partiality for those soft-footed, white-coated servants of the Pacific Coast. Prejudice gives way before such respectful, faithful service, as I have witnessed there, and I mentally compare the coast China-boys to the pert, indifferent maids of our part of the country, with whom housekeepers wage war month after month, year after year, growing hopeless at last, and impatient even with the superior help that occasionally favors them.

The problem of domestic service in eastern Canada and the United States perplexes many. The dwellers on the Pacific Coast have solved that problem by the introduction of the Chinese. They have their disadvantages. Their advent as a race is not desirable, but, as servants, they are certainly an acquisition in a country where household service is difficult to obtain from other sources.

### “They courted death”<sup>72</sup> (1895)

Three Chinamen employed at the Hotel Dallas came very near waking up in the Chinaman’s paradise this morning. They sleep in a small building to the rear of the hotel, and last night when they retired made a nice charcoal fire in an open portable furnace. There was something wrong with the stove, and they were out to keep warm. The charcoal fire was not very warm looking, and all the apertures were carefully closed. Then like three good hard-working Chinamen they lay down to rest. This morning at 7 o’clock no amount of knocking at the door would arouse them, so just was their sleep, and the place was forced open. All three were in a semi-conscious state, and the best restoratives available were quickly applied. Dr. Meredith Jones was also sent for and the advantage of his medical skill was lent to their restoration as well. A telephone message at noon conveyed the information that they were all able to be up. It is rather remarkable, however, that they escaped death. In a couple of cases of a similar nature here<sup>73</sup> the victims have not been so fortunate.

### “Why all this howl”<sup>74</sup> (1896)

Why all this howl about the Chinaman and Chinese labor? If I am not mistaken most of the trouble rests with ourselves and in our own hands is the remedy. We make it profitable for the Chinaman by giving him our patronage. If Europeans did not support the Chinese laundries and tailoring establishments, as well as entrust Chinamen with household and other duties, they could not exist and would thus be compelled to seek other pastures.

The writer has recently been given strong reason to believe that the European population of this city are at this moment under monetary obligations to the Chinese pretty nearly: if not fully up to \$100,000<sup>75</sup>, for laundry work, wages for domestic employment and other accounts. It would surprise you to see the catalogue of names ranking as debtors for large amounts; persons posing high in the social scale as well as some in receipt of government pay – both Dominion and provincial – who are indebted for washing alone in sums ranging up to \$30, \$40, \$50, and even up to \$100, and cases are not infrequent where Chinese employed for \$20 or \$25 a month for household work are put off with \$5 now and then until the amount owing them totals up to a large figure; in fact the Chinaman seems to be a most helpful factor in keeping many homes going in their apparently flourishing condition. We impose upon him for our own benefit and then talk loudly about kicking him out.

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<sup>72</sup> From THEY COURTED DEATH. (1895, March 6). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> “Two Chinese servants of F. H. Worlock, Victoria, were suffocated by charcoal gas on Friday night, while sleeping in a detached building in the rear of the residence. An inquest will be held on Monday.” Two Chinese. (1893, March 25). *Vancouver Daily World*, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> From ONLOOKER. (1896, August 21). THE CHINESE QUESTION. *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> The original read \$10,000, but Onlooker corrected this figure in a brief letter published in the *Victoria Times* of August 22, 1896.

## “Chinamen as domestics”<sup>76</sup> (1896)

With your further permission I should like to say something with reference to Chinamen as domestics. We find them at five houses out of six where a servant is kept, yet as a rule if you get a confidential chat with their employers they are full of complaints about them. I have been told the most harrowing tales, that their linen disappears most mysteriously, its renewal at frightful expense, legs of mutton and roasts of beef, having once made their appearance on the dining table are seen no more; their best china is smashed so successfully that not a trace is left behind, all inquiries result in the reply “No sabe.”

One innocent householder in the country found himself obliged to again change his China boy, and out of kindness showed him the road along the trail to the boat. On returning he was horrified to see his best carving fork lying across the trail. Meditating on the strange occurrence, he hurried home to find the knife had gone altogether. A friend to whom he communicated his trouble was not in the least astonished, coolly remarking that he must have discharged his Chinaman so hurriedly that he had not time to tie up his blankets as securely as usual. Further search proved several much-prized articles missing.

Then they complain bitterly that they can't get girls. Girls would come, and gladly, if there was a demand for them, and they were treated properly. A Chinaman will be given \$15, \$20, \$25 a month readily, with the back door key to come in at any hour of the night he finds it convenient to leave Chinatown, but if they get tired of John, they unblushingly offer a girl \$10 a month to do the same work and think it is a perfect nuisance if they want to get out on a Sunday evening, but as a rule they prefer a Chinaman with his loose morals and a chance of Chinatown infection.

And what about the influence upon the children of Chinese morality? It has often been a wonder to me the tyranny under which the employers of Chinese domestics groaned, but if Onlooker's figures of their indebtedness to them is correct the question is solved. I knew one case where a small establishment owed the Chinaman \$70.

Their stupidity and impudent curiosity when answering the door is barbarous. I had important private business with one of our leading citizens. When I rang the door bell the Chinaman coolly asked me what my business was. I explained that I could not possibly tell him. He replied: “I no tell him what I wanted, I can no see them,” and left me ignominiously discomfited on the door step.

As cooks they are most extravagant. An English woman can make you better soup with a 10 cent bone than they can with a small roast, and the way butter and eggs disappear in their very medium pastry is worthy of a conjurer. Of course there are a few exceptions, but for the majority it may be said the less you see of their kitchens and cooking the more you will eat.

I trust that on Friday resolutions will be passed that will help clear out these aliens, and make way for some good, honest, English, Scotch and Irish girls, who will

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<sup>76</sup> From WORKINGMAN. (1896, August 28). CHINESE DOMESTICS. *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

spend their earnings with our milliners and dressmakers, enabling them to pay their rates and taxes.

### **“The real objection to them”<sup>77</sup> (1896)**

The old story about the nasty vices and filthy conduct of these [Chinese] people is being repeated to-day by men who should, we think, scorn to repeat the cant of the hoodlums, when it is so obvious that it is not the vices of the Chinese, but their virtues, that are the real objection to them. Every family on the western slope that can afford it has a Chinese servant. Some of these are heartless and vicious and false, and some are devoted and faithful, but for the most part they are efficient and well-liked as servants, and if they are cheap it is by the will of their employers, and not their own. People there do not believe in the leprosy, or even in the louse theory, or else they would not have them in all domestic capacities. People who live east<sup>78</sup> find the Chinese better subjects than many of the peoples imported from Europe. They mind their business, work hard and well, and obey the laws. They are arrested less than any other immigrants. The real objection to them is that by doing more for the money, they lower the price of labor.

### **“Neglect of the girl in their midst”<sup>79</sup> (1897)**

It is often said that under modern conditions the young woman is crowding out the young man from many situations. We have often reason to pride in the successes of our young women, but there is also cause for sadness because in the strife for place and success she has to meet so many temptations.

In British Columbia<sup>80</sup> conditions differ somewhat from those prevailing in the Eastern Provinces. There it is the Chinaman who is thrusting out of employment the young woman as a domestic servant. The Chinaman will work for little money; he has no desire to reside in the home, but will do his work and return to his filthy quarters. It is well for the good people of the Coast to ask themselves if they should in any way encourage the neglect of the girl in their midst, whose need and proper place is the home, and work is that of a domestic. To ignore her claim is only to make her downfall the easier.

To say that servants are not always what they should be is not a sufficient answer. The Chinaman is not always what he should be. Possibly the home and the mistress have much to do with the failures of many servants. The girls are our sisters, and the mothers of the far west should feel a sister's care for them; and if by the

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<sup>77</sup> From THE CHINESE QUESTION. (1896, September 29). *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> “The Chinamen in Montreal are going ahead. It is said that quite a number of them are now being employed as domestics, and in that capacity they are giving thorough satisfaction. One lady says that her Chinaman takes the place of three girls. As cooks, the Chinese servants particularly excel.” PITHY PARAGRAPHS. (1897, June 22). *Vancouver Daily World*, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> From CHINESE HOUSE SERVANTS. (1897, July 16). *Vancouver Daily World*, p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> Of course this is from an Ontario publication. [Note in the original.]

employment of one where help is required another sister would be encouraged in the good and prevented from the evil, then it would be a Christly thing to give the young woman of our own land the preference over the Chinaman.

**“Trustworthy, industrious, etc.”<sup>81</sup> (1897)**

Let me relate one or two incidents within my own experience as a twelve months' resident of your city [of Victoria], and show some of the arguments advanced by the advocates of Chinese labor. At the first hotel where I put up were a number of Chinese servants. I objected to one of these attending to my room, for I notice a peculiar discoloration about his hands suggestive of a loathsome complaint, and I declined to sleep, or rather attempt to sleep, in a bed under circumstances which would produce so uncomfortable a feeling in my mind as the dread of contagion. The landlord of that hotel informed me that the Chinese were trustworthy, industrious, etc., as much as to say the Europeans were not so. He did not say anything about the wages being lower than a white man or woman could live on, though his hotel was not a cheap one to stay at by any means, but he did say that if he wanted a dozen Chinamen he could depend upon them turning up at the very minute, while if it were white men he engaged not one of them, or not more than one or two of them, would be there. This I know to be absolutely untrue, for there have been hundreds of white men out of work since I have been here, who would have been glad, and who would be glad now, to take anything that offered.

**“A very satisfactory domestic animal”<sup>82</sup> (1897)**

The servant girl question, as it is understood in the east, is not a problem in British Columbia, the reason being that the Chinese are the cooks, chambermaids and washerwomen, not only of the coast cities but of the interior.

Somebody has made the suggestion that the Chinese be employed as domestic servants in England on account of the increasing difficulty of getting competent maid servants, but a Mrs. Fenwick Miller writing to the *Illustrated London News* says that John Chinaman is “anything but clean in his general habits, and he has been known to demoralize the children of a house in a shocking way.” This statement will be a surprise to the people of British Columbia, where Chinese servants are the rule and maid servants the very rare exception.

There are good and bad Chinese servants, of course, but on the whole they are highly satisfactory, learning their work quickly and doing it thoroughly and cheerfully. They are seldom impudent or unwilling, are certainly anything but lazy and generally speaking are well behaved. One never hears of them being under the influence of liquor. They do not stop in the middle of their duties to read newspapers or trashy love stories, nor do they have a best young man to haunt the kitchen in the evenings or go out walking with on Sunday afternoons. So far as their “demoralizing

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<sup>81</sup> From HALIFAX. (1897, August 11). STILL THEY COME. *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> From MEN AND THINGS. (1897, November 20). *The Province*, p. 824.

the children of a house” is concerned, that is something that they have yet to do in the experience of Victoria people.

It is not to be imagined from all this that the Chinese are perfect servants, for of course they are not. Like the rest of us, they have their shortcomings. It is a difficult matter to scold them, for instance, if they do their work unsatisfactorily, because they are apt to pretend that they do not know what you are talking about. And one of the most thankless tasks in the world is trying to correct someone who listens blandly to all you have to say and politely informs you at the end that he doesn’t understand.

Another drawback is that it is practically impossible for a mistress who takes an interest in her kitchen and likes to keep a close eye on it to get satisfactory work out of a Chinaman. As one of them remarked to a lady one day: “You no like me in your drawing room; I no like you in my kitchen.” And he doesn’t. When the mistress of a house goes into the kitchen her Chinaman is very apt to make a bee line for the pantry or the cellar, and to stay under cover until she goes away again. But apart from these and one or two other little peculiarities, a well-trained Chinese servant is a very satisfactory domestic animal.

### “Chinese immigration”<sup>83</sup> (1898)

Some people seem to think that they could not get on in this province without Chinese labor, but they lose sight of the fact that it is the presence of Chinese labor which keeps away white labor. If it were known in Eastern Canada or Europe that Chinese were excluded, the demand for labor at the wages current in this province would soon be supplied.

How many families have come here of late years and left because they could not make a living and would have gone but for the presence here of Chinese as market gardeners, washermen, laborers and domestic servants? The business of market gardening and washing is almost monopolized by Chinese, though it is incomprehensible how any one can eat vegetables grown by Chinamen or wear clothes washed by them if he knows that the former deluge their crops with their own sewage and that the latter always fill their mouths with water and spit it out on clothes when ironing.

It is also incomprehensible how people put up with the class of Chinese who perform the duties of domestic servants in this province. They are not of the class which foreigners employ as servants in China, but their appearance, language, dress, manners and ignorance show them to be coolies. A coolie in China thinks himself lucky if he earns ten cents a day, or say, two or three dollars a month, and house servants employed by foreigners get from eight to fifteen dollars a month without food. It is surprising that Chinese domestic servants here secure not only their food but wages of ten, twenty or twenty-five dollars a month, equal to twenty, forty or fifty dollars in China. It is time for their wages here to be cut down one-half or more.

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<sup>83</sup> From I. (1898, January 1). CHINESE IMMIGRATION. *The Province*, p. 27.

The ignorance prevailing of the proper behavior of Chinese servants is also astonishing; for instance, how few employers of them know that according to Chinese custom it is an insult for a Chinaman to sit down in the presence of his master or to appear before him with his queue tied round his head.

With such high wages and ignorant treatment it is no wonder that Chinese servants become independent and insolent, as shown by your mention in the issue of the 20th of November of a Chinese cook objecting to his mistress going into the kitchen. Any mistress watching her Chinese cook for a few days can soon learn some of the horrors of Chinese cooking; for instance, only the other day I heard of one being discovered washing his filthy stockings in a pan used for washing plates and dishes.

The statement of [Mrs. Fenwick] Miller to the *Illustrated London News*<sup>84</sup>, also referred to by you on the 20th of November that “the Chinaman is anything but clean in his general habits and has been known to demoralize children in a shocking way,” is perfectly true. No man with a family should employ a Chinaman in his house nor allow one in any way to associate with his daughters. During the last twelve months I have had three Chinamen who have attempted to seduce four white servant girls, and one of them boasted of having seduced the fifteen-year-old daughter of a previous master. These matters are not published from the housetops or in the newspapers, but they undoubtedly exist, for many mothers refuse to send their daughters to a house where a Chinaman is employed, and others specially warn them against Chinamen. Under these circumstances it is monstrous that at some of the salmon canneries Chinese are allowed to work alongside white girls.

The United States now exclude not only not only Chinese but all paupers of any nationality. Why does not Canada go only the length of excluding Chinese, the majority of whom when arriving here are worse than paupers, for they are in debt? It is notorious that Chinese take from this province hundreds of thousands of dollars to China every year, thereby decreasing its wealth and white population. But any legislation made with the object of keeping Chinese out of the country should be preceded by a revision of the laws for their naturalization. Besides a lengthened residence, a strict and severe educational test should be enforced on every Chinaman wishing to become a British subject. Otherwise it will only be a question of time for white votes to be swamped in this province and the Government to be carried on by a race very different from our own in religion, customs and almost everything else.

### **“All and more”<sup>85</sup> (1899)**

Scarcity of domestic servants such as we have in the East, is much relieved in coast cities by the willingness of Chinamen to perform cheerfully all and more than the hired girl does in the average family in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and for the same wage. A Chinaman in Victoria or Vancouver is glad to get a position at \$12 a month as a domestic servant. You give him the key of the back door and he sleeps in Chinatown and comes to your house as early in the morning as required,

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<sup>84</sup> In the issue of October 2, 1897.

<sup>85</sup> From Fraser River Canneries. (1899, September 27). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 3.



and has breakfast ready before you are down stairs. On Monday he has all his housework, plus the washing, done before you are astir, and is not happy unless he can get the ironing done the same day he washes. He will take care of your horse, milk the cow, go down town on an errand, chop wood, mind the baby, do the gardening, gamble all night, swear fluently in broken English when he gets the wrong cards, and display the same interest and zeal in any of the things mentioned as another. They are honest and faithful, and will not disappoint when they give their word. The ambition of the average Chinese servant is to be a good cook. I made the acquaintance of a Chinaman of 80 who had earned in his younger days \$75 a month as head cook in the leading hotel in Victoria. A Montreal lady, visiting a friend in Vancouver, made some cakes and fancy dishes for the family. The Chinese servant followed her about the house, asking questions, and making elaborate notes, in a large book, of the quantities of ingredients.

### **“Liable to startle housekeepers”<sup>86</sup> (1899)**

**While almost certainly apocryphal, these stories reflect contemporary stereotypes.**

At present there is a keen demand for honest female labor in South British Columbia, the country depending entirely on Chinamen for cooking and domestic service. For this work they get anywhere from \$20 to \$35 a month, and women domestics would command like prices.

These Chinamen, while cleanly and industrious, are, as a rule, surly fellows, and liable to startle housekeepers by their vagaries. One Rossland woman, for instance, had occasion to teach her Chinese cook how to make a new cake, and for the first time made it herself before him. The recipe called for six eggs, and after she had opened four there chanced to be two bad ones, which she naturally threw away. Some weeks after, during which the cook had made the cake excellently several times, she happened to be in the kitchen when he was at the cake again. The Chinaman opened four eggs, then threw two away and then went on.

“What did you throw those eggs away for?” she asked.

“Ah, me do like you,” said John, with a surprised stare. And it turned out he did it each time he made the cake. So much for their imitative faculty.

Another woman of Rossland had a puppy given her, which she turned over to her Chinese servant to look after.

“John,” she said, “this puppy has just been given to me. I want you to take him into the kitchen and be very careful of him.”

“Me understand,” said John.

At dinner that night John brought in a covered dish and set it before the master.

“Me heap careful,” he remarked to his mistress, as he raised the cover with a pleased smile. Under the cover was, of course, the puppy neatly cooked.

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<sup>86</sup> From MINING’S LUCKY PHASE. (1899, November 2). *Vernon News*, p. 6.

Such Oriental peculiarities as these hardly encourage housekeepers to consider their China boys, as they call them, complete substitutes for the servants of their Eastern days.

### **“Ousting John Chinaman from the kitchen”<sup>87</sup> (1900)**

There has been another development in the Japanese question in Vancouver. The hired girl had to make way for the “heathen Chinese,” and now the little Brownies are ousting John Chinaman from the kitchen. In Vancouver \$6 a month and board was the lowest figure for which a China boy could ever be induced to work in the kitchen; now Japanese boys are a drug on the market at \$2 and \$3 a month and board, with the privilege of sleeping in the woodshed. In fact, all they expect is to be well fed, and they will work like slaves during the day and attend night school from 7 to 9 p.m. They are far more willing than Chinese, and will do any work that they are asked without complaining. They do not think of their present comforts; their only thought is to advance themselves, so that they may be able to go to Seattle or San Francisco and get a good position. The night schools are crowded to suffocation by these little Brownies. There is no charge made to the Japanese boys, the schools being run by missionaries, with a view to converting the Japanese boys to Christianity.

### **“Social life in Vancouver”<sup>88</sup> (1900)**

The delightfully quaint Chinese domestic in his white coat and apron is to be seen about, either watering or cutting the lawn about the houses, which gives a touch of picturesqueness to these scenes. My “boy” is such a dear, clean looking fellow and goes noiselessly about the house, his pigtail wound round his head and always a merry smile and “Yes, Missy!” when I tell him to do anything. These domestic oddities are so delightfully friendly when visiting that they open the door for you and tell you: “Come in, sit down! I go tell lady!” or else they tell you with a truly regretful expression, they “so sorry lady miss you!” I thought it dreadfully shocking that my boy should bring me my morning tea into my bedroom, but one soon gets accustomed to everything. They sleep in Chinatown, these Chinese servants, take your kitchen door key and arrive upon the stroke of the clock every morning. They are housemaid, parlor maid, kitchen maid and cook, all combined in one Oriental human being. [...]

Dinner parties are a form of gaiety that the ordinary household with one Chinese man-of-all-work cannot very well undertake, consequently they are few and far between. But I have been to dinners of the daintiest where the Chinaman cooks and waits upon the table by himself. This to your ears will sound impossible, but in the west such a thing is possible. [...]

My Chinese domestic demands my attention so I must go; it never does to keep the creature waiting; it is against the rules of the Chinese Cooks’ “union.”

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<sup>87</sup> From Japs in Vancouver. (1900, July 13). *The Prospector* (Lillooet), p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> From SOCIAL LIFE IN VANCOUVER. (1900, December 15). *The Province*, p. 15.

## “Girls as domestics”<sup>89</sup> (1901)

The question of how to get girls for domestic service has long been one of serious consideration in the west. Here it is allied closely with the employment of Chinese, and since the agitation to keep the Mongolian from this province is deeply grounded, some settlement of the matter will have to be arrived at. In reference to this, there are several points which suggest themselves – the demand, the supply, why some women prefer Chinamen, and why girls do not remain in their situation.

In the first place, the demand is greater than the supply, but then, there are some mistresses who cannot keep a girl domestic at all, nor, it might be added, a Chinaman. The names of these people are constantly appearing at the bottom of advertisements for domestic servants in the daily press. For the reason one need not look very far, for no servants – women or Chinese – will remain in a situation where their lives are made unendurable on account of excessive labor and almost inhumane treatment. The guilty ones are well known among all who are after situations, and those housekeepers are accordingly shunned by girls seeking employment. It is most needless to state that whoever prefers girls to Chinamen, and would treat them as becomes a mistress and a lady, would have no difficulty in securing them.

### HIGH CLASS OF GIRLS

The supply may not be so large as to give range for particular choice, but it might be remarked that the quality of girls who offer for domestic service in Vancouver is far above the average. In many instances the education and manners of the maid are better and more refined than those of the mistress. Girls who have been school teachers in the east, and brought up in homes of refinement, allured by the high wages paid on the coast, have come out to seek a change in fortune. Many of these have secured places where life is a pleasure, and at the same time the remuneration is excellent. On the other hand, having the culture, many lack a knowledge of the cuisine art which is a necessary qualification for anyone seeking the position of a domestic in a family. About the same proportion of Chinese boys have the same failing, and while the Chinese are taught perhaps by the mistress, the girls are supposed to acquire the attainment by whatever means may be at their disposal.

There are many women in the city who find a Chinaman almost indispensable. He is quick, prompt, polite and clean and evinces an eagerness to learn. These attributes make him a jewel in the eyes of a woman who has the cares of a household on her shoulders. It is said that the householder is compelled oftentimes to employ a Celestial, not being able to find the girl to suit her. The fact can be substantiated, however, that every girl with even fair qualifications who is willing to work can be placed in a situation.

It has been maintained that girls leave their places because of the work that is required of them. In a family of small children the care of these alone is sufficient to demand the strength and attention of one person alone. Yet, in addition to this, cases are frequent where the unfortunate domestic is obliged to perform the house work

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<sup>89</sup> From GIRLS AS DOMESTICS. (1901, January 1). Semi-Weekly World (Vancouver), p. 6.

besides. Any reasonable woman will acknowledge that this is too much for the energies of a single person. The Chinaman absolutely refuses to take care of the youthful sprigs of humanity that may be scattered about the house. The Celestial thus escapes the most tiresome part of a servant's routine. He by this means obtains more time for his other employment, better performance of which brings more credit to him than may be justly due. A fair amount of work apportioned to an individual, be that person Caucasian or any other race, will invariably result in satisfaction to the employer and contentment to the employee.

#### PROPORTION ABOUT EVEN

The proportion of Chinamen and white girls in domestic service in Vancouver is about even. Any effort to change this cannot be made without forethought and preparation. Those who have girls who do what is required faithfully and well may wonder why their friends keep Chinamen. But the Celestial also gives satisfaction, and to part with the useful Mongolian adjunct to their household service would perhaps mean inconvenience to many mistresses and disorder to their domestic arrangements. The proportion of wages paid is also about the same to each class of persons. This is adjusted by economic conditions of the occupations. [...]

Householders must have domestic assistance, and if there are not girls sufficient, then the Mongolian must be taken in. If the existing conditions are regarded as an evil, then they will in time work their own cure. [...] What is regarded as a social evil is the result of circumstances, and the effect will only cease to exist when the cause is removed.

#### **“Filial duty”<sup>90</sup> (1901)**

The Rev. Canon Beanlands [...] gave his experience with Chinese domestic servants, whom he had employed ever since he had been in the country. He usually kept one about three years, and they left to some place where they could get better wages. As to sending money home to China, he said it was often the outcome of promptings of filial duty. He knew of a young Chinaman who had sent a considerable sum home to his parents before he was 21. He attended night school and paid keen attention, though he thought their keenness was largely to increase their capability to earn increased wages.

#### **“Impossibility of obtaining white domestics”<sup>91</sup> (1901)**

Dr. McKechnie, surgeon for the Vancouver Coal Company and city medical officer, testified before the royal commission<sup>92</sup> yesterday. He had absolutely no use for Chinese in any kind of work. [...] Asked to explain how it was he employed two Chinese servants as domestics in his own house, he said it was due to impossibility of obtaining white domestics. He had gone to extraordinary lengths to obtain such,

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<sup>90</sup> From ORIENTAL COMMISSION. (1901, April 16). *Weekly News-Advertiser*, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> From NANAIMO. (1901, April 17). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> The Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration.

without avail, offering \$40 per month for a cook, and \$50 per month on another occasion, without responses to widely distributed advertisements. He had prepaid the passage of servants from as far east as Montreal, but they left him for other employments when here a little time.

### **“A God-send to this country”<sup>93</sup> (1901)**

Mr. B. T. Rogers, Manager of the British Columbia Sugar refinery, after being duly sworn, said [...] he had had experience with Chinese as domestic servants, and thought them a God-send to this country. He had two engaged as domestic servants in his house. He never had trouble in getting girls, and had two girls at present. The two Chinese servants he would not replace for anything. He did not favor exclusion, as he would hate to be without a cook, and did not know whether an increase in the head-tax would make any difference. [...]

Mr. J. Buntzen, Manager of the British Columbia Electric Railway, testified to the effect that [...] he had engaged Chinese as domestic servants, one or two being very good. [He] had difficulty in getting suitable girls.

Mr. Daniel McPhaiden, carpenter and contractor, gave evidence bearing upon the use of Chinese as domestic servants. He had kept a boarding-house both here and in Victoria, employing Chinese, off and on, in both. Orientals were not desirable house helps, as, first, they had to be taught their work and when once they had learned their duties they became very independent. Wages paid to inexperienced Chinese help ranged between \$5 and \$10 per month. Servant girls were rather scarce; if, however, they were encouraged to come to the country there would be a great many more here available for the work. A white girl required about \$10 per month for wages.

### **Time off during the Lunar New Year<sup>94</sup> (1902)**

New Westminster, B.C., Feb. 7 – Chinatown is celebrating to-day in ancient form, and tons of mild explosives are being fired to make a Celestial holiday and incidentally to frighten away all evil spirits, except Sam Suey. With the permission of the city fathers, at the mystic hour of midnight salutes were fired from the chief places of Chinese business, which was a signal to the faithful that “Happy New Year” had commenced, and immediately exploding crackers roared from a score of places in the China quarter, and the show commenced.

As is their usual custom nearly every Chinese house servant in town left his place yesterday afternoon, in most cases without the formality of leave of absence, and with the comforting information for the benefit of his employer: “Me come back Sunday, Friday Saturday all same New Year: Chinaman no work.”

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<sup>93</sup> From ORIENTAL COMMISSION. (1901, May 4). *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> From NEW WESTMINSTER NOTES. (1902, February 7). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 7.

### **“The quickest working antidote”<sup>95</sup> (1902)**

When it was feared that there was smallpox at Harrison, the services of Health Inspector Marrion and the city apparatus were requisitioned to assist in the disinfection and fumigation of the place and the inmates thereof. The other evening everyone about the place was supplied with bichloride of mercury lozenges to be used in taking a bath. The Chinese servants were supplied the same way.

One of the Chinamen put the lozenge into the water pitcher in his room. He did not use a great deal of the water, apparently, because the pitcher was nearly full the next evening. He had drinking water in a duplicate pitcher. On the following evening he took a drink out of one of the pitchers. Just after it was done he thought of the fact that the antiseptic tablets had gone into one of the pitchers, and that he had been warned that they were deadly poison. The thought came to him that he might have partaken of the poisoned water, and with a series of yells that would make a Comanche blush for his ability as a raiser of hair and hair-raising howls, he rushed down stairs and threw himself out rigid on the office floor.

It was with difficulty elicited from him that he had taken the “poison water,” and a person who was present rushed off to the residence of the doctor, where Mr. Marrion was at the time attending to the work of formaldehydization. The doctor took a run up to the hotel, being under the impression that the misapplication of the means of prevention was worse than the disease.

Mr. Marrion got up as quickly as he could when his work was finished and asked the doctor if the Chinaman was dead.

“Dead?” said the doctor, “not a bit of him. I took a taste of the water and found that he had taken the pure water and not that in which the tablets had been dissolved, so I applied my pedal extremity to the caboose of his trousers and told him to get up. And he did forthwith. It was the quickest working antidote on record.”

### **Liquor duty<sup>96</sup> (1902)**

Commissioner Munro said there were many good hotels in the City which catered to early morning thirsts through Chinese servants. This, of course, was before the regular bar-tenders got around.

### **“A case of Hobson’s choice”<sup>97</sup> (1903)**

The week has been divided for Vancouver women between two fiercely opposing forces – public politics and private woe – for have not our faithful Chinamen been and gone and left us to wash the dishes and sweep the rooms, while they reveled in a Celestial heaven of opium, fire-crackers and puppy-pie? [...] We women are very

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<sup>95</sup> From ANTIDOTE. (1902, July 28). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> From LICENSING BOARD. (1902, December 20). *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> From Gwen. (1903, February 1). FROM A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW. *Daily News Advertiser* (Vancouver), p. 9.

dependent upon our Chinese servants, and we will fight every man, tooth and nail, who, by restricting Chinese emigration, tries to take them from us. If we could get white servants we would not complain, but when it is a case of Hobson's choice – Chinaman or no one – give us a Chinaman every time.

### **“Down with the hay”<sup>98</sup> (1903)**

A few days ago Sam, a Chinese domestic who is employed in the family of Mr. J. H. Senkler, went up into the hayloft to throw some hay to a kind-faced old cow. Sam lost his balance and came down with the hay. His cries for help startled the entire neighborhood and assistance soon came. Upon examination it was found that Sam had a badly damaged leg, and his friends in Chinatown were communicated with. A few hours later an express wagon arrived and the injured man was taken to the Chinese hospital.

### **“Obliged to board away from home”<sup>99</sup> (1904)**

#### **Employing Chinese servants was occasionally seen as a political liability.**

Most of your readers will remember the time when a certain medico in the city, seeking political honors, discharged his Chinese servant so that he could not be charged during the campaign with employing them, with the result that, being unable to get white help, he and his family were obliged to board away from home until he retired from politics, when he hired back the Chinese.

### **“Chinamen were poisoned by gas”<sup>100</sup> (1905)**

Two Chinese domestics in the employ of Geo. A. Kirk were found dead in their room in the rear part of their employer's residence on St. Charles Street yesterday morning. Death was evidently caused by gas poisoning, due to the imperfect combustion of charcoal, which the unfortunate domestics had left burning in their apartment when they lay down to sleep.

It appears that before retiring they ignited some charcoal in a coal scuttle, for the purpose, doubtless, of heating the room for the night. On Sunday morning as they gave no signs of being up, Mr. Kirk was sent to their room to investigate. There he found two Chinamen, dead on their beds. He at once communicated with the police, and Constables Best and Munro drove to the scene in the patrol wagon, accompanied by a man from Hanna's undertaking establishment. Subsequently Sergeant Hawthorn went to the scene and investigated the circumstances and condition of the room. The two bodies were removed to the morgue.

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<sup>98</sup> From Down With the Hay. (1903, March 5). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> From ANTI-HUMBUG. (1904, October 20). VERY SMALL – ONIONS. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> From CHINAMEN WERE POISONED BY GAS. (1905, February 13). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.

The Chinese had plainly been poisoned by gas. [...] Cold snaps such as the one Victoria has just experienced frequently produce their harvests of death from this cause. People, especially Asiatics, ignore the many sad lessons that are taught from time to time regarding the fatal effects of carbon gas, and continue to ignite charcoal, or coal, close the window until the room is air tight, and then lie down – to die<sup>101</sup>. The room occupied by the domestics had been closed as tight as a drum. Both the victims of this unfortunate occurrence are young men, but little is known of them outside of Chinatown. Their names are Chine Far Yuen and Ma On.

### “How I tried to learn the Chinese tongue”<sup>102</sup> (1905)

Being stationed some years ago in a small mining town in the interior of British Columbia, I had a very intelligent Chinese servant, and my duties not being onerous I had a good deal of spare time on my hands – so I thought it would not be a bad idea to try and master the intricacies of the Chinese language. I informed John of my intention, asked him to teach me, and I would return the compliment by helping him to improve his English. By way of encouragement, he told me it would take at least seven years to acquire a knowledge of the language, and even then he did not think I would succeed, but I decided to try anyway.

I commenced my task by learning ordinary household words, such as chair, table, fire, stove, meat, bread, etc., etc., and after considerable practice succeeded in pronouncing them correctly, at least John said, but I am inclined to think he must have kissed the blarney stone. However, I was well satisfied with my progress, and one day I undertook to tell him to broil a steak for dinner.

John looked at me steadily for a minute and said, with a curious twitching around the corners of his mouth, “You know what you say?” “Of course I do,” I answered, and although the Chinese are naturally polite, he could not stand it any longer but went off into roars of laughter. I lost my temper and abused him roundly, but it only made him worse, and I could not get a word out of him as to what there was so funny<sup>103</sup> about it. So I started off to a friend of mine who also had a Chinese servant and had him called into the room. I told him I had been studying Chinese and wanted him to tell me what a phrase I had constructed meant. He politely said he would, so I repeated it to him and had hardly finished when he burst into roars of laughter, dropped into a chair and from that rolled off onto the floor and I thought

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<sup>101</sup> “An inquest was held on Thursday to inquire into the death of Lee, a Chinese domestic employed by Dr. Fagan who was found dead in his room on Wednesday morning. The evidence showed that death was due to asphyxiation, the unfortunate man having left charcoal burning in a coal oil tin when he retired. He had been suffering from rheumatism and had evidently taken, without knowing the danger, a most hazardous method of heating his room. A verdict of accidental death was returned by the jury.” NEWS OF THE PROVINCE. (1902, February 1). *Daily News-Advertiser*, p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> From J.V.W. (1905, November 26). HOW I TRIED TO LEARN THE CHINESE TONGUE. *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> It is possible he meant to say 烤牛排 (Kǎo niúpái), “broil a steak”, and instead said 靠女孩 (Kào nǚhái), slang for sleeping with a young woman. A Mandarin instructor of my acquaintance thought there was another, more likely, possibility, but declined to share the details.



would have gone into convulsions. My monkey was up now, and I determined to find out the meaning of it if possible, so I called on two or three more of my friends who had Chinese servants, with the same result in each case, only with slight variations.

I had a Chinese friend highly educated and who spoke English as well as I did, who was bookkeeper and manager for a large Chinese firm. I decided to call on him and lay the matter before him and ask him to honestly tell me what it meant. He promised me he would if he could, so I repeated the phrase, he looked at me for a moment, bit his lips, and when I thought he would have burst a blood vessel in his efforts to keep his countenance, he could not stand it any longer and went off into a laughing fit like the rest of them. I waited patiently until he could not laugh any longer, for an explanation of the extraordinary effect of my efforts in the Chinese language. When he had sufficiently recovered, he told me he could not translate it for me, as he knew of no words in the English language which could convey to me even an idea of the absurdity of the phrase and the ridiculous effect it had in Chinese, and with that he went off laughing again. Two or three Chinamen in the store who had heard me were by this time rolling on the floor in convulsions of laughter.

Concluding that Asiatic languages were not my forte, I gave up the job in despair and graciously abandoned my studies.

I may add that for the next month or two my appearance on the street was sufficient to send into convulsions of laughter any Chinaman I chanced to meet.

### **“The domestic servant question”<sup>104</sup> (1905)**

The domestic servant question is rapidly becoming, indeed it now is, a serious one in British Columbia. When the head tax on Chinese immigrants increased to \$500 The Province drew public attention to the fact that this difficulty would assuredly arise, and it pointed out the wisdom of some effort being made to meet and dispose of it before it became too great.

In this province, as indeed all along the Pacific coast, the Chinaman alone is available, except to a very limited degree, as a domestic in private families. And whatever exception may be taken to him, in other respects, it must be admitted that here at least he fills the requirements, and fills them well. When the oriental steamers ceased to bring over their complements of Chinese steerage passengers the prediction was made that the demand for servants would quickly become much greater than the supply, and that as a natural consequence the wage of domestics would increase to such a degree that very soon many families in reasonably comfortable circumstances would be unable to employ them, and would likely have to dispense with help altogether.

The situation has not become so acute as this, but servants are certainly becoming more difficult to obtain, and their wages are increasing in accordance with the law which governs supply and demand. At one time it was customary for families to secure the services of Chinese boys, at a low figure, and these boys they trained so

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<sup>104</sup> From DOMESTIC SERVANT QUESTION. (1905, April 19). *The Province*, p. 8.

that they became very useful and expert servants. That day, however, seems to have gone with the abundant supply of Chinese labor on the market.

Nor is there any class to take the place of the Chinese domestic. No systematic attempt has been made to bring trained or untrained servant girls from the East or Europe, although many warnings have been given that this would have to be done if the demand for domestics was to be met. The few instances, too, in which girls have been induced to cross the continent have not proved highly successful. In some instances they have got married shortly after arriving, leaving their employers again in the lurch, or they have shown an impatience with their new surroundings which has greatly impaired their usefulness. The knowledge that this particular labor market is poorly supplied has the same effect upon those offering their services that similar knowledge has in all other branches of business governed by supply and demand.

What the ultimate outcome of the situation will be it is difficult to predict, but at the present moment there appears little hope of relief.

### **“Chinese servants have become very exacting”<sup>105</sup> (1907)**

We have a letter from a correspondent which we are unable to print because he desires it to appear anonymously, but in which some valuable points are made in regard to domestic service, and as it is the rule of all newspapers to make use of good things whenever they find them, we propose to appropriate our correspondent’s ideas, for which we know he will excuse us.

He says that the importation of Chinese to be employed as domestic servants will not solve that phase of the labor problem, unless we are prepared to hand over our household interests to the Asiatics exclusively, for, as he points out, the greater the influx of Chinese servants the more likelihood that female domestic servants will decline to come to this province.

Our correspondent thinks that we would find ourselves in a sad case if we permitted Chinese to come in to such an extent that they would control the supply of domestic labor. He believes that they would make us feel in more ways than one how dependent we would be upon them. As he says, they have the evil features of trades-unionism, and none of its advantages. Moreover, their unions are secret organizations, and it is impossible for white people to exercise any influence over them.

There is no doubt that, with the shortage of labor, Chinese servants have become very exacting. They all want to become cooks, and, as everyone knows, there are other household duties for which help is needed quite as much as for cooking. Besides, there is a distinct tendency on the part of Chinese servants to disregard all contracts which they make with their [employers]<sup>106</sup>. They leave on short notice, and very many of them are utterly insensible to any kind of responsibility.

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<sup>105</sup> From DOMESTIC SERVANTS. (1907, June 9). *The Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> The original wrote “employees”.

The shortage of labor is enabling us to see the Chinaman in a true light, and there is plenty of evidence that if he is allowed to control the domestic service of the province our homes would soon be in the hands of a union of Orientals, with whom we have almost nothing in common. It would be a fool's paradise into which we would enter if the prayer for the free admission of Chinese as servants were complied with.

It is proper to add that among Chinamen there are many who fully appreciate their obligations towards their employers, men of good, sterling honesty, whose word can be absolutely relied on. But such are in the small minority. It would be exceedingly bad policy for the housewives of British Columbia to entrust their domestic welfare in the hands of irresponsible Chinamen, and this is just what would happen if the request for their free admission into Canada were complied with.

### **Reaction to Vancouver's Anti-Asian Riot<sup>107</sup> (September, 1907)**

**A parade and lecture by Vancouver's Asiatic Exclusion League turned into a violent riot in September of 1907. The rioters targeted Chinese and Japanese businesses.**

Vancouver, Sept. 9 – All Chinese domestics and mill workmen in Vancouver left work this morning and announced their intention of staying in Chinatown until the riot trouble is over. Chinese boys who sleep in their employers' houses were notified by telephone this morning that they must leave immediately or they would be killed. Many instances of this threat being made are given.

When hardware stores opened this morning the Chinese swarmed along the sidewalks and crowded the stores immediately. Hundreds of revolvers sold within a few minutes, and Chinese carried them away by armfuls to Chinatown. An hour later the police notified the stores to cease selling guns until the trouble was over.

### **"Exodus of domestics"<sup>108</sup> (September, 1907)**

When the hundreds of Chinese domestics that are employed throughout the city had washed up the "dinner things" on Sunday night, they went down to Chinatown and stayed there. It appears that there is a general order that they shall not return to work "until all this trouble is settled." Some say that this is the result of a decision on the part of the Chinese Restaurant Association which in this instance has taken a leaf out of the book of labor unionism, and others that in it appears the iron hand in the velvet glove of influential tyees. As a matter of fact, John Chinaman the domestic is frightened. He cannot read the papers, and he can only judge by what he sees and what his orders are.

Thus is the "domestic servant difficulty" accentuated with a vengeance. In a thousand houses this morning people had to get their own breakfasts. Mistresses of west end homes woke to the fact that there was nothing doing in the kitchen. Husbands were interrogated as to the ominous quiet that reigned in the downstairs

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<sup>107</sup> From CHINESE ARMING. (1907, September 9). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> From EXODUS OF DOMESTICS. (1907, September 10). *The Province*, p. 12.

regions. John Chinaman never makes much noise, but this morning a dead stillness prevailed. No savory smell of matitudinal frizzling bacon was wafted to the upper regions. The downstairs rooms looked just as they did the night before. Nothing had been touched. The cooking range was cold – and yesterday’s ashes did not look hopeful.

The inconvenience to householders is, of course, immense. There are numbers of mothers who have enough to do in attending to their babies and children of a morning without going to the kitchen to cook breakfast or to perform the many household duties that in a well-ordered household are assigned to the usual domestic. There are women with sick husbands or other invalids who need their constant attention, and who are sadly put to it by this exodus of helpers. Of course they have turned to it with a will and are doing their best to come up to the exigencies of the situation, but it goes without saying that this development means the entire upsetting of the domestic arrangements of a very large proportion of the best homes in the city. It is impossible to run large houses very well without servants, and if servants cannot be obtained, no doubt a damper is placed on the building of large houses.

A happening like that of yesterday brings people face to face with the facts of the household situation in a way that nothing else would. It is easy to say that the situation will right itself in time, but until it does, it means disorganization and discomfort in hundreds of comfortable homes. It means in many cases, where there is sickness, positive hardship. To the healthy and strong a few days of the picnic style of living may not be of much account; but the invalids and the aged and weak are deserving of much sympathy under the circumstances.

### **“Back upon their own resources”<sup>109</sup> (September, 1907)**

Many Vancouver households this week have been indulging in the pleasant experience of camping without any need of going further than their own doors. This was brought about, of course, by the Anti-Oriental trouble, that for a day or two at least, threw a large number of housekeepers, who had never perhaps before been entitled to that term except in the baldest sense of the word, back upon their own resources. One is inclined to think that but for the saving grace of loyalty, many strange stories might be told of the way in which the Vancouver housekeepers met the situation.

According to the facile writer in the Sunday woman’s page of our morning contemporary, Vancouver women are well nigh dependent upon their Chinese help, so the difficulties that arose when they were suddenly bereft of them can easily be imagined. Just why there should have been any serious difficulties, however, it is hard to see. The women of the Anglo-Saxon race from the queen down to the cottager are proverbially renowned for their excellent housekeeping qualities. Does “Gwen”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> From Beth. (1907, September 14). Women, Wraps and Wrangles. *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> Most of Gwen’s articles in this collection are found in the section on Tax Incidence.

wish us to believe that in their migration to Canada those same qualities have been left behind?

I grant that it is not always easy to meet domestic catastrophes with a smiling face, for, strangely enough, though no one ever considers it a hardship to rise early in the morning to prepare breakfast while out camping on the holidays, it is considered by some a very real misfortune to have to leave one's bed an hour earlier than usual, in the day of domestic misfortune, to address oneself to the far less romantic task of preparing the ordinary homely breakfast.

I am inclined to think that "Gwen's" stories of the absolute necessity of Chinese domestic help are likely to tend towards encouraging Vancouver women to forget those time old qualities of housewifeliness and thrift which our great grandfathers most prized in our great grandmothers. Almost, it would seem, that they are growing daily more imbued with the belief that housekeeping, that is doing one's own work and attending to one's own children, is either beneath their dignity, or too much trouble. Such a belief, if encouraged, is likely to land Vancouver in a far worse position than ever the present influx of Chinese is said to ensure.

### **"Musings without malice"<sup>111</sup> (1907)**

I notice that barbers' shops and real estate offices are numerous in this beautiful city [of Victoria]. One can only suppose that people are anxious to get rid of the burden which housekeeping entails. The boarding-houses indicate the same state of affairs, and it appears that the luxurious male inhabitants of the place, are ready and willing to let someone wield the razor for them, for the paltry sum which that luxury entails, but the Socialistic spirit cannot tolerate the idea of the wives and mothers of the race requiring household help at a reasonable price, for such little burdens, as the carrying of firewood, scrubbing and washing!

Oh, no – what does it matter? A delicately built woman may stand in the drizzling rain and heave up armfuls of "waste wood" from the saw-mills, into the window of a woodshed, but the husband finds it economical to have his chin shaved by a barber – his time is too precious for this important toilet adornment – he most likely has to attend a meeting where the iniquity of allowing the Chinese to enter the Province is in session. There are fees to be paid for the up-keep of the organizing secretary of his "Union," a fee that would go far towards paying for the "China boy" who might help his wife with the arduous and never-ending duties of the household and leave her leisure to see more of the children. But no, a sort of wave of absolute selfishness seems to envelop those who clamor loudly for the exclusiveness of the only available help in households.

They do not see that they are hurting the very core of community life – the home. It does not matter if the mother, forced to work from morning until night, finds but little time to look after the youngsters, who, left to themselves, find their recreation in the streets. Talk of the "yellow peril" [is misleading] – the peril which

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<sup>111</sup> From *Musings without Malice*. (1907, December 14). *The Week* (Victoria), p. 10.

besets this country lies in the waning influence of the parents in the home. Juvenile courts are an outcome of this state of affairs. We hear on every side of petitions for legislation which will curb the evils among children, who have become as it were, “wards of the street.” Good, wholesome food, at a reasonable price, eggs, butter and milk, in plenty, and the companionship of the parents instead of street companions, would remedy many of the evils of which we read.

### **“A white girl in every home”<sup>112</sup> (1908)**

“We want to place a white girl in every home in this city where Chinese are engaged. We consider a white girl to be a far better addition to a household in every respect than a Chinaman. Already we have had quite a number of applications for domestic help from different homes in this city. No girl will be allowed to come out, however, unless she has been applied for.”

Thus Adjutant Wakefield, of the local corps of the Salvation Army, in answer to a query put to him this morning by a *World* reporter in respect to the vigorous immigration work that is being conducted on the coast by the arm that “saves” in a double sense of the word. The adjutant was asked from which section of the community he received the largest number of requests for white servants – from the houses where Chinese were employed, or from the houses where no help was kept. He replied that the demand came from the people who were not employing Chinese, which would seem to permanently disprove the weak arguments of the pro-Asiatics that they use Chinamen because they can’t obtain white help.

What Adjutant Wakefield is doing at Vancouver and the surrounding neighborhood, Capt. Richard, recently appointed to assist the adjutant in his immigration work, is doing on Vancouver Island. This energetic officer, who was formerly in charge of the Lethbridge corps, is securing numerous applications for both domestic and farm help. These will be handed into headquarters at Vancouver, and forwarded from there on to the Dominion headquarters at Toronto. Staff Captain Myles is touring the Okanagan country on the same mission, and has there found many applications for farm help.

Those desiring help through the medium of the army, advance \$50 for passage money, while the army assumes responsibility for the balance, the emigrants traveling second class.

### **Rudyard Kipling on British Columbia’s Chinese servants<sup>113</sup> (1908)**

One cannot leave a thing alone if it is thrust under the nose at every turn. I had not quitted the Quebec steamer three minutes when I was asked point-blank: “What do you think of the question of Asiatic Exclusion which is Agitating our Community?” [...] The Question appears to be confined to British Columbia. [...]

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<sup>112</sup> From WOULD DISPLACE CHINESE DOMESTICS. (1908, January 24). *Daily World* (Van.), p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> From Kipling, R. (1908). *Letters to the Family*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited.

The Chinaman has always been in the habit of coming to British Columbia, where he makes, as he does elsewhere, the finest servant in the world. No one, I was assured on all hands, objects to the biddable Chinaman. He takes work which no white man in a new country will handle, and when kicked by the mean white will not grossly retaliate. He has always paid for the privilege of making his fortune on this wonderful coast, but with singular forethought and statesmanship, the popular Will, some few years ago, decided to double [sic.] the head tax on his entry. Strange as it may appear, the Chinaman now charges double for his services, and is scarce at that. This is said to be one of the reasons why overworked white women die or go off their heads; and why in new cities you can see blocks of flats being built to minimize the inconveniences of housekeeping without help. The birth-rate will fall later in exact proportion to those flats. [...]

Now hear a wife, a mother, and a housekeeper.

“We have to pay for this precious state of things with our health and our children’s. Do you know the saying that the Frontier is hard on women and cattle? This isn’t the frontier, but in some respects it’s worse, because we have all the luxuries and appearances – the pretty class and silver to put on the table. We have to dust, polish, and arrange ‘em after we’ve done our housework. I don’t suppose that means anything to you, but – try it for a month! We have no help. A Chinaman costs fifty or sixty dollars a month now. Our husbands can’t always afford that. How old would you take me for? I’m not thirty. Well thank God, I stopped my sister from coming out West. Oh, yes, it’s a fine country – for men.”

“Can’t you import servants from England?”

“I can’t pay a girl’s passage in order to have her married in three months. Besides, she wouldn’t work. They won’t when they see Chinamen working.”

“Do you object to the Japanese, too?”

“Of course not. No one does. It’s only politics. The wives of the men who earn six and seven dollars a day – skilled labor they call it – have Chinese and Jap servants. We can’t afford it. We have to think of saving for the future, but those other people live up to every cent they earn. They know they’re all right. They’re Labor. They’ll be looked after, whatever happens. You can see how the State looks after me.”

### “Objected to Chinese band”<sup>114</sup> (1909)

**Though mentioning Chinese servants only in passing, this article sheds some light on one of their preferred entertainments.**

The power of a Chinese band to induce sleep [...] was considered by Mr. Justice Morrison in [the] supreme court chambers this morning. Louis Levalle, a rooming house keeper on East Pender street, applied for an injunction either closing the new Chinese theater, which started last November, or limiting the hours of performance, his allegation being that the efforts of the specially imported bandsmen from China resulted in noise so disturbing that people refused to sleep in his apartments, and his

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<sup>114</sup> From OBJECTED TO CHINESE BAND. (1909, April 1). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 11.

business was suffering. The band played throughout the performance, which lasts from seven o'clock until twelve, and these were weary hours in his memory and destructive to his business. [...]

His Lordship inquired [...] whether the performance could not start an hour earlier, six o'clock, and close an hour sooner.

"The Chinese servants cannot get down there by that time," replied Mr. Reid, K.C., counsel for the respondent.

"Oh, Chinese servants regulate their own hours," declared His Lordship with conviction.

It is essential, according to Chinese custom, that a band play throughout the play, and at the earliest it cannot close before twelve o'clock, were statements in the theater proprietors' affidavit.

### **"Servants of Vancouver have a guild"<sup>115</sup> (1911)**

The Chinese house servants of Vancouver have a guild that goes the trade union one better. Not only do they fix the wage, but if, for any reason, one Chinaman gets fired unjustly or if the boss fails to pay up, there is no Chinaman to take his place. Hence the outcry for old country servant girls.

### **"Chinese servants at root of evil"<sup>116</sup> (1915)**

Condemnation of the police court system which made the fines and estreated bail of women of the underworld the chief source of revenue of the city of Vancouver was expressed in trenchant language by more than one speaker at the Social Service Council's public meeting in Hamilton Hall last evening. A resolution dealing with a single phase of the problem was put by Mrs. J. O. Perry and seconded by Mrs. J. K. Macken, and enthusiastically carried.

"Seventy-five per cent of our fallen womanhood in Vancouver is the product of our restaurants," declared Mrs. Perry, in putting the following resolution:

"That the Social Service Council place itself on record against the employment of white girls in Chinese restaurants, and further, that the members of the organizations sending delegations to the council study the problems of unemployment with a view to remedying the conditions which force our white girls into positions detrimental to their physical and moral welfare."

With the amendment that a copy be sent to the government, the resolution was unanimously carried.

Declaring that appalling conditions grew from such associations, Mrs. Perry laid the responsibility upon the Shaughnessy Heights and West End residents who employed Chinese servants in their homes instead of white girls.

Mrs. Perry said that the license commissioners had it within their discretion to compel all hotel keepers to employ white labor on penalty of forfeiture of their

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<sup>115</sup> From A Page for the Wage Worker. (1911, September 23). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 35.

<sup>116</sup> From CHINESE SERVANTS AT ROOT OF EVIL. (1915, July 23). *Vancouver World*, p. 2.



license. The commissioners had refused, at the meeting attended by the Social Service Council delegates, but she drew the audience's attention to the fact that the Prince Rupert commissioners had fearlessly exercised<sup>117</sup> that discretion. The answer given by the hotel keepers who opposed the measure, Mrs. Perry denounced scathingly. It was that a hotel was no fit place for white girls to be about.

"By those words they condemned themselves," said the speaker. "If that is the kind of hotel they keep, they are not fit to keep their licenses."

### The Janet Smith Bill<sup>118</sup> (1924)

**In the summer of 1924, Janet Smith was murdered<sup>119</sup> at the home where she worked as a nursemaid. The same household employed a Chinese servant, upon whom (unproven) suspicion was cast. In the wake of this death, a bill was proposed that would forbid the employment of "white girls" in homes with Chinese servants. This took place the year after Canada's government passed its Exclusion Act, which virtually banned Chinese immigration until 1947. Despite popular support, the bill was found *ultra vires* – beyond the government's power to pass – as it would violate an agreement<sup>120</sup> between the Canadian and Japanese governments.**

British Columbia Chinese protested to the Provincial Government against the Janet Smith Bill to-day through Lin Pao Heng, Chinese consul at Vancouver. At a conference with Premier Oliver this morning the Chinese consul declared that Mrs. Mary Ellen Smith's measure, which would forbid the employment of Chinese in the same homes with white girls, was a gross discrimination against Orientals. Such legislation, he asserted, was not justified by conditions prevailing in British Columbia homes. He protested emphatically against the introduction of racial considerations on such slim grounds as the Janet Smith murder case. [...] Opposition to the Bill among politicians is based on the fear that its enactment would result only in the dismissal of large numbers of white servant girls. Employers of servants apparently prefer Chinese servants to white women. This is indicated by the fact that a large number of white domestics have left Vancouver homes, refusing to work with Orientals. Their employers evidently declined to dismiss their Chinese servants.

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<sup>117</sup> "The licensed hotels in Prince Rupert are prohibited from employing Chinese servants." Provincial News. (1910, July 15). *The Province*, p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> CHINESE PROTEST JANET SMITH BILL ON RACIAL GROUNDS. (1924, November 26). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> Murder by an unknown person or persons was the verdict given at a second inquest into the death. The first inquest had led to a verdict of accidental death by gunshot: "Mr. F. L. Baker told the jury that he believed the girl had been examining the gun and it had gone off. It had been in a haversack in the front hall of the house, and he believed she had obtained possession of it out of curiosity." "ACCIDENT" IS JURY'S FINDING. (1924, July 29). *The Province*, p. 5.

<sup>120</sup> "[T]he Janet Smith bill, forbidding the employment of Orientals and white girls ad domestics servants in the same homes, apparently is doomed. The measure is absolutely *ultra vires* in the opinion of the government [...]. Mrs. Mary Ellen Smith's anti-Oriental act, it was explained today, contravenes the Japanese treaty, as it attempts to take away from Japanese rights bestowed upon them in that agreement." "JANET SMITH" BILL DOOMED. (1924, December 12). *Vancouver Sun*, p. 1.

## Head Taxes (and who pays them)

**British Columbia and Canada's federal government passed a number of "head taxes" on Chinese immigrants. In the case of Chinese servants, it was clear from an early stage that their employers would pay a large part of the tax, either directly or via higher wages.**

### **"Paid the \$10 tax on their Chinese servants"<sup>121</sup> (1878)**

Under pressure and a threat of having their goods and chattels seized and sold in satisfaction of the Chinese tax, a number of citizens paid the \$10 tax on their Chinese servants. This money the collector passed into the treasury. The decision of Mr. Justice Gray, which declares the tax to be unconstitutional and void, having been promulgated, those citizens who paid the tax are naturally looking for a refund and care clubbing together to commence proceedings against the luckless collector, who will be held personally responsible for the amount in each case by him collected.

The Government, it is presumed, are awaiting a bill of costs from the Chinese whose goods they seized illegally and sold; but having expended the proceeds, it is said that there is not on hand the wherewithal to meet the demands – that they "no have got" the amount necessary to liquidate the claims. In the end the experiment will cost the country several thousand dollars.

### **"Petition against the Chinese Exclusion Bill"<sup>122</sup> (1903)**

**A number of British Columbians were worried by the federal government's increase of the head tax, from \$100 to \$500. This "Exclusion Bill," which sought to reduce Chinese immigration by imposing a high tax on it, is not to be confused with the Exclusion Act of 1923, which would virtually ban Chinese immigration until 1947.**

To the Editor – I have been asked to, [and] have prepared, a separate form of petition against the Chinese Exclusion Bill. I sent a few forms to Vancouver, and I find the ladies there have taken the matter up. But they have added to the petition the following paragraph:

"And whereas since the bill increasing the said tax to \$500 has been passed by the House of Commons, the Chinese household servants are already demanding much higher wages than formerly, those who have received \$30, \$35 and \$40 per month in the past are now asking for an increase of about 30 per cent., and as no white servants can be obtained to take their places the result of this must inevitably be what it has been in San Francisco and other Coast cities in the United States, viz., that the large majority of people who cannot afford to pay these exorbitant wages will be compelled to eat in hotels and restaurants, and the home life largely broken up."

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<sup>121</sup> From "NO HAB GOT!". (1878, October 5). *Daily Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> Angus, F. (1903, May 19). CHINESE SERVANTS. *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4. Written by Forrest Angus (1826 – 1919).

Forms for ladies to sign will lie a day or two in the book stores for ladies' signatures, or may be had for procuring signatures by application to the undersigned. I have no money to pay for canvassers for signatures.

Many gentlemen decline to sign, but say we highly approve of the object of the petition, but fear we may be black listed. Our clever lawyer legislators can surely meet the black listing tyranny.

F. ANGUS,  
[“The Oaks,”] St. Charles Street, [Victoria].

### **“The price of their labor is naturally increased”<sup>123</sup> (1903)**

The appeal which was made to the Senate by quite a large number of the householders in this and other cities in British Columbia, to defeat the measure introduced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to increase the head tax on the Chinese to \$500, and thus make the embargo practically equal to exclusion, pointed to one hardship which the barring out of these Orientals will necessarily occasion to a very considerable portion of the community.

The difficulty, which almost amounts to impossibility, of getting white domestics in this province has rendered that occupation one in which Chinamen have heretofore been almost exclusively employed. In cutting off the importation, not only is the supply of Chinese domestic servants definitely limited, but of course under the circumstances the price of their labor is naturally increased. The result is that many families who heretofore were able to maintain a servant in the household will be compelled to do without one from the inability to pay the increased wage which is demanded.

### **“From a woman’s point of view”<sup>124</sup> (1903)**

**“Gwen,” the editor of the *Daily News-Advertiser’s* Sunday page for women, wrote a number of columns on the impact of the head tax on British Columbia’s servant problem.**

The question of highly taxing all Chinese labor which competes with white labor is more a man’s subject for discussion than a woman’s, as it is men and not women that the yellow Celestial comes into competition with, but when it is simply a question of domestic service then the matter touches women far more closely than it does the men, and surely we should have a voice in the decree. In domestic service, however, the Chinaman does not even really compete with the white woman at all, because whenever possible to obtain her services, every householder prefers and

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<sup>123</sup> From CHINESE RESTRICTION. (1903, September 29). *The Province*, p. 6.

<sup>124</sup> From Gwen. (1903, November 1). FROM A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 9.

engages the capable white maid, but as there are only on an average three white women to fill every ten places, why not permit the Chinamen to fill the balance?

Once the Chinamen enters into competition with white women servants, then it will be time enough to legislate against them. No one has the welfare of the Vancouver working man more at heart than I have, and my pen and influence will always be his in favor of just wages and right treatment; so too, the working woman has always my keenest sympathy and my unflinching help, for am I not a working woman myself, and know what it is to work very hard too, and I should most certainly resent Chinese competition in these columns. But so long as the Chinese do not compete with us either as domestic servants, telephone operators, shop assistants, journalists or in any other feminine calling, why legislate against their usefulness to us in occupying the positions of domestic servants which there are not 30 per cent of the necessary women to fill?

### **“Who will pay the tax?”<sup>125</sup> (1905)**

Some time ago when the \$500 embargo was first imposed upon Chinamen coming into the country, the question was asked, “Who will pay the tax?” I think the answer is conclusively forthcoming to-day. Radical increases in Chinese servants’ wages, and in the rates for all forms of Chinese labor, are simply causing the white housekeeper to pay the Chinese tax.

The Government has certainly proved itself possessed of an extremely Liberal policy so far as our pockets are concerned. In Vancouver to-day we women are paying higher rates for inferior services – that is all.

There are no white servants to fill the demand, and now not even enough Chinese ones, consequently the Chinese can ask and obtain much larger wages than formerly, wages being totally disproportionate to their merits, while a complacent Government smiles serenely secure in the knowledge that it has truckled to an ill-advised minority by taxing the average householder.

Will the proposed new Usonian<sup>126</sup> Treaty with China exercise a beneficial influence upon Canada? This is the question that women in Vancouver are asking to-day. If Chinese domestic servants are to be admitted free into the United States, will they not soon be again admitted free or almost free into Canada? The state and economic aspects of the international question concern the men of the country, the ‘servant question’ concerns the women, and it is just as well that the complacent gentlemen at Ottawa should know that we are weary of the extortionate demands of local Chinese domestics, and their newly-acquired insolent and independent ways.

It is all very well for men to make laws and impose promiscuous taxes – they seem to think that breakfast and dinner grow upon the table by the special dispensation of Providence – but if these same serene M.P.’s had to black-lead the

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<sup>125</sup> From Gwen. (1905, August 6). FROM A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 9.

<sup>126</sup> United States. A more precise term than ‘American’, as that could refer to South, Central or North America, as well as to the United States alone.

kitchen stove, wash the pots and pans and cook their meals on Summer days, I fancy the Chinese tax would soon be lifted.

(This expression of opinion on the Chinese question is, of course, from a householder and woman's point of view. -Ed.)

### **“A woman's question”<sup>127</sup> (1905)**

As remarked in a foot-note by the Editor last week, the expressions of opinion in these columns upon the Chinese domestic servant question are “of course from a woman's point of view” – some men would probably say “only from a woman's point of view” – but all the same it is both satisfactory and encouraging to note that many of the masculine order are endorsing in no uncertain phraseology my contention that the \$500 tax imposed on domestic servants is imbecilic, and should be revoked.

The women are on my side to a unit – at least I have yet to hear of one single housekeeper in Vancouver who is not reduced to righteous exasperation – and sometimes tired tears – whenever she bethinks her of the extortionate demands and independent behavior of her erstwhile polite, industrious Chinese domestic. And now even the men of Vancouver are rising in their wrath against the contemptible truckling of a pusillanimous Government. I knew they would, just as soon as the creaking and groaning of the household machinery required them to get up at six o'clock in the morning and chop wood for the breakfast fire, and live on “canned meat” and “bought cake”.

The Chinese servant question is a woman's question, and it was woman's common sense that foresaw and fought against the calamity which has now overwhelmed us in Vancouver. These woman's columns were the first (as they were the only ones) in which open, honest protest has been made against a state of affairs that is affecting the domestic comfort and peace of thousands in our City. With the question of Chinese coolie labor we women do not and need not concern ourselves, let the business men of Canada attend to that problem, but our homes are our kingdoms, and how are we to rule them in peace and comfort when men are legislating to deprive us of all domestic help? If we could get women servants, how joyfully and thankfully we would employ them. But they are simply not to be had on any terms whatsoever.

A pretty state of affairs meddling politicians at Ottawa have brought about! We cannot obtain white help, and they say we shall not have Chinese help. “Shall not” is true, since with the enormous rise in Chinese wages many women are forced to give up keeping a servant altogether.

There is much talk about the Chinese boycott of American goods. What about the Chinese boycott of Vancouver housekeepers? For be it well understood each house in town is now “rated” by the Chinese, and we must pay from \$15 to \$40 per month at their command for our servants. It is of no use for you or me, my dear woman, to say I want a servant at \$15 per month, for if Chinatown has decided that you shall pay \$25, you will have to do so – or do all your own work yourself.

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<sup>127</sup> From Gwen. (1905, August 13). FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 9.

And here is the point which will no doubt ultimately lead the male population to protest against this absurd shutting out of domestic servants in the West. The man pays the bills, and when he finds that he must hand out five, ten or fifteen dollars a month more<sup>128</sup> to his Chinaman than formerly he will rebel.

Why does the government everlastingly rush to extremes? And why is it so wonderfully deficient in common sense? Please Providence, it will content itself in future with legislating for labor and leave us women to legislate for our domestic hearths. We want no meddling masculine interference there.

### C. Gardiner Johnson on the head tax<sup>129</sup> (1906)

**Written by Charles Gardiner Johnson (d. 1926), a pioneer of Vancouver's shipping industry.**

Are we, in the interest of all concerned, doing the right thing for ourselves by insisting on a \$500 tax being placed on the Chinese before they enter Canada? It may be so, but I doubt it. [...]

To-night, Sunday the 29th July, I told my Chinese domestic I would like my supper at 7:30 instead of 7 p.m. The boy, who, by the way, I pay \$25 a month to, and who, as a rule, can talk but little English, took my breath away by saying, "7 o'clock or no supper; I want go Chinatown 7:20." To knock him down was easy, but to reflect and maybe write this was better.

Would, I ask you, this lad have talked to me as he did if he did not thoroughly understand the position, i.e., that Chinese domestic servants were at a premium, and that if I did not employ him someone else would? If that \$500 poll tax was removed and British Columbia had all the Chinese they wished to employ, would this youngster have so answered me? And this brings me to, "if the \$500 poll tax was removed."

I am told that the legislation that imposed the \$500 tax was brought about by the vote of the working-man. [...] Working-man, or man who works with his hands, what are your people, wives and daughters, doing to-day? Are they at home all the week mending and washing your clothes, getting ready your midday meal and supper at night, or are they, as the so-called better off wives and daughters are doing, employing domestic labor to do their arduous work for them, i.e., the Chinese domestic? Tell the truth – go for me – tell me I do not know what I am talking about, when I tell you that your girls are stenographers, or in shops, and go home at night when you do, as tired as you are, and that so long as you or your combined family can afford it you engage cheap (not now under existing circumstances) labor, and save

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<sup>128</sup> The head tax was \$500. The capitalized value, or present value of an infinite stream of payments of \$5, a month apart, at a discount rate of  $r$  per month, is  $\$5/r$ . The *annual* discount rate that makes the two values equal is 13%. Since 6% was a typical business discount rate in that time period, this suggests that either the servants were passing on more than 100% of the tax to their employers, or that they had an unusually high rate of discount.

<sup>129</sup> From Johnson, C. G. (1906, August 4). THE \$500 POLL TAX ON THE CHINESE. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 2.

your wife and your girls the drudgery that once had to be done. Tell me, “working man” friends who speak at election time, if you will swear before a Committee that no clothes of yours are washed by a Chinaman; that if you have not a regular domestic on no occasion is your wife saved the drudgery, and your house scrubbed and cleaned by a Chinaman. Why, of course it is, only you won’t say so.

Times are changed, and maybe it is wrong that they are, and that the wife and daughter who used to have all ready for the Lord and Master are themselves workers now, but that is another question. [...]

Go to your representatives and tell them to remove the poll tax. Let the Chinese in on the old basis. Restrict them, if you like, to certain occupations, but if you go on like we are going we will all be in restaurants whose cooks are Chinese. You will have no home; no servant whom you work hard to pay, and no civility from even your inferior who nobody will deny your Chinese domestic has to be.

This may be a selfish way of looking at the matter, but it is one of the straws that show how the wind blows. Yours very truly,

C. GARDINER JOHNSON.

Vancouver, B.C., July 29th, 1906.

P.S. – Since writing the above I learn action has been commenced re: removing the \$500 poll tax by the Fruit-Growers Association of Kootenay. -C.G.J.

### “The labor shortage”<sup>130</sup> (1906)

Sir: I was glad to see that the question of Chinese servants has been approached by your correspondents, as the present house-help situation is becoming acute and is likely to prove a dilemma in the near future. There does not seem much probability, however, that the poll-tax will be repealed, allowing a general influx of the “Yellow man,” as this move would be distinctly objectionable to the mass of electors, who do not want any more Oriental labor dumped on the market than is permitted by the grace of the Imperial Government and the complacency of the Ottawa Legislature. Therefore, it seems highly probable that we will have to evolve some other solution of the difficulty, work out our own domestic destiny, so to speak; or else look pleasant and pay whatever increased wages the wily Chinese may demand for his services.

Argued logically, it means, of course, that as the present supply of cooks and housemaids becomes diminished through disease, disablement, old age, etc., we won’t have any one at all to cook the juicy porterhouse or scrub the back verandah; that is, unless we alter our social conditions somewhat. This is the secret of all the trouble, as your correspondent rightly observes. In common with the rest of North America we have become so infatuated with the desire to amass money that we have sent our daughters, sister and even mothers, in some cases, into the ranks of workers. Perhaps I should qualify this statement by saying that we have deliberately encouraged the female sex to have their natural and honored sphere of household duty by our own

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<sup>130</sup> From DOMESTICITY. (1906, August 5). THE LABOR SHORTAGE. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 4.

complete subjection to commercialism and the making of money. The result is that domestic work has become a drudge to the present generation of women, who see their own fathers and brothers neglect their homes for more exciting fields. Being women, they have accepted the servility of business life because it pays them financially well, and in most cases gratifies an inordinate love of dress and display, which can only be expected from a perversion of the fundamental principles of family and social life.

Of course, the whole question of female employment is a very vexed one, because the agitators and advocates of female emancipation claim the right for women to employ their time in any manner they choose. The men are so indifferent, for the most part, to what they claim, or cackle about, so long as they don't directly threaten masculine prerogatives, that they have got in their own way, and are assisting to-day to further delude their unfortunate sisters in shaping their own and the destiny of the race.

What the end is going to be, who can say? Will a revulsion of feeling arise and sweep away these false doctrines, and insist upon the restoration of the home and family life? It seems hardly possible, in an age so enslaved by the lust of riches and power – not to exercise for good but power to oppress others or repress them, as the case may be. This state of public sentiment has reached its zenith in the United States, and it is invading Canada. Careful and impartial observers have noted the changed attitude of women in the States and their predictions are voiced in no uncertain tones. Women may have their liberty, as they call it, and go into the cities to slave and compete with man, while their more favored sisters make of their homes merely a headquarters in which to stock their gew-gaws and finery; but they must pay the toll, as the social wreckage which strews the streets of every city on this continent amply demonstrates. Of course the end may often be protracted, but it is nevertheless inevitable, as its law is inexorable.

Herein, I think, we have the solution of the question. If women and girls will not stay at home and look after their homes, the inferior (as we term them) races must be employed. If, then, we bar out the Chinese, etc., and still persist in allowing our women to work, we reach the dilemma, on the horns of which we are liable to be elevated, to the accompaniment of ruined digestions, if not something worse, if we do not grapple with and reverse the engine.

Yours, etc.,

DOMESTICITY.

North Vancouver, August 3rd, [sic.] 1906.



## **“Why our daughters do not seek domestic service”<sup>131</sup> (1906)**

Sir: I would like to mention one point left untouched in Mr. C. Gardiner Johnson’s communication of this date on the Chinese poll-tax and its effect on the domestic service question. [...]

Mr. Johnson does not mention why our daughters do not seek domestic service in preference to working in laundries, biscuit and candy factories, garment-making shops and other places where the work is hard, exacting and exhausting.

I have every reason to believe that it is mainly because girls who seek domestic service are placed in a false and humiliating position; from being equals before seeking such work, they become “menials” as soon as they engage in it, and are made the butt of “society”.

Why should such work – or any work – be considered menial? I can see no other cause than the false pedestal of social importance assumed by those who are in a position to buy domestic help.

But, are we not all on the labor market? Even King Edward is supposed to give return for his hire. In a word, my contention is that until we place all labor on the same plane of honor – where the king and the street-scavenger are fellow co-workers with the rest of humanity, white, yellow and black – we are no better than the caste-slaves of India that we superciliously smile at.

In closing, I beg to challenge Mr. Johnson’s closing statement as herewith quoted: “Your inferior whom nobody will deny your Chinese domestic has to be.” I would remind Mr. Johnson of the prayer of the Pharisee, and counsel him to be slow in putting himself on a plane above even his Chinese domestic.

Yours, etc.,

ROBT. GIBSON.

Mount Pleasant, August 4th, 1906.

## **“Hope for housekeepers”<sup>132</sup> (1906)**

“Hope for Housekeepers” is the motto of the week. The farmers of Alberta and the fruit-growers of Kootenay are asking for the Chinese tax to be partially lifted. Let us hope that this is the end of the wedge towards an inadequate supply of house-servants, which are to-day only to be obtained in Vancouver at exorbitant wages. If we keep a Chinese cook, we ourselves pay his tax to the tune of \$20 to \$40 a month; those of us who cannot afford to give such enormous wages do our own work. Maid-servants are so scarce that the possibility of getting one is practically nil, therefore it is most satisfactory to our housewifely instincts to learn that there is once more a chance of our obtaining domestic Chinese servants at a reasonable price. We have no

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<sup>131</sup> From Gibson, R. (1906, August 5). THE LABOR SHORTAGE. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 4. Written by Robert Gibson of Mount Pleasant, a self-described “working man,” whose death preceded that of his son, Robert Coulter Gibson, in 1949.

<sup>132</sup> From Gwen. (1906, August 5). FROM A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 9.

objections to paying reasonable wages for services rendered; but we do object to the Government forcing us to pay our Chinaman's tax.

### **“Falls most heavily on the wives and families”<sup>133</sup> (1906)**

Sir: Will you allow space in your paper for a few lines on the Chinese labor question from the poorer housekeeper's point of view? The burden of the present tax falls most heavily on the wives and families of the working-man. Whether he works with his head or hands, it means the giving up of all pleasure and recreation in life for those – and they are the most numerous – who were able to pay only \$10 or \$15 a month for their help. The wealthy ones, who could pay from \$25 to \$35, will still be able to get Chinese cooks, as they will certainly manage to pay the higher rates for them now demanded, but the poorer housekeepers cannot, and all the rest and comfort of the home is lost, and often health also.

The Chinese domestic does not come into competition with the white, as every housekeeper knows no girl will enter domestic service who can get anything else to do; wherever the fault lies, that is the fact, and is so all over Canada.

Why cannot the Chinamen be allowed to come in as before as to tax, but with permits given them for domestic service only, and forbidden to work in any other way, under the supervision of police or bureaus?

I think I may truly sign myself, yours etc.,

ONE OF MANY.

Vancouver, B.C., August 7th, 1906.

### **“Growing agitation”<sup>134</sup> (1906)**

The growing agitation in favor of the removal of the \$500 poll-tax on Chinese domestic servants, farm laborers etc., is causing tremendous satisfaction to the housekeepers of Vancouver, many of whom have abandoned home-life altogether and gone to live in boarding-houses and hotels, or who are living in rooms and taking their meals at restaurants simply because they cannot afford to pay the exorbitant wages demanded to-day by even inferior Chinese servants. No community can prosper without a plentiful supply of labor, and a prohibitive tax which strikes a death-blow to family life, causes fish to rot un-canned, fruit to decay un-gathered, and the land to degenerate uncleared, untilled and unsown is nothing short of iniquitous.

The imposition of the tax was a piece of political chicanery to catch votes on the part of the present Government; it was not the wish of the majority, nor in the real interests of the people or the country, but was the epitome of the dog-in-the-manger cry of those who say: “We will have all the jobs and those we cannot fill shall go undone”. A pretty state of affairs, truly! [...]

Bar out such skilled Oriental labor as would offer unnecessary and undesirable competition to our white labor, but for goodness's sake admit the unskilled labor and

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<sup>133</sup> From ONE OF MANY. (1906, August 9). THE CHINESE QUESTION. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> From Gwen. (1906, August 12). FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW. *News Advertiser*, p. 9.

domestic servants without which our fair Province must go to wrack and ruin, since it is proven impossible to obtain anything like an adequate supply of white labor.

Why should we women be forced to give up our homes? Why should we be forced to neglect our children, our sewing and our requisite rest and recreation because we cannot afford to pay the \$500 tax for a Chinaman (in the shape of the exorbitant wages he now demands) to do the ordinary house-work? Cannot the men who forced this burden upon us understand that the tax is not putting a single extra dollar into their pockets, but is simply enriching the Oriental against whom it is supposedly directed? Who really pays the tax? The women of Vancouver. Who pockets the money? The Chinese domestic servants. It is the crassest folly of the age.

No one today who gives the subject serious thought can come to any other conclusion than that this tax is ruining home life and wrecking the agricultural prosperity of the Province. Persons in power are terribly prone to be supine, and the question really resolves itself into this: not, should the tax on unskilled labor and domestic servants be abolished, but will the Government have the backbone to take the step?

There is many a weary woman in Vancouver today who hopes for a cheaper scale of Chinese wages before she finally gives up the struggle and goes to live in a boarding-house.

### **“Why girls prefer down-town work”<sup>135</sup> (1906)**

A few days ago a letter appeared in the News-Advertiser, written by our friend Gardiner Johnson in reference to the Chinese poll tax. Since then several other letters have appeared, all agitating for the removal of the \$500 tax. No one seems to have discussed the other side of the question as yet, so I decided tonight to champion the cause of my fellow working man and give my views, which I believe to be the sentiments of the average working man and average working girl in this our beautiful city. [...]

One man [sic.], who signs himself “One of Many,” states that any house-keeper knows that no girl will enter domestic services who can get anything else to do, and Mr. Johnson states: “Your daughters are all stenographers or in shops, and as long as you can afford it you engage cheap help.” Now, this would suggest the question, “Why do so many girls take to the shops and offices? And why have our good ladies to hire Chinese servants?”

The answer is this: The average master and mistress do not treat their female domestics with proper respect, but they are looked down upon as very inferior beings, a fact which (I am glad to say) is strongly resented by the average intelligent and ambitious young lady. Woman’s sphere is in the home, and nature has very bountifully endowed her to fill that sphere. To really become man’s helpmate she should know the art of housekeeping and homebuilding, and the home is the place where the girls should be perfecting their natural endowments. But instead we find

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<sup>135</sup> From VANCOUVER ENTHUSIAST. (1906, August 13). WHY GIRLS PREFER DOWN TOWN WORK. *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 6.

nine out of ten, yes, ninety-nine out of a hundred of our young girls going out into the world and battling it with the commercial activities of the day in order to get a livelihood.

The average wage of the average working girl is from six to eight dollars per week. Out of this she has to pay her board, buy her clothes, car fare, etc., etc., and besides start a bank account. Now, tell me, ladies and gentlemen, would the girls be doing this if they could get, say, \$20 per month and board, and be treated with due respect in a comfortable home?

Over and above the work done by a Chinaman, the average house maid is expected to do considerable shopping for which she sometimes receives considerable abuse if everything is not just up to the mistress' expectations. She is expected to run numerous errands that a Chinaman would not understand. Very often a heap of sewing is entrusted to her and lastly, but greatest of all, she must look after from one to half a dozen children while their mother is out looking for a hat or a dress that she intends to buy in a month or two's time. She usually gets one afternoon a week off, but is expected to be back in time to look after the children, and on Sunday she gets very little time to read her Bible. For all this she is expected to be satisfied with about fifteen dollars a month, while the average Chinaman gets twenty-five. Now, this may be an exaggerated account of affairs, but the fact remains that the female domestic is very seldom treated properly.

Mr. Johnson says: "If you go on as you are, i.e. restricting Chinamen you will soon have no homes," and the other man [sic.] who signs himself "One of Many" says, "It will mean the giving up of all the pleasures and recreations in life. All the rest and comfort of the home will be lost and often health itself." Now, I say, God help the poor people of Vancouver, if they have to have a Chinaman in the house before they can have a home or any pleasure or recreation in life, and also say God help the poor dyspeptic who has to eat Chinese cookery to preserve his health. I am sure the men who have to eat in restaurants where they employ Chinese cooks will say "Amen" to this last.[...]

We are building up a province which already has a world-wide reputation of which we are proud. Why in the name of common sense don't we get the very best material we can? The Chinese will never make good citizens. [...] Now what do we want them for? [...] There are thousands of females who would make splendid servants for those who wish to employ them, and also good wives for some of our (Chinese) restaurant-fed men. [...] Get in your immigrant agent and bring in a desirable class of servant. [...] Have the best and nothing but the best, for we are of the west and better than the best.

A VANCOUVER ENTHUSIAST.

P.S. – Keep on the \$500 tax.

## “Long may it roll”<sup>136</sup> (1906)

The ball of discussion regarding the removal of the tax on Chinese labor is rolling merrily on. Long may it roll, for with every revolution fresh reasons are disclosed why it is highly desirable that we should obtain sufficient Oriental labor to gather in the harvest, the fruit crop and the salmon pack, and to fill those posts in domestic service which there are not enough white servants in the country to undertake. [...]

It is most gratifying to find the wives of the Vancouver workingmen taking a hand in this matter. They, in common with all the other women in the City, are beginning to find the cost of living creeping up daily. When in bad health, when burdened with a large family of little children, or when worn out owing to some extra press of work, every woman longs for efficient domestic help, and thank goodness she is at last gaining the courage to say so.

When a man sees his wife pale and ill, tired beyond her strength, sinking beneath the strain of over-work of some kind or another, when he has found and faced the impossibility of getting a white servant to help in the house, when he has counted up the present outrageous cost of Chinese help (which is to-day as slovenly and impertinent as it is expensive) and found it beyond his means to pay – then if he still persists in opposing the removal of the tax, he is indeed no better than a slave-driver of his own flesh and blood.

The removal of the tax would mean fair-priced domestic help for the women of Vancouver, and absolutely no increased competition with white labor, simply because there is practically no white domestic labor in British Columbia to be competed with. Therefore all this absurd inflammatory hubbub about Chinese servants “taking the bread out of the white people’s mouths” is rubbish. There are few white domestic servants to be had at any price, and certainly none to be competed with.

The voters of Vancouver no doubt think themselves superior to the men of those races who force their wives to work under the penalty of the whip; but in maintaining this tax and thereby denying necessary domestic help to their households, are they not placing themselves upon the low level with those barbarians they think they can look down upon?

I know dozens of women in this city to-day who are overworked, over-strained, ruining their health and their lives because they cannot get a white servant, and cannot afford to pay the present enormous wages demanded by a Chinaman. Meanwhile their noble husbands rant and rave at street corners about “the white man’s country”. White man’s country it may be – but not the country for a white woman to live in, unless the present preposterous conditions are speedily changed.

It is in such a climax as this that woman longs for the suffrage. Had the women of the West a vote to-day, that tax would be repealed so quickly that Ottawa would reel under the shock thereof.

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<sup>136</sup> From Gwen. (1906, September 2). FROM A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW. *News Advertiser*, p. 9.

And what hypocrites some of these anti-Chinese ranters are! It would be laughable if it were not so serious. One man will force his wife into cooking, washing, scrubbing and sewing and caring for the children unassisted, from dawn till dusk, because he will not or cannot pay the sum to which by means of the tax he has forced up Chinese wages; he cares not that she has no leisure or recreation, or that she is slowly killing herself in order that he may sit in the chief places at meetings and call down curses upon the Chinese in uplifted and pious tones.

Another man utters the same bombastic unction in public – but in the privacy of his own home he pays an incompetent and lazy Chinese servant thirty dollars a month, instead of the reasonable wages he formerly gave for first rate service. Perhaps the Vancouver voter thinks he is demonstrating his superior political economy by such actions. Certainly neither common sense nor truth are the foundation thereof.

### **“A.B.C.” on the head tax<sup>137</sup> (1906)**

This province is at present kept back for want of labor of the commonest sort. [...] Every labor man expects and hopes that neither he nor his children will ever require to accept such work as the Chinaman takes. He expects his children, who have had infinitely better chances through socialistic education, to be served by Chinaman or some inferior race to do the menial work. Those of us who may be a little better off want them for house servants. They cannot get woman servants, and Englishmen won't take that work.

Very few know what the Exclusion Bill has cost and is now costing the province. Last year, the \$100 tax (which I don't want to see reduced) brought to the provincial Treasury \$254,000 – the amount which Ottawa retained, I don't know. This is a big sum. Many of these arrivals went to the States. We have nothing to do with that. But \$254,000 is a small sum compared with what we have had to pay to the Chinese for [the] increased price of their labor. [...] All wages for household servants have advanced. [...] It is reckoned we have some 10,000 Chinese in the province. Taking them all together, they now get \$10 a month more than they did before the exclusion tax was put on. Ten dollars a month and ten thousand people makes \$1,200,000 a year – [...] think of it! All this money thrust into the pockets of the Chinese here.

When I wrote trying to prevent the Exclusion Bill being passed by the Legislature five years ago, I invited the lady of Victoria, and they are chiefly affected by the high wages, as the money generally comes out of housekeeping expenses. Very few ladies were at the trouble to call at Hibben's and sign their names. In Vancouver the ladies were much more active. I hope all will sign now. The thing is monstrous that we should heap such a lot of money into the hands of the Chinese, and make them so rich and independent, and their charges will go on increasing.

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<sup>137</sup> From A.B.C. (1906, October 6). The Chinese Question. *The Province*, p. 22.

## “Utterly inconsistent”<sup>138</sup> (1906)

It is extremely gratifying to the housekeepers of Vancouver to read the sensible letters written in the public press by “A.B.C.” on the subject of our urgent need of domestic servants, and the best means of supplying this need.

When “A.B.C.” points out that by reducing the Chinese head tax to its original figure of \$100, Canada would at once obtain an income of \$250,000 a year, householders would obtain plenty of domestic servants, and no competition would be offered to white labor (because there is practically no white domestic labor in B.C.), he is proffering three excellent arguments in favor of reversing the unwise legislation which was rushed through Parliament a few years ago on the recommendation of a committee (specially chosen for the purpose!) and which has ever since been a curse to Vancouver householders.

It is utterly inconsistent for newspaper men to supply Chinese cooks and then to write flaming fulminations against Chinese servants; it is also inconsistent for trade unionists to rant and rave at public meetings heaping abuse on Chinese servants, and then to go home and eat a supper cooked by a Chinaman; and it is equally inconsistent for any public man to promulgate an anti-Chinese policy on a public platform by decrying Chinese domestic help, and then that very same evening go home and pay an exorbitant wage to his Chinese servant. “Consistency, thou art a jewel,” it is said, but such jewels are rare in Vancouver – among the men.

No wonder Canada is afraid to give women the franchise, for had housekeepers a vote, no political candidate would have a chance of election to Parliament who did not promise such legislation as would ensure to them sufficient domestic help at a reasonable price. Why should British Columbians make a present of \$1,200,000 to the Chinese every year? What right has the Government to waste our substance like this? What right has it to destroy the comfort of our homes, and force us to abandon that home life which is the bulwark of the British Empire, and go to live in hotels and boarding-houses? None whatever.

The women of Vancouver are unwilling to leave the question of cheap labor in commerce and agriculture to be settled by the men; that is not their immediate concern, but domestic servants are necessary for the preservation of their home-life, and therefore they demand that Chinese shall be admitted into Canada at a head tax of \$100 for domestic service only.

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<sup>138</sup> From Gwen. (1906, October 28). FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW. *News Advertiser*, p. 9.

## “Women ask lower tax on Chinese servants”<sup>139</sup> (1907)

Vancouver women are endeavoring to solve a troublesome feature of the housekeeping problem by suggesting a reduction of the tax on Chinese coming to Canada as domestic servants.

Recently the question was taken up in a determined manner at Victoria, where the same shortage of household help exists as in Vancouver. A petition to the federal Government on the subject was circulated, and very generally signed. A copy of this petition is now in Vancouver, being held at the Granville-Dunsmuir store of the McDowell, Atkins, Watson Company, for signatures. The petition follows:

“Whereas, girls coming to, or at present living in British Columbia, much prefer occupations in offices, stores and factories to domestic service, and at present the demand for them in these vocations far exceeds the supply, the undersigned women wish their names to go on record as being in favor of a reduction of the tax on Chinese coming into Canada as domestic servants.”

### WAGES STEADILY INCREASE

“Oh, no! This is not a political proposition at all,” said a Vancouver woman speaking of the question to-day. “Neither are we discussing the economics of the general subject of Oriental immigration, except perhaps, insofar as it affects our own pockets. What we are trying to do is supply the great demand for servants in Vancouver homes.

“Half a dozen years ago, housekeeping was a pleasure in Vancouver. ‘China boys,’ who could look after the heavier work around a house, could be hired from \$10 to \$20, or \$22 per month. But now you are very lucky to get one at all, and your Oriental lad gets from \$35 to \$45 and \$50 per month. Girls for housekeeping work cannot be secured. There are so very few available that they cannot be depended upon as a source of supply to fill the demand.

### WORSE EVERY YEAR

“And then year by year the China boys are becoming scarcer and correspondingly more difficult to hire. In another couple of years, conditions will be such that from \$50 to \$75 per month will have to be paid, and sometimes more than that, according to how fully capable the Oriental is of looking after the affairs of the household.

“Of course, I am aware,” continued the young housewife, as she related some of her own difficulties, “that general objections may be made against any increase in importing of Orientals. But on the other hand, what will happen if we don’t get help of some kind? Why, Vancouver will simply become like San Francisco, and other large cities on the Pacific coast. The people will give up their houses and the home life of the city will be a thing of the past. We will all be living in flats and eating our meals in restaurants pretty soon, if present conditions continue,” added the young woman, with a discouraged shrug of her expressive shoulders.

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<sup>139</sup> From WOMEN ASK LOWER TAX ON CHINESE SERVANTS. (1907, March 4). *The Province*, p. 1.



## TOPIC OF CONVERSATION

“Oh, I can tell you this is a live question, and Vancouver women, bridge parties, five-o’clocks and even sewing circles have on certain standby for conversation these days, ‘How to get a China boy and how to keep him’.”

### “Chinese domestics have the upper hand”<sup>140</sup> (1907)

In your issue of March 4 I read the item about Vancouver women endeavoring to solve a troublesome feature of the housekeeping problem by suggesting a reduction of the tax on Chinese servants, and having a petition placed in McDowell, Atkins, Watson’s Drugstore. I, for one, am almost ashamed to be classed as a Vancouver woman, and I cannot believe there are any, only those who never stop to think what they are doing in signing such a petition to flood our fair and prosperous city with Orientals and finally lower their fellow men and women beneath the Chinaman.

Already the Chinese domestics have the upper hand. I have seen instances where the lady of the house dare not dictate to her Chinese servant, and rather than have him leave she would give way to him and let him domineer over a girl working in the same house. Wherever there is a girl in the house with a Chinaman, the Chinaman has the biggest wages and is boss over the girl. Then why wonder that our girls prefer office work to being domestic servants? The office is the only place where a girl has not to be beneath a Chinaman, and I would not give a cent for a girl who would either work beside, eat her meals with or in any way be lowered beneath a Chinaman.

I think that if the ladies would put a girl even on a level with a Chinaman as regards wages and privileges, there would be plenty of good girls. The lady said they had to pay from \$35, \$45 and \$50 per month for Oriental servants, and would soon have to give even more. Now, if girls could get such wages as that, there would be plenty of girls to fill the demand, but where there is a girl she is offered from \$15 to \$25 per month and in most cases she is servant-girl in general, housekeeper, nurse-girl, [and] laundry maid. Girls usually have one night a week off, but where a Chinaman is he gets off every night, and a couple of hours every afternoon. I know of good white women who go out by the day washing and ironing, and some of our most influential West End people begrudge \$1.50 per day for that kind of work, and then a lady will say they pay all the way from \$35 to \$50 per month for Chinamen. I say for shame to down the white woman who can work around three or four C—s<sup>141</sup>, but of course some people must have pets, and it would not do to pet a white girl; you might spoil her. And again it would be too bad for people to have to move into flats and eat at restaurants and neglect their bridge parties and five o’clocks and sewing circles all because they have not a China boy to Sam Sing and John around.

I’ll tell you, ladies, I believe the husbands would appreciate a nice dinner superintended by his wife more than all the bridge parties they could talk about. If

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<sup>140</sup> From A VANCOUVER WOMAN. (1907, March 11). Chinese Servants. *The Province*, p. 17.

<sup>141</sup> The original has here an offensive term for Chinese people.

you never get anything to worry about more than sewing circles, five o'clock tea and bridge parties, you have a great deal to be thankful for.

A VANCOUVER WOMAN.

March 9, 1907.

### **“Ladies want Chinamen”<sup>142</sup> (1907)**

When some three years ago the Government practically prohibited the immigration of Chinese by imposing a head tax of \$500, the measure had the support of the majority of the people of the Province. At that time, the only interests involved were those of capital and labor. It was to satisfy the laboring men, who saw the average of their wage rate cut down by the Chinamen, that the law was passed.

#### **NEEDED AS DOMESTICS**

Now the women – the housewives of the Province are agitated over the question. The Chinese make unexcelled domestic servants – as cooks they are not to be surpassed by the best Parisian productions, and so long as immigration was unhampered, the homes of British Columbia had at their disposal an unlimited supply of the best servants imaginable. Once the head tax was imposed, that supply was cut off, and ever since that time Chinese servants have been growing more and more a perquisite for the families of the wealthy only.

Since 1903 the population of the Province has grown immensely; hundreds of new families have settled in the cities of the coast – Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster – and the demand for domestic servants has been growing greater and greater. The number of Chinese servants has, however, remained stationary, or grown less, for with the rise all round in the price of yellow labor, many of the servants have preferred to leave their household positions and seek more remunerative employment.

#### **BREAKS UP FRIENDSHIPS**

The inevitable result of the increase in demand has of course been an increase in the average wage rate, and to hold a Chinese servant the housewife must now pay as much per week as she was in the habit of paying per month in the good old days. Even then, she cannot be sure of holding her servant. Jealously she guards her treasure from the prying eyes of neighbors, but, nevertheless, despite all her care, it often happens that by offers of higher pay and shorter hours a neighboring housewife will manage to charm him away. More friendships have been broken in British Columbia during the last year over Chinese servants than over anything else.

#### **ENGLISH GIRLS MARRY**

Various attempts have been made to fill the deficiency caused by the shortage of Chinamen. Swedish and Norwegian girls have been imported, but beside the deft and silent Chinamen they appear clumsy and stupid. English girls have been sent out by various charitable organizations, but they have always persisted in getting married just as soon as they arrived on the coast. All possible expedients have been

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<sup>142</sup> From LADIES WANT CHINAMEN. (1907, April 15). *The Windsor Evening Record*, p. 6.

given a trial, and now the housewives of the Province are crying out for the Chinamen again.

### **“No more cheap labor”<sup>143</sup> (1907)**

Some little time after the head-tax on Chinese entering the country was increased to \$500, the Chinese already in the country began to demand more wages. Domestic servants, in particular, asked sums which made it impossible for people of small means to employ them. Many households which had learned too well to depend upon Mongolian help were disorganized, and mothers of large families of young children were obliged to undertake tasks which robbed their lives of all leisure and prevented them from giving as much attention to their offspring as they wished. *The World* has never had any sympathy to spare for women who had but to choose between neglecting duties which they could no longer afford to have performed for them and abandoning some portion of their social engagements, but it has always recognized that the increased wages demanded by domestics, and not by Chinese domestics only, had caused a certain amount of genuine hardship in the homes of the salaried men whose remuneration had remained stationary while everything else was rising in price. Our position, however, was, and is, that the most advantageous change cannot be brought about without somebody suffering, and that, regrettable as was the situation of a number of families, this could not be considered a valid reason for delaying or opposing a measure of such great public good and such genuine necessity in the interests of the province as the exclusion of the Chinese.

Insufficient as it is, the argument derived from the high wages demanded by Chinese domestics, which, by the way, cannot be reduced without reducing those of girls of European extraction, is the only one which is seriously advanced by those who demand the reduction of the head-tax to the old figure. It is, therefore, of some interest to find that it is based upon a false analogy.

It is contended that because the wages of the Chinese were comparatively low before the head-tax was increased, they would return to their former figure were the head-tax reduced to \$100. This, however, seems highly improbable. Doubtless the raising of the head-tax did accelerate the raising of wages of the Chinese, but it would have come in any event. For the value of the wages paid in British Columbia depends very largely on the rate of exchange.

The Chinaman is here for the one purpose of sending his money home, and he counts his gains in the silver paid to his relatives there, and not in the dollars he receives here. A low rate of exchange means high wages to him. A high rate means low wages. Now, some statistics published in a European-Chinese paper just to hand show that in the last ten years the rate of exchange with Hong Kong has risen materially in sympathy with the general rise of prices everywhere, a rise which has also made wages half as much again or more at Hong Kong. It follows, therefore, that the Chinaman's position in Canada is doubly affected. Not only is his money worth

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<sup>143</sup> From NO MORE CHEAP LABOR. (1907, July 9). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 4.

less, dollar for dollar, when sent to China, but the higher wages paid to him at home tempt him to stay there. It is not at all likely, therefore, that the opening of the ports to the coolies of China would result in any very great reduction of the wages paid them here, a view which receives support from the fact that the Japanese, who are coming in freely, also ask for and obtain wages much higher than those of a few years ago. The day of the cheap domestic Oriental, whether Chinese or Japanese, has gone by and is not likely to return.

### **“Daily becoming more unbearable”<sup>144</sup> (1907)**

It is a fact that the lot of the Vancouver housewife in regard to the employment of Oriental servants is daily becoming more unbearable. The Chinese have become so intolerably independent that in many instances they are positively insolent. Many families who have employed Chinese servants for the last twelve, fifteen and twenty years are discharging them and declare that never again will a C——<sup>145</sup> coolie lord it over their kitchens.

Already the high wages and pleasant conditions of domestic service in Vancouver are attracting many of the best class of girls to the province. The Y.W.C.A. has been able to supply many families in the last few months with girls. It is only a question of time when the facts become known that many good servants will be attracted to Vancouver.

When a good cook can earn \$25 to \$30 a month in a private family and house maids from \$15 to \$25, where the washing is in most cases given out, where every modern convenience is provided, where the Western standard of considerateness for help of all kinds obtains as it does in Vancouver, giving to girls plenty of leisure and privileges never thought of in the old lands – when all these facts become known, Vancouver will be a mecca for high-class domestic servants.

It cannot be denied that the use of Chinese help has had a deterring effect in keeping white women away from Vancouver, especially in times past when Chinese help was cheaper than it is today. But since the \$500 head tax went into effect, the Chinamen already here began to feel they had what the small boy would call a “lead pipe cinch,” and they have grown in self-importance and valuation until the C—— has become now well-nigh impossible.

So the ladies of Vancouver are now casting about for means of banishing the pigtailed from their homes, and if the \$500 head tax succeeds in doing that, it will have been successful beyond the dreams of its promoters.

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<sup>144</sup> From THE DOMESTIC SERVANT PROBLEM. (1907, August 10). *Saturday Sunset*, p. 12.

<sup>145</sup> The original had here an offensive term for a Chinese person.

## “At last the tune is changed”<sup>146</sup> (1907)

At last the tune is changed. Instead, as heretofore, denying that there is any lack of domestic servants, or scarcity of agricultural laborers in British Columbia, public speakers and the public press are now “frankly admitting” the true facts of the case; namely, that public works are being delayed, crops are rotting, industries are paralyzed and home life is being destroyed owing to the impossibility of securing competent – or, for that matter, [...] incompetent – labor.

Had the tax been temporarily raised [six.] last year on the Chinese to admit them to engage only in agricultural and domestic service, and in such rough, unskilled forms of work as are immediately necessary to develop the country, we should not to-day be in the dire straits we are. Fortunately, the evil is now so colossal as to force a prompt and expansive remedy. Those persons who oppose all immigration, whether European or Asiatic, will no longer be listened to.

Men of business knowledge and experience in Eastern Canada are speaking openly of “the enslavement of British Columbia”. They are not far wrong so far as the average women of the West are concerned. The average woman in Vancouver to-day, who cannot afford to pay the exorbitant wages now demanded, is literally<sup>147</sup> a slave in her own household. From early morning till late at night she must [be] cook, housemaid and nurse; she must wash and bake, scrub and sew, sweep and dust, and look after the children. Instead of employing a good servant girl, or a Chinese domestic, at a reasonable wage to do the cooking, dish-washing and house-cleaning, thus leaving her free to attend to the innumerable duties connected with the management and direction of her household and the up-bringing of her children, she is so occupied with the daily routine of domestic work that her children’s interests are necessarily neglected; she has no time to walk, talk, or read with them, or to teach and guide them as only a mother can; and she has no leisure for herself, a thing every woman needs in the interests of her health and happiness.

Do those men who are denying us servants ever stop to think of the curse of neglect they are laying upon the rising generation? Can we expect our boys and girls to grow up good citizens and members of the State when we give them only food and clothing and a roof over their heads, and deny them all the mental and higher training at their mother’s hands?

In a thousand Vancouver homes to-day there is worry and fatigue, rebellion at the intolerable situation created by platform orators and the public perversion of facts, and, above all, a vast despair at the total individual inability to cope with the problem. Women are sinking into apathy and ill-health, home-life is disorganized, or exchanged for hotel-life, children are neglected – and why? Because the Dominion Government neither assists servant girls to come here from Europe, nor lifts the tax temporarily on Chinese domestics. Thousands of women can testify to “the enslavement of British Columbia,” for they themselves are the ones enslaved.

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<sup>146</sup> From Gwen. (1907, August 25). FROM A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW. *News-Advertiser*, p. 13.

<sup>147</sup> Noteworthy as an antique example of using “literally” to mean “figuratively”.

### **“Sad, too, if it were a universal fact”<sup>148</sup> (1907)**

Sir: Once again I notice in your admirable paper that your contributor “Gwen” is vigorously wielding her pen re: the Chinese Servant Question. Well, as the Quaker once said to his wife, “All the world’s queer, but me and thee, and sometimes thee’rt a little queer.” How “Gwen” must love the Chinese. Pathetic and touching it is to hear of the overburdened wives in Vancouver; sad, too, if it were a universal fact. True it is that in many homes, mothers have enough to do, which is not a detriment, if we would be happy and live honored and long lives. But let me ask, where are the overburdened women who literally flock to At Homes, looking happy and well dressed, or who have the leisure to attend furniture sales, waiting patiently all day for bargains? How can we fit in these and other frivolities if we are care-worn and overworked? Would you know what is meant by overburdened women? Then go amongst the farmers’ wives of Western Canada, where women toil early and late, whose work is never done; these need help, but rarely get it.

Absurd is it for us, with the conveniences we possess in our homes, and otherwise, to constantly air our supposed grievances in this selfish fashion. It should seem that we think little and care less about the ultimate prosperity of British Columbia. Let us be in the truest sense helpful wives, patriotic mothers, teaching our sons patriotism in its fullest sense, the patriotism which puts love of country before love of self.

“Let us, then, be up and doing  
With a heart for any fate  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor, and to wait.”

KATHLEEN.

### **“Scarcity of domestics”<sup>149</sup> (1907)**

Sir: A contributor to your Sunday’s issue, under the head of the Cosy Corners Chat, makes allusion to two matters about which I should like, with your permission, to say a few words, namely, as regards afflicted mothers who are compelled to do their own housework owing to the scarcity of servants. [...] As to the sad plight of those mothers who are compelled personally to look after their own homes and children, I would like to ask your contributor what she sees in this order of things to make it appear lowering and reprehensible. It must be rather disconcerting for her to realize that nearly all the matrons of Britain’s Overseas Dominions, including this province, are in the sad predicament of having to tend their own households, and thousands remain so from choice and not from necessity.

Again, I would like to ask why the fact of a mother being without domestic help bars her from taking an interest in her children’s moral and mental up-bringing. Does

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<sup>148</sup> From KATHLEEN. (1907, August 31). WHAT SOME MOTHERS DO. *Daily News-Advertiser*, p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> From CANADIAN. (1907, August 31). SCARCITY OF DOMESTICS AND SWETTENHAM INCIDENT. *Daily News-Advertiser*, p. 2.

not the reverse hold good, as shown by the biographies of the great men of our country? How often are the children of people of means and leisure in the Old Country relegated to the kitchen and nursery, and only admitted to their parents' presence at odd times? I am speaking from actual observation when I assert that many English mothers, finding their children noisy and troublesome, escape from this "inconvenience" by leaving them to the care of nurses and governess while they "entertain," in other words, fritter away their time in social amenities.

However, this charge may also be laid at the door of other than English matrons. By living in flats, with no household duties to occupy their minds and hands, and nothing to think about but bargain hunting and theatre-going, and pleasure seeking generally, with no children to "bother" them, the fashionable women of the large cities across the line are fast losing the sterling qualities that characterized the stock from which they sprang. Though fortunately this cannot be said of the vast majority in city and town in the United States, still the evil is there and likely to spread, unless its degrading consequences are made so plain that people will revert to the simpler domestic life of their progenitors. [...]

CANADIAN.

### **"Trying to forecast Victoria's future"<sup>150</sup> (1907)**

In trying to forecast Victoria's future we confidently expect the same grand climate, the same beautiful scenes, the same profusion of fruit and flowers year after year, but what about our future domestic help? Household help has been growing very perceptibly scarcer owing to Chinese joining their ancestors, Chinamen migrating to the prairie towns, or going back to China, and also on account of the number of people with means who have settled in Victoria during the last two years, most of whom employ a Chinese cook. As there have been no Chinamen coming in to take the place of those who departed, wages have been going up each month, till now they are almost double what they were. I venture to say that they will continue to increase, till in a year or two only the very wealthy will be able to afford one. All the rest of the citizens will have to wash their own clothes.

Now, sir, I ask, do you consider that state of matters will be likely to induce people who have been accustomed to, or who are in a position to keep servants to settle here? I rather think it will have the effect of driving a good many of our best citizens away, most of whom only stay here because Victoria is a pleasant place to dwell in, but who, if they have to do their own drudgery, will simply go to where they can get it done for them at a reasonable cost.

A certain class of our politicians and the rabid Socialistic agitators loudly cry for Canada being kept a white man's country. This means every white man is his own scavenger, and every white man's wife her own slavey. This is, no doubt, in accord with Socialistic ideas, but if anyone, Socialist or politician, who is not making a living out of this agitation stops for a moment to think, he must come to the conclusion that

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<sup>150</sup> From Wright, A. (1907, August 30). THE CHINESE QUESTION. *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4. Written by Andrew Wright (1881 – 1928).

unless people with money can be induced to come here, the tradesman, the artisan and the laborer will soon find the want of profitable employment.

If artificial barriers are deliberately placed to compel the man with means to do the work which only a Chinaman can be hired to do, and his wife and daughters, owing to the same reason, have to practically live in the kitchen, I don't think we are going to see "Victoria, the beautiful" developed into the greatest residential city in Canada, as it might easily become. People who have made money through perseverance and hard struggles have passed the stage of doing their own drudgery, and if their residence here would entail their doing their own menial work, why, they will simply go elsewhere to settle.

Formerly, the Chinese servant (who is by far the most satisfactory of all servants) was a strong drawing card to induce people to settle here. He is a good cook, he is cleanly and his wages were moderate, and the housewife in the Eastern cities who had experience of the servant girls drawn from the squalid foreign immigrants, looked with envy on the fortunate dwellers on the Pacific Coast, who could get so easily supplied with Chinese help.

Unfortunately, this is a drawing card no longer. Chinese help is no longer cheap, and, moreover, it is very far from being as good as it was. The short supply and the large demand has swollen John's head somewhat. But we are better off now than we will be in, say, a year's time.

The Chinaman is passing rapidly, and will soon become extinct in British Columbia. Then what are we going to do? Will our big residences all go on the market and their owners move into shacks, or will they try other pastures, where the labor agitator does not run the country? This subject is worth looking into by those who live here and those who are making up their mind to come here. Real estate is going to be seriously affected. Who is going to buy a few acres to build a fine residence thereon when they will not be able to hire help to keep it in order? If they have to live here, they will be far better off with a 25 ft. lot and a shack.

We have heard enough fiction in the labor union controlled press about white men being driven out of work by Asiatics. We British Columbians know that nowhere in Canada do such high wages prevail, and nowhere in the world are there so many jobs calling for people to fill them.

### **"One reason for the growth of the apartment"<sup>151</sup> (1908)**

One reason of the growth of the apartment houses in this city [of Vancouver] is, of course, the servant difficulty. The \$500 tax on Chinese servants has done much toward building these aggregations. It looks as if in future separate homes will only be possessed by those at the two extremes of income. The rich will have their own houses<sup>152</sup> and gardens because they are able to pay for servants. The poor will have their own houses because they have the good old-fashioned habit of having children.

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<sup>151</sup> From DIOGENES. (1908, August 1). STREET CORNERS. *Daily Province*, p. 13.

<sup>152</sup> "One of the most comfortable homes in town, recently refinished and decorated. Dining rooms, parlors, library, breakfast room, kitchens, six bedrooms, Chinese servants' quarters, modern billiard



## **“This tax really comes right off the people”<sup>153</sup> (1910)**

A business man closely in touch with public and governmental affairs suggested to The Province this morning that [...] the present was a very opportune time for the discussion of some better law relating to the immigration of Chinese than the \$500 head tax. [...]

“I know it would be immediately urged,” [he said,] “that we in British Columbia would at once lose heavily of the tax were abolished; because the British Columbia government gets half the revenue collected under this poll-tax system. But this tax really comes right off the people again; in most Vancouver homes which employed Chinese servants two years ago the wages paid were \$15 to \$30 per month. The tax has created a shortage of this labor; Vancouver householders now pay \$40 and even \$70 per month for Chinese help.”

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room (splendidly equipped), garage, tennis courts, lawns, shrubbery and flowers – a most attractive, restful home in every way. All modern conveniences.” E. W. MacLean & Co. (1911, September 30). *Supremely Desirable in Every Detail* [Advertisement]. *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 6.

<sup>153</sup> From CHINESE HEAD TAX DOES NOT PROHIBIT. (1910, October 14). *The Province*, p. 12.

## Crimes and Punishments

**Allegations of crimes performed by and against Chinese servants were not unusual. This section includes examples of some of the better documented cases.**

### **“Stealing time”<sup>154</sup> (1880)**

Yesterday morning at 7 o'clock Mr. Mackenzie, superintendent of education, opened a side door and admitted his Chinese servant, one Ah Wi. Soon afterwards Ah Wi entered his employer's room and asked excitedly, "Where your watch, boss?" He was told that it was concealed behind a photograph on the dining room mantelpiece. He went to the spot indicated, returned and reported the "ticker" missing. When questioned, the Chinaman said that he had found the front and back doors open when he came in the morning. Mrs. Mackenzie is confident that she fastened all the doors and windows on Monday night. A remarkable circumstance which would seem to dispose of the burglar theory is that money and valuable silver ornaments were in the same room as the watch and were not disturbed. Another circumstance which seems to point to the Chinaman as the thief is that ever since he has been in the employ of Mr. Mackenzie he has constantly admired the watch, examined it, asked its value, etc. Officer O'Connor arrested Ah Wi, but did not succeed in finding the watch, but as the prisoner absented himself from the house for half-an-hour after the loss was discovered, it is feared that he concealed it meanwhile.

### **An assault on a servant<sup>155</sup> (1885)**

Barry and Harris, on remand from yesterday<sup>156</sup>. Mr. Walls appeared for the defense, and Mr. Fell for the prosecution.

Jack Sing, sworn:

"As I was passing by a butcher shop on Yates street, there were four boys, among them were the three in court. In answer to a telephone from Mr. Hunter<sup>157</sup>, I left his house at about a quarter past four. Harris caught hold of me and pulled me into the stable and threw me down. There is a fruit store between the stable and the butcher shop. Harris called to the others to close the door quick, and Manson and Barry closed it, and stood there guarding it. Harris then unbuttoned my clothes, put his hands in my pant's pocket<sup>158</sup> and took out 75 cents. I was on the floor and Harris

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<sup>154</sup> From STEALING TIME. (1880, December 22). *Daily Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup> From POLICE COURT. (1885, October 23). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.

<sup>156</sup> "Henry Harris and Albert Barrett, assaulting a Chinaman. There being no interpreter present, the case was remanded until to-morrow." POLICE COURT. (1885, October 22). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> Jack Sing's employer. Probably Joseph Hunter, Chief Engineer for the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway, who lived in James Bay, Victoria.

<sup>158</sup> Not an isolated incident: "John O'Brien was up before Magistrate Hall yesterday morning on the charge of having robbed a Chinese servant of the sum of \$5. It is alleged that the accused met the Chinaman on Collinson Street, and, seizing him round the neck, put one hand in his victim's trousers pocket and extracted therefrom a \$5 bill." The Police Court. (1900, May 11). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

on the top of me. He then told the others to open the door and they went back to the butcher shop. I told them I would tell my master about it. Harris did not strike me, he simply threw me down.”

To Mr. Walls:

“Harris did not give it back. I did not tell officer Walker that I did not lose a cent; I did not go into the dry goods store; I did not see any chickens. I swear that Manson was there.”

This closed the evidence for the prosecution. Mr. Walls then spoke for the defense and said:

“Mr. Harris keeps a fruit, game and chicken store next to Beak’s butcher shop. He has a shed where he sometimes keeps his chickens, and having no right there, he took him by the shoulders and put him out of the door.

The following witnesses were then called for the defense.

Mr. Marks, sworn:

“I am a butcher and employed in Beak’s butcher store. I was on the sidewalk about 4:30 p.m. and Mr. Barry and Mr. Harris were with me. I saw Jack Sing go into the shed. From what I said Barry and Harris went into the shed, and in a minute afterwards I saw the Chinaman being pushed out by Barry and Harris. The door of the shed was not closed. The Chinaman had no right there. I saw chickens in the shed during the afternoon.”

To Mr. Fell:

“There is an entrance to the backyard from the shed. Barry went in first. Both pushed the Chinaman out. I was standing on the sidewalk right in front of the store.

To the Court:

“Harris usually keeps his poultry in the shed. Doors were wide open on this occasion. The poultry are exposed for sale in the shed.”

Constable Walker, sworn:

“I remember the afternoon of Thursday week last. I came with the defendant from his house. He complained to me that his clothes were torn; that a man had taken hold of him by the shoulder. I asked him if he had lost anything; he said he had lost nothing. I asked him to show me where his clothes were torn, but he could not do it.”

To the Court:

“It was about five o’clock in the afternoon; he had two ducks in the basket. I asked him if Harris struck him. ‘No,’ he said, ‘Harris very good man.’”

Henry Harris, sworn:

“I am a store keeper on Yates street next to Beak’s butcher shop; there is a shed on the other side. I use the shed for storing my poultry. About 4:30 p.m., on Thursday week last, I was standing on the sidewalk with Barry and Marks. I saw the Chinaman go into the shed; the Chinaman was about two feet from the chickens; we took hold of him by the arm and put him out without using any violence. He did not resist. We took no money from him. He had no right there.”

To the court:

“The chickens were not in sight of passers. I keep fruit, etc., inside the shed.”

The magistrate found Harris & Barry guilty of assault and fined them \$5 and \$2.25 costs each.

### **“The assault case”<sup>159</sup> (1885)**

The Police Magistrate said that the defendants and their victims had proved the charge. They were standing outside the store of one of the defendants about 4 in the afternoon when Mr. Hunter’s Chinese servant came down the street and walked past them into the shed adjoining the store. The doors of the shed were wide open, and in it goods were exposed for sale in connection with the store. The defendants, without speaking to the Chinaman or waiting to ascertain what he wanted, instantly seized him by the arms, one on each side, and pushed him back into the street. That was an assault. They claimed that he had no right to be there; but in that case they were bound to request him to leave before putting him out. There was reasonable ground for the Chinaman to suppose that he had a right to enter the shed. The complainant’s version of the case was untrue in several particulars; but it was unnecessary to decide whether he willfully lied or was so confused by fright as to be unable to remember what really occurred.

### **Theft from a servant<sup>160</sup> (1885)**

On Sunday night the residence of Mr. Judson Young, James Bay, was visited between the hours of 7 and 9 o’clock, and the Chinese servant’s room broken into and \$115 the Celestial treasured in a can and his blankets taken, probably by some Chinese acquaintance who was aware of its place of keeping.

### **Two thefts<sup>161</sup> (1888)**

Two merchants, A and B, noted for their pushing, energetic business qualities, have long been ambitious, one to gain a slight ascendancy over the other. A day or two ago, the Chinese servant of Mr. A got himself into trouble by some misdemeanor, when, to keep up his end of the log, the Chinese servant of Mr. B a few minutes later committed a theft and was also taken in charge. The two appeared in the witness box together and each succeeded in keeping the name of his “house” before the public.

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<sup>159</sup> From THE ASSAULT CASE. (1885, October 27). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

<sup>160</sup> From NUMEROUS ROBBERIES. (1885, December 1). *Daily Colonist*, p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> From LOCAL BRIEFS. (1888, July 11). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

### **“Assaulted on the public streets”<sup>162</sup> (1897)**

While the Mongolian question may still be considered a burning one, but not of sufficient importance for constant discussion in the press, the majority being of one opinion, again attention must be called to the fact that inoffensive Chinamen continue to be assaulted on the public streets by young hoodlums. Without the least cause, a young China boy was knocked off the sidewalk on New Year’s eve on Granville street by three fellows who pelted him with whatever came to hand, until two gentlemen intervened and ordered the lads off. Then on Friday afternoon, a Celestial was proceeding along Seaton Street when he was attacked by seven young scamps. They pulled his basket of clothes from off his shoulder and began to kick him, but notwithstanding the odds “John” showed fight and quickly sent two of them sprawling. Then, making a move as if to draw a firearm, he picked up a stick, but his assailants funked and quickly scattered. There is no reason why this should be tolerated, even if Chinamen “are” Chinamen.

### **“Unruly boys”<sup>163</sup> (1897)**

Complaint is made of the manner in which unruly boys make life unbearable for any Chinaman finding employment on Menzies street. One resident of that neighborhood says he finds it next to impossible to keep Chinese domestics, owing to the treatment they receive when out of doors.

### **“A strange assault case in Chinatown”<sup>164</sup> (1898)**

The police authorities are investigating a strange assault case in Chinatown. On Tuesday evening a Chinese girl servant to L. G. Wing, came running down stairs at 37 Fisgard street terribly cut and covered with blood. People passing notified the mission house, who in turn notified the police. During the excitement incident to the visit of the police, the girl was spirited away and has not yet been found.

### **“To grab a watch and chain”<sup>165</sup> (1898)**

Lee Kay, a Chinese domestic, was arrested by Detective Palmer last evening on the information of two boys who claimed that the Chinaman had attempted to grab a watch and chain from one of them, R. Keeler. They said they were walking along the street when the Chinaman made a grab for the chain, part of which he secured. One of the boys followed him, while the other went for an officer.

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<sup>162</sup> From INOFFENSIVE CHINAMEN. (1897, January 2). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 8.

<sup>163</sup> From COMPLAINT. (1897, January 6). *Daily Colonist*, p. 3.

<sup>164</sup> From LOCAL NEWS. (1898, April 9). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 5.

<sup>165</sup> From Highway Robbery. (1898, December 21). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

### **“Barbarously ill-used a China boy”<sup>166</sup> (1899)**

Some difficulty is being experienced by the authorities in securing the arrest of the 18-year-old boy Fred Forbes, who so barbarously ill-used a China boy on Wednesday evening at the south end of Granville Street Bridge. To assert the superiority of the white race in general and his own courage in particular, he is said to have at short range thrown crushed granite from the roads point blank into John’s face. As a result the Celestial has a broken nose. There is a grave suspicion that the boy is being concealed by his people, who keep a store on Fourth Avenue and Centre Street in Fairview.

### **“Stole jewelry”<sup>167</sup> (1899)**

The police had several hurry calls on Monday night from a house on Dupont street where a Chinese domestic had been kept. It appears that a considerable quantity of valuable jewelry was missed and the Chinese servant, He Chong by name, was suspected of theft. There was, accordingly, a strong desire to have He Chong apprehended before he could get the goods disposed of. The police found him and also the jewelry, but as He Chong had himself placed it back in the house the charge of theft was withdrawn.

### **“Within a week”<sup>168</sup> (1900)**

Within a week the Colonist has had three complaints from householders, who say that their Chinese servants have been abused by boys on the street. This is a very disgraceful state of things. Whatever may be said against the Chinese in this community, no one will ever claim that they are not orderly and well-behaved on the streets, and something should be done to protect them from insult and abuse. If a British subject were used in China the way Chinamen are used on the streets of Victoria every day, the matter would be taken up by the Imperial government. It is a disgrace to the boys of Victoria that they do not extend British fair play to everyone under the protection of our laws. Where did they get their ideas of what is right and wrong? Shame upon them, for they are a discredit to the flag of which they are so proud, when they make the boasted protection of that flag a mere sham. Parents and teachers have a duty to perform in this connection.

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<sup>166</sup> From DAILY CITY GOSSIP. (1899, September 22). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 8.

<sup>167</sup> From STOLE JEWELRY. (1899, December 22). *Semi-weekly World* (Vancouver), p. 8.

<sup>168</sup> From Within a week. (1900, February 3). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

## The murder of Mah Lin<sup>169</sup> (1900)

**The investigation of the murder of a Chinese cook at Rosslund provides a number of incidental details regarding the life and work of Chinese servants.**

The inquest on the murder of Mah Lin was held on Friday evening. Mr. W. de Ville Maistre appeared on behalf of Lai Yuen & Company, and Mr. C. E. Gillan appeared on behalf of the relatives of the deceased.

Mrs. L. Aylward, sworn, said:

“I live on Third avenue. On the afternoon of the 23rd instant, at about 20 minutes to 6, I went to Mrs. Chenoweth’s window, for I wanted to speak to her. I am in the habit of speaking to Mrs. Chenoweth through the window of her kitchen, which is near the back door. When I looked in I saw a Chinaman lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Thinking he was bleeding to death, I called to Mrs. Weisenthal, whom I saw in her back yard, to come. I saw Mrs. Wright in her kitchen and called her also. The Chinaman was lying on his right side on the floor in a pool of blood. There was no movement. I saw nobody in the house. I heard no noise during the afternoon. I was in my house for a little while before. I saw the youngest boy of Mrs. Chenoweth’s come along about 6 o’clock. The Chinese vegetable men are in the habit of coming in the morning and not in the afternoon. I saw none of them around that afternoon. I never saw Mrs. Chenoweth’s cook more than once or twice.” [...]

Mrs. Mary Chenoweth, sworn, said:

“I have lived on Third Avenue near St. Paul Street since last August. I have three sons staying with me. They are aged 19, 17 and 8 years respectively. [...] My husband left Rosslund a year ago. I don’t know where he is. I had a Chinaman employed at my house; we called him Lin. He has worked at the house from Monday morning last. He was cook, and nothing else. I paid him \$16 a month. He slept out, coming at 5 a.m., and went away at 10 or 11, after cleaning up after the breakfast. He would come back at 4:30 and cook dinner, remaining till about 7 p.m., long enough to clean up. We dine a little after 6 o’clock. He gave satisfaction to me and my sons. I had no disagreement with him. The vegetable men and my washman are other Chinamen that come to my house. I have seen no others. I heard him talking to a Chinaman outside the house the day before the murder. I did not notice who it was; I think it was a vegetable man. A China boy brought Lin to me on Sunday evening.

“I left home day before yesterday a little before 4 in the afternoon. I went to Mrs. Kenly’s art lecture in the Allan House. I left the Allan House about half-past five. Lin was not in the house when I left it. Little Hugh, my eight-year-old son, was in the house when I left. There was no one else in the house. I left the Allan House in company with Mrs. King, of St. Paul Street. I went to a butcher shop on First Avenue and bought some supper meat and returned home a little before 6.

“I saw Mrs. Aylward and a little crowd near the house. Mrs. Aylward said: ‘Do not come here.’ I asked if my boys were hurt. She replied that my China boy was dead.

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<sup>169</sup> From NEWS OF THE PROVINCE. (1900, May 30). *Daily News-Advertiser*, p. 6. I’ve included material from the continuation of the inquest in the *News-Advertiser* of June 3, 1900.

This was the first I heard. I did not go into the kitchen till later. [...] I broke out the pane in the kitchen window so that the provision dealers might hand through any small articles. Vegetable men sometimes do the same, but not often. Hugh did not stay at the house after I left. Mrs. Copley saw him at the depot a little after 5, and met him going home on Lincoln Street. He was not excited. He went home with me, and after seeing the body through the broken pane, got very excited. [...]"

[Ernest]<sup>170</sup> Chenoweth was then called. He said he was eight years old. He did not know what an oath was. He did not tell lies, but did know what would happen to him if he did tell a lie. He then said:

"I was playing at the back of the house when the Chinaman came at about half-past four. He began to cook dinner. He had no one with him. I was playing house with a tin pan, two cups and some broken dishes. I left the house and went to play with Johnny at the depot. I afterwards went down to where they were moving a house. I met my mother there about 6 o'clock and went home with her. When I left the house the Chinaman was cooking potatoes. I put away my tin pan and things. I was in the kitchen a minute or two. The Chinaman was good-tempered. I liked the Chinaman. He was all right. The doctor said he was shot. [...] I looked in the window because the other people were looking in. I wanted to see if the Chinaman was surely dead." [...]<sup>171</sup>

After a retirement of some 20 minutes, the jury came out and the following verdict was then read by the foreman:

"From the evidence produced, we find that the deceased, Mah Lin, came to his death as the result of a gunshot, fired by some person or persons unknown, and that the said shot was fired from a number 32 caliber rifle produced in court, and that the shot was fired from within the house, where the body of the deceased was found." [...]

By the cross-questioning of the little son of Mrs. Chenoweth, Ernest, [...] it was too evidently indicated that this boy was thought to be the guilty party. It is asserted that he has been known to threaten to shoot the chickens. But yet it is found that one of his neighbors trusts him with chickens to look after. There is nothing in evidence so far to show that he ever made such a threat. The theory can only be that the boy lifted the gun in play and it accidentally went off. [...]

Mrs. Coakley, who was not called upon, could testify that she met the boy, Ernie, playing unconcernedly two blocks away from the scene of the crime at 5:15 and asked him what he was doing there. She was replied to by a friend, Mr. Borthwick, who was at the spot, the corner of Lincoln and Second Avenue, who stated that he had seen the youngster playing at the depot. Also Mr. Bard, who was removing a house, and whose work the boy declared he was watching, can say that the child had been there some minutes before Mrs. Coakley's arrival.

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<sup>170</sup> Mistakenly named 'Hugh' in the original. Hugh Stevens is Mary Chenoweth's eldest son.

<sup>171</sup> From this point on, the material is from the June 3 issue of the *News-Advertiser*, p. 6.



### **Ernest Chenoweth's confession<sup>172</sup> (1900)**

The mystery of the killing of Mah Lin, a Chinese cook, who was found dead in the kitchen of Mrs. Chenoweth on May 23rd, has been cleared. Ernest, the eight-year-old son of Mrs. Chenoweth, has made a confession that he fired the fatal shot. He states that there had been a disagreement between him and the Chinaman. Mah Lin had laughed at him, whereupon the youngster averred that he would shoot him. This caused the Chinaman to laugh again. The boy went into his brother's room, climbing over the bed, got the gun, and climbing back snapped it. It did not go off. Again he held it on the Chinese and pulled the trigger, and this time it went off and the Chinaman fell face forward on the floor and died there.

"He did not laugh any more then," said the boy.

### **"The verdict was received with cheers"<sup>173</sup> (1900)**

The case of Ernest Chenoweth, about eight years of age, charged with the murder of a Chinaman at Rossland on May 23rd was opened at the court house on Monday afternoon. A startling announcement was made by Mr. Wright, one of the Crown's witnesses, who stated positively on oath that since the preliminary examination before the magistrate at Rossland in May last her husband had been approached by two Chinamen who offered him \$500 to bring evidence which would secure the conviction of little Ernest Chenoweth. Without leaving the box, the jury on Tuesday afternoon returned a verdict of "not guilty". The verdict was received with cheers.

### **"Chinese servant missing"<sup>174</sup> (1900)**

The services of the local police have been enlisted in an effort to locate the whereabouts of a Chinese lad named Yan Chong, employed as a domestic at the residence of Mrs. Janion<sup>175</sup>, Yates street. He left home at 5 o'clock on Tuesday morning, with the object of going to attend to his domestic duties, but since then he has not been seen. His friends, while anxious for him, do not entertain any fears of foul play. He is about 16 years of age.

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<sup>172</sup> From ROSSLAND. (1900, July 25). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 7.

<sup>173</sup> From Provincial News. (1900, October 26). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 7.

<sup>174</sup> From Chinese Servant Missing. (1900, September 13). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

<sup>175</sup> In the 1901 census, the Janion family has one live-in Chinese servant, named "Wong". He was born in 1882, emigrated to Canada in 1890, and was paid \$120 a year (presumably \$10 a month).

### **“A disappearing diamond”<sup>176</sup> (1900)**

On Friday last Mrs. Haney, of 661 Hornby street, laid five finger rings on the bureau in an upstairs room. She was called downstairs and in her absence the Chinese servant of the household, Wang Ching Chow, entered the apartment in the discharge of his duties. When Mrs. Haney returned for her jewelry a valuable diamond ring was missing. As the Chinaman had been the only person in the room, suspicion fastened upon him. No action was taken on that day (Friday) and not till Saturday were the police notified. Detective Wylie arrested the Celestial, but he denied knowing anything of the ring.

### **“Shot his cook”<sup>177</sup> (1900)**

Golden, June 1 – The saddest tragedy that ever occurred in this valley was the one which took place at the residence of the Hon. Frank Lascelles, Thunder Hill, on the morning of Wednesday, May 29th, when that young man, laboring under the delusion that some one was outside his house wanting to force an entrance, shot and instantly killed his Chinese cook.

For some time past he has been brooding over a fancied insult to him in connection with his being called to give evidence in Magistrate Scovil’s court in a dispute over a horse. Since that time he has been much unsettled, and on Tuesday afternoon he took his saddle-horse and went out riding. After the usual supper hour he returned to the house without his horse and with no coat and expressed a desire to be let alone, as he was not feeling well. In the house with him there lived John Lambert, Fred Kimpton and two Chinese servants, one [named] Muck Hum, a cook, who had been with him for years and of whom he thought a great deal (this was the one that was shot). After retiring on Tuesday night he found himself unable to sleep and requested Lambert to sit up with him and for a time acted in a very irrational manner, but apparently there came to his mind a glimmer of his usual gentlemanly manners and he told Lambert that it was all foolishness to keep him out of bed, and told him to go to sleep.

Lambert was awakened by hearing Lascelles announce that after counting five he would shoot the first man he saw. Thinking Kimpton had left the house, Lambert got out as quickly as possible, and after looking round and seeing no one heard a shot fired and saw one of the Chinese servants running with his clothes in his hands. Finding from this Chinaman that Kimpton was all right and getting nothing further from him, Lambert at once struck for the camp of two men who were fencing on Lascelle’s estate.

In the meantime Kimpton tells of how he stood in a room across a hall from the maniac, unable to shut the door or get to the window, and heard the shot fired from a shot gun at a distance of two feet into the Chinaman’s brain, and of the language used by Lascelles to the now inanimate form of his fancied foe. Kimpton then made

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<sup>176</sup> From A DISAPPEARING DIAMOND. (1900, November 27). *The Province*, p. 3.

<sup>177</sup> From SHOT HIS COOK. (1901, June 3). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 3.

his escape and made his way to the nearest neighbors. Securing a horse he rode to Windermere and gave information to the officers of the town. [...]

An examination of Mr. Lascelles was made by Drs. Elliott and Taylor and a certificate of insanity issued by them and a commitment to the asylum at New Westminster was made.

Special interest is taken in this occurrence owing to the prominence of Mr. Lasscelle's family. Mr. Lascelles holds the controlling interest in the Upper Columbia Navigation and Tramway Co. and is possessed of large private means.

### **“Boys charged with assaulting a Chinese domestic”<sup>178</sup> (1901)**

In the police court this morning Clarence Baker and Christopher Medwedrich, the two boys charged with assaulting a Chinese domestic several evenings ago, were convicted and each fined \$15, to be paid by the 14th, or in default of one month's imprisonment. According to the informant he was proceeding to town near Rock Bay Bridge when he was attacked by the two boys, who attacked him with sticks. One of them, he said, abstracted a ten dollar bill from his pocket, and also threw his slippers over the bridge.

### **“Domestic found dead”<sup>179</sup> (1902)**

A Chinese domestic named Lee, employed by Dr. Fagan, secretary of the provincial board of health, was found dead in his bed this morning. He occupied a room in his employer's residence just off the kitchen, and retired last night about 10 o'clock. This morning E. Geiger, plumber, who had been engaged to do some plumbing work, had occasion to enter the Chinaman's room and saw the domestic lying dead in his bed. [...] The Chinaman complained of a touch of rheumatism yesterday, but otherwise was in his usual health. He had been with Dr. Fagan for some time and was about twenty-two years of age. He has several cousins employed as domestics in the city.

### **“Rich for short time”<sup>180</sup> (1902)**

Ah Kim, a fifteen year old Chinese boy, is in the custody of the provincial police court charged with the theft of \$310 from his employer, Mr. Bishop, of Bishop & Clark, dairymen, of Cadoboro Bay. Mr. Bishop yesterday drew \$310 and placed it in a box in his room, intending to leave for the Sound this morning to purchase two horses. The Chinese boy, becoming acquainted with the fact that the money was there, is said to have taken advantage of Mr. Bishop's absence at the stables about 5 o'clock this morning and decamped with the sum.

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<sup>178</sup> From BOYS WERE FINED. (1901, December 7). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 8.

<sup>179</sup> From DOMESTIC FOUND DEAD. (1902, January 29). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 5.

<sup>180</sup> From RICH FOR SHORT TIME. (1902, March 20). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

Mr. Bishop, returning to the house, soon missed the money and the boy, and notified the provincial police. Sergeant Murray started on a hunt for the culprit, and Mr. Bishop went after the youth on horseback. He caught him at about 7:30 on the Cedar Hill Road, and turned him over to the sergeant. He was searched, and \$300 found in his possession. He confessed to the police that he had paid \$5 to a Chinaman at a vegetable garden, but could not account for the other \$5.

The boy said he took the money because he wanted to get away to a big city like San Francisco.

### **“Got seven months”<sup>181</sup> (1902)**

Ak Kim, the 15-year-old Chinese servant who was arrested by Sergeant Murray charged with stealing \$286 from Frank Bishop, milkman of Cadboro Bay Road, was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment in the provincial police court yesterday by Magistrate Hall. The evidence showed that the accused had climbed on to a bed to reach a box at the bottom of which was \$300 placed there and covered by some ties and handkerchiefs, and taken \$286 of it. The money had been placed there for Mr. Bishop, who was to have gone to Seattle to buy a team. When he missed the money and also the boy, he gave chase, and overtook the boy on the road, before he had time to dispose of the money. Sergeant Murray afterwards arrested him.

### **“Misplaced confidence”<sup>182</sup> (1902)**

P. Burns, liveryman, who resides at 694 Seymour Street, has had his faith in Chinese servants very badly shattered. He had as family servant a Chinaman named Lee, who was considered a jewel. The family all had implicit faith in him, and he had the run of the house. He was an observant Chinaman and he improved his time while going about the premises by getting an accurate idea of where money and valuables were kept. On Sunday morning he put his knowledge to use and decamped with between \$75 to \$80 in bills and silver, two two-and-a-half dollar American gold pieces, a lady's gold watch and chain, two gold rings, and a check signed by J. Logan for \$7. Lee, the Chinaman, is described as having a partially crippled right hand, the thumb and two fingers being stiff and useless.

### **Theft at the provincial jail<sup>183</sup> (1902)**

It is certainly a most unusual thing for a robbery to be committed behind the stone walls of a jail. However, such an occurrence is reported to the local police from the Westminster jail, and it is supposed to have been the work of Chinese servants.

The theft, which amounts to over \$400, took place some two weeks ago, but was kept quiet as it was thought by the warden that the guilty party, or parties, would

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<sup>181</sup> From Got Seven Months. (1902, March 28). *Daily Colonist*, p. 4.

<sup>182</sup> From MISPLACED CONFIDENCE. (1902, April 7). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 8.

<sup>183</sup> From ROBBERY. (1902, August 16). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 1.

be located. Yesterday Detective Mulhern received a letter from the chief of police at Whatcom, in which he stated that his men had arrested a Chinaman. It was stated by a companion of the Celestial's that the men locked up had stolen a large quantity of jewelry near Vancouver.

This was learned by the warden at the provincial jail and he at once communicated with the Vancouver police reporting his loss, which consisted of one gold lady's watch and chain, bracelets made out of gold nuggets, chain, three bangles with the names Etta, Frank and George engraved on them, four brooches, five rings, one of which had the initial M set around with five diamonds, [and a] brooch made of a silver dollar with the letters M. A. upon it.

Detective Mulhern states that the Whatcom Chinaman may be the thief, and the matter is being investigated.

### **“There seems to be no doubt whatever”<sup>184</sup> (1902)**

The Vancouver Detective Department has been working on a big robbery during the past few days and the affair was only cleared up last evening. Several days ago Mrs. Percy W. Evans, of Nelson Street, placed a magnificent diamond crescent, valued at \$480, in her jewel case and left her residence for the purpose of placing some calls. When Mrs. Evans returned home she was rather startled upon finding that during her absence the jewel had disappeared. The house was searched from attic to cellar, but without success, and finally the police were telephoned for.

Detectives Mulhern and Park visited the home, and upon learning that Mrs. Evans had a Chinaman in her employ, the detectives at once came to the conclusion that it was he who had taken the diamond. He was cross-questioned, but positively denied that he had seen anything of the missing property. The Celestial was informed that unless it was returned by the next morning he would be locked up.

The following day several of Mrs. Evans' friends called to see her, and one of them noticed the missing jewel lying on the floor. There seems to be no doubt whatever but that the Chinaman had stolen the article and fearing arrest threw it on the floor where he knew it would be found.

### **“Diamond ring was returned”<sup>185</sup> (1903)**

Mrs. Corbett of 561 Granville Street reported yesterday to the police the theft of two rings, one a diamond valued at \$100. The rings had been placed under a mattress, so that they would be out of the sight of a Chinese servant. But the latter was sent to make the bed, and the rings disappeared. The police were sent for, and before they arrived the rings were found on a dressing-table. The Chinese was not arrested, however, as the evidence against him was not direct.

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<sup>184</sup> From RECOVERED. (1902, August 27). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 5.

<sup>185</sup> From DIAMOND RING WAS RETURNED. (1903, January 2). *Province* (Vancouver), p. 1.

### **“A gang of twelve boys”<sup>186</sup> (1903)**

A Chinaman in the employ of Mrs. Janion, Cadboro Bay Road, was run over by a Fort Street car last evening, a short distance from that place. His leg was crushed, and his head and face badly bruised. The ambulance was called, and the patient removed to the Jubilee Hospital, where it was found necessary to amputate the injured leg. The Chinaman, it seems, was on his way home after work when a gang of twelve boys commenced badgering him, and in the excitement the unfortunate Oriental was forced on the track just as the car came along. The motorman had no time to slow down.

### **“Must answer for it”<sup>187</sup> (1903)**

Proceedings will be instituted against the boys who assaulted the young Chinese domestic, employed by Mrs. Janion, last Tuesday evening. As will be remembered the boy was forced onto the car track when the car was passing and received injuries which necessitated the removal of his left leg below the knee. The police have been investigating, and it is to be hoped those responsible for the unfortunate lad's terrible condition will be brought to book.

Crease & Crease have been instructed to sue for damages on behalf of the injured boy. This is not the first time<sup>188</sup> Chinese domestics have been assaulted by thoughtless lads who invariably outnumber their victims five to one.

### **“A victim of thoughtlessness”<sup>189</sup> (1903)**

The case of the Chinese boy who, baited, bullied and frightened by the actions of a bevy of youngsters of the superior race until he temporarily lost sight of the real dangers of the highway in a danger which was for the most part imaginary, stepped in front of an electric car, and will be a cripple for life in consequence, has caused considerable comment in Victoria. The general attitude towards the lads may be said to be one of censoriousness. Yet is the community, when the matter is fully considered, entirely free from responsibility in the premises? It is a popular thing to speak disparagingly of the despised people. Men who would promptly go to the assistance of a Mongolian if they saw wrong, injustice or cruelty being inflicted upon him, speak lightly in public places of the value of his life. Jestingly they will urge the driver of a car or of a wagon to put on speed and run him to earth. Policemen are said to shut their eyes to many acts of petty persecution against these unfortunate sons of the East.

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<sup>186</sup> From A Chinaman. (1903, January 14). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 5.

<sup>187</sup> From MUST ANSWER FOR IT. (1903, January 16). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.

<sup>188</sup> Or the last. “Mrs. Teeporten complains to the police that four white boys make a practice of assaulting the Chinese domestic employed by her.” DAILY CITY GOSSIP. (1903, January 24). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 8.

<sup>189</sup> From A VICTIM OF THOUGHTLESSNESS. (1903, January 20). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 4.

Now, the eyes and ears of boys are always open. They make a mental note of the sayings and doings of those who have reached the estate to which they look forward with eager anticipation. They are thoughtless; their sympathies have not been broadened by the experience, the suffering and the bereavement which are the common lot of all sojourners in the world for any length of time. It may not be a pleasing trait of the juvenile disposition, but it is none the less the fact, that boys are highly delighted when they discover a butt on whom they can vent the savagery that is more or less inherent in the coming men. At least such was the general disposition of youth a score or so years ago. It is not likely there has been a great change in one generation. The world has not made any remarkable strides in that time. We have a distinct recollection that when a collection of youths out for a frolic drove from cover a drunken man or woman they did not pause to reflect upon the divine construction of the human form or to consider the pain that would surge through the heart of a father, mother, sister, brother, husband or wife at the spectacle which was the cause of their boisterous, unthinking merriment. Their philosophy was not deep enough to harbor such speculations. If the right train of thought had been set in motion, the attitude of the mob would probably have undergone a distinct change on the instant. If the young heart is thoughtless, it is also easily moved at the sight of suffering and the idea of wrong.

The boys who were primarily responsible for the accident by which the Chinese domestic was maimed, it is needless to say, had no thought of the dire event which was destined to follow their pranks. After a fashion they exemplified the sentiments of the community towards their victim, and the community cannot be entirely absolved of responsibility. As a people for sound economic reasons we are hostile to the Chinese. We shall never be satisfied until a change has been effected in the laws and the doors are permanently closed to this undesirable class. But we must not forget that we share the responsibility for their presence, and that it is our duty as representatives of what we term the higher civilization to see that they suffer neither personal violence nor wrong in any form while they are with us. What is specially needed at the present stage of our relationship with the Chinese is education. The curriculum might with advantage in some cases be extended so as to include adults within its scope, but the teachers of our children, whether in the home or in the public schools, should ask themselves in the words of Longfellow<sup>190</sup>:

“How can I teach your children gentleness,  
And mercy to the weak, and reverence  
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,  
Is still a gleam of God’s omnipotence.”

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<sup>190</sup> From Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem, “The Poet’s Tale – The Birds of Killingworth”.

“Assaults on Chinese boys”<sup>191</sup> (1903)

Sir – I desire to call the public attention to the outrages committed almost nightly by a gang of boys in the vicinity of the east end of Jervis Street, who annoy residents in various ways, but mainly by harassing and annoying Chinese servants in their own kitchens and premises, and on the streets. On Thursday evening a Chinese boy was badly cut on the head, and previously another one narrowly escaped a much more serious injury at the hands of these young “hoodlums”.

The worst feature of these outrages is that the culprits are known to be children of respectable parents and ought to know better how to behave themselves.

The indignant residents are quietly taking steps to obtain evidence that will convict some of these boys, and the parents are warned that no effort will be spared to punish the offenders if they continue their practices.

Yours, etc.,

RESIDENT.

Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 26th, 1903.

**“Highway robbery from the person of Ah Due”<sup>192</sup> (1903)**

Severe penalties were inflicted on George Stone and Frank Moore by Magistrate Hall in the police court this morning. The former will serve five years in the provincial penitentiary and the latter three years. They pleaded guilty to four crimes, namely, stealing from a trunk belonging to Mrs. Whitely, stealing from M. R. Smith & Co., stealing from the Lighthouse saloon, and highway robbery from the person of Ah Due, a Chinese domestic. The last crime, of course, was the most serious of the lot, and it was for this that Stone was banished to the penitentiary for five years and Moore for two years less. [...]

Moore admitted his guilt on the charge of highway robbery. Stone pleaded not guilty and the prosecution proceeded with its case. King’s evidence was given by Emil Oleson, an accomplice, a lad not yet fifteen years of age. He told a story damning to the cause of Stone. He stated that on the night of January the 17th he met Stone and Moore and showed them a revolver. The former said it would be a good thing to hold up Chinamen with, and suggested they try it. They went to the corner of Kane and Quadra streets and Ah Due came along. Moore held the revolver to the Celestial’s head while Stone shoved him against the fence and demanded his money. The frightened Chinaman said he hadn’t any, so Stone went through his pockets and took a purse which contained a key and sixty cents. The purse and key were returned.

The prosecution then called upon Moore to testify, but at this juncture Stone intimated to the chief that he wanted to change his plea to guilty. In doing so he denied that he had suggested the robbery. As a matter of fact, he said it had been planned by Oleson, who had repeatedly urged it upon himself and Moore. Oleson’s

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<sup>191</sup> From RESIDENT. (1903, January 27). ASSAULTS ON CHINESE BY BOYS. *Daily News-Advertiser*, p. 5.

<sup>192</sup> From BOTH SENTENCED TO PENITENTIARY. (1903, February 20). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.



attention was drawn to Stone's allegations and he gave them an emphatic denial. He had not planned the robbery. At the time it occurred he was laughing, as he thought it a good joke. [...]

The chief explained that he would have prosecuted Oleson, but spared him in consideration of his giving King's evidence. He concluded that it was better that one guilty person should escape than three.

### **“In Court on behalf of his servant”<sup>193</sup> (1903)**

The 15 Chinamen captured in the raid at No. 28 Dupont Street on Tuesday evening were brought up before Magistrate Russell in the Police Court yesterday on the charge of being present at and watching a gambling game. [...]

Colonel Dudley, the United States Consul, appeared in Court on behalf of his servant, a Chinaman, who was arrested at the house in Dupont Street along with the others. It appears that about 8 p.m. on Tuesday this man left the Colonel's house to go in search of a friend whom he wished to inform of a vacant position as servant. He had with him a slip of paper bearing the name and address of the gentleman who desired a Chinese servant, and this paper was found in his hand at the time of his arrest which took place about 8:30 p.m., so that the man could only just have arrived at No. 28 Dupont Street about the time the raid was made. Colonel Dudley spoke highly of the character of his servant, and asked the Magistrate to deal with the man under the first offence rule.

### **“Cowardly attack on Chinese”<sup>194</sup> (1904)**

Several complaints have been made to The Province about a brutal attack made last night at the corner of Thurslow and Pender streets upon a Chinese domestic who works in a house nearby. From the statement made it seems the boy left the house where he is employed about 10 o'clock, and returned in a few minutes, his face covered with blood. His story was that three white men had attacked him, and had his cries not attracted the attention of some people living nearby, he might have been more seriously hurt.

### **“Roughs assault Chinese servant”<sup>195</sup> (1907)**

Mr. W. Fullerton, a resident of the West End, this morning came downstairs to find his Chinese Servant, Mah Yuen, suffering severe injuries about the head and body. Questioning the man, he learned that last night about 10:30 o'clock the Oriental, in company with another Chinese servant, was standing at the post office waiting for a car. Suddenly a group of six white men attacked the pair, who attempted

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<sup>193</sup> From IN THE POLICE COURT. (1903, November 12). *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 5.

<sup>194</sup> From COWARDLY ATTACK ON CHINESE. (1904, April 30). *The Province*, p. 1.

<sup>195</sup> From ROUGHS ASSAULT CHINESE SERVANT. (1907, September 24). *The Province*, p. 1.

to escape. The men followed them up, knocked Mah Yuen down and kicked him in the face and side. As evidence of the attack the servant showed his numerous bruises.

Mr. Fullerton states that his servant is a trustworthy man and that he believes the story to be true. He was formerly employed by Mr. Roberts of the Northern Bank, by whom he was highly recommended. Since the recent riot he has been in a constant state of alarm because of his fear of being assaulted.

The assault has been placed before Mr. A. E. McEvoy, who has been acting as local adviser for Mr. King, Chinese Vice-Consul at San Francisco. This official is still in the city, and it is probable the matter will be fully investigated.

### **“Chinese pawnshops condemned by court”<sup>196</sup> (1915)**

Chinese pawnshops came in for strong condemnation by City Prosecutor J. K. Kennedy this morning, when the case of Ching Low, charged with the theft of several articles of jewelry, was heard. Ching had been in the employ of Captain Fullerton at the Granville Mansions for some time, and during the past two months a number of pieces of valuable jewelry had been missed, suspicion at last falling on the employee.

Detectives Crowe and Imlah were detailed to investigate the matter, and they quickly located the thief in the person of the wily Ching Low. He admitted his guilt, and the detectives then discovered that he had done a regular, and, as far as a pawnshop keeper was concerned, lucrative business in the jewelry line. One brooch valued at \$350 he pawned for the modest sum of \$45; a \$100 diamond ring going for \$15; one valued at \$150 also going the same way at that figure; while \$1 was received for a ring worth \$85.

### **“Chinaman reports assault”<sup>197</sup> (1916)**

That he had been assaulted by three youths while near the gate leading to his employer’s house, was the report made by a Chinese domestic servant employed at 1049 Nelson Street. The man stated that the three culprits waited for him on the steps of the church at the corner of Nelson and Burrard streets, followed him to the gates of the house where he was employed, and there beat him with sticks. He assured the police of his ability to recognize the young fellows again.

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<sup>196</sup> From CHINESE PAWNSHOPS CONDEMNED BY COURT. (1915, June 30). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 16.

<sup>197</sup> From CHINAMAN REPORTS ASSAULT. (1916, August 18). *Daily World* (Vancouver), p. 16.

## The Murder of Mrs. Millard

The death of Mrs. Millard at the hands of her Chinese servant, just before the start of World War I, proved the death-knell of Chinese servants as an institution in British Columbia.

### “At the hands of her Chinese servant”<sup>198</sup> (1914)

“We have found enough evidence to justify us in the statement that Mrs. Millard was foully murdered,” was the statement given out by the police at 1 o’clock this morning, after spending forty-eight hours of constant labor on one of the most startling crimes which has occurred in the city of Vancouver. For two days the police have searched the premises at 1650 Pendrell street, inside and out, for some trace of the missing woman, and it was not until last night that definite traces of a ferocious crime were discovered and the above statement was given out by the police. According to the various clues discovered, Mrs. Charles J. Millard, wife of the chief ticket agent of the C.P.R. station, was done to death, allegedly at the hands of her Chinese servant, Jack Kong. [...]

The theory of the police is that Mrs. Millard discovered some clue which led her to accuse her Chinese servant of being guilty of the theft of some jewelry which was missing from the house some time ago. At that time the Chinaman said he thought that a man who had called at the house a day or two before and had been given a pair of boots, was guilty of the theft. It is thought that when Mrs. Millard accused him of taking the jewels, the Chinaman, taking advantage of the fact that they were alone in the house, struck her with a poker or stick [and killed her in the ensuing struggle.]<sup>199</sup> [...]

Mrs. Millard was about 30 years of age and had lived all her life in Vancouver.

### “He was a favorite with his teachers”<sup>200</sup> (1914)

Jack Kong [...] confessed last night that her murdered [Mrs. Millard]. [...] Mr. Millard, according to the story reported to have been told by the boy to the police, left home on Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday morning, Mrs. Millard, because of her husband’s absence<sup>201</sup>, did not rise at her customary early hour. When she did get up she complained to Kong that the porridge had been burned. He was in a hurry to attend his class at the Lord Roberts school, directly opposite the house, and returned

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<sup>198</sup> From MRS. CHAS. J. MILLARD IS CHOKED TO DEATH THEN THROWN ON FIRE. (1914, April 4). *The Sun* (Vancouver), p. 1.

<sup>199</sup> The original story contains graphic details.

<sup>200</sup> From CHINESE SERVANT IS GUILTY OF MURDERING MRS. CHAS. J. MILLARD. (1914, August 4). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1.

<sup>201</sup> “At the inquest Mr. Millard related how he left his wife to go on business of the C.P.R. to Victoria last Tuesday, and how he returned the following night and found his wife missing.” WAS MURDERED BY CHINESE BOY. (1914, April 5). *Daily Colonist*, p. 1.

a saucy answer. Mrs. Millard scolded him. She told him, declares the boy, that she would cut off one of his ears to make him obey. Becoming angered, he picked up one of the chairs in the dining room and hit her a crushing blow on the head. [...]

The boy is 17 years of age. [...] Rather pleasant in countenance, he was a favorite with his teachers at the Lord Roberts school, and with his playmates there. In his cell at the Grandview sub-station, Kong, with the characteristic of his race, maintains an outward calm. It is hard to believe that the sturdy boy, dressed in knickerbockers, who occupies the iron cell, could be guilty of such a fiendish act as he is alleged to have confessed to. He shows no traces of emotion. His jailers do not converse with him except when they bring him his meals. Last night he slept soundly, and this morning was whistling in his cell.

The murder has caused a tremendous sensation throughout the city. Mrs. Millard had lived here nearly all her life and was well known in social circles before her marriage with Mr. Millard. It is stated this morning that a number of West End residents dismissed their Chinese domestics after learning of the tragedy.

### **“Lately he had grown careless”<sup>202</sup> (1914)**

Mrs. Millard was a frail woman of somewhat nervous disposition, and was no match physically for the Chinese youth, who had been employed by the Millard family for four years. Kong had hitherto given good service, but lately he had grown careless and it is believed that he had become addicted to opium or some other drug habit.

### **“Have now realized the risks”<sup>203</sup> (1914)**

The atrocious, almost unprecedentedly brutal murder, of his mistress, by a Chinese servant, will set many people in this city thinking. Already scores of Chinese servants have been dismissed by householders who have now realized the risks undertaken by the employment of this class of domestic help.

The system of employing Chinese boys as servants at low wages because they are allowed to attend school is all wrong. These Chinese boys are usually much older than their classmates. For instance, the China boy who confessed to the terrible crime which has shocked the whole country, was a seat-mate of a white boy only thirteen years of age, while the Chinaman was seventeen years old. The China boy has been in daily contact with many white boys many years his junior. His crime immediately suggests the standard of morality which was his. No one knows the moral standard

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<sup>202</sup> From Frightful Murder by Chinese Youth. (1914, April 4). *Inland Sentinel* (Kamloops), p. 1.

<sup>203</sup> From McConnell, John P. (1914, April 6). The Chinese Servant. *The Sun* (Vancouver), p. 6. Written by John P. McConnell (c. 1875 – 1926), founding editor of the Vancouver *Sun*, who was asked to resign from the paper because of this editorial. (“Mr. McConnell claims that as a result of this editorial and his failure to have published Mr. Wade’s editorial, he was asked to resign by Mr. Wade, whose action was endorsed by the directors of the Burrard Publishing Company.” WRIT ISSUED AGAINST “SUN” AND MR. WADE. (1914, July 3). *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 3.)

of any Chinaman. A Chinaman's face as a rule is as expressive as a steam radiator. No one can tell by looking at him what is passing in his mind.

What the result of contact of this youthful self-confessed murderer may have had upon the minds of his more youthful contemporaries no one can tell. But this awful tragedy should teach the school board that their first duty is to segregate the Orientals from white children in all the schools. The Oriental character, standard of morals and all else that pertain to the upbuilding of a white citizenship in this country are fundamentally opposed to ours, and no mixture of the races should be further tolerated in this city, and especially among our children. [...]

It seems somewhat anomalous that with the constant influx of capable white girls there should be any place for Oriental servants in this country, in any case. The writer knows of many families who would not tolerate a Chinaman in their households, yet do not experience much difficulty in securing competent white female help.

Some criticism of the police has been made because it is alleged the third degree<sup>204</sup> was used to extract the truth from the young Chinaman. Our opinion is that any method by which the truth can be dragged from the inscrutable Oriental is justifiable, and if the police did use the third degree in this case, the public will find no fault with them.

### **“Indignation runs high against the Orientals”<sup>205</sup> (1914)**

As a result of the murder of Mrs. Charles Millard, which was confessed to by Jack Kong, a China boy in the employ of the Millard family, indignation runs high against the Orientals. Several attempts were made on Saturday night and yesterday afternoon to flame the prejudice into something tangible, but the prompt action of the police in each case stopped what might easily have resulted in a recurrence of the Chinese [sic.] riots of seven years ago.

One man, who gave his name as J. Quieny, was arrested by Detective George McLaughlin on Hastings Street, after he had assaulted a number of Orientals, late Saturday night. When the officer placed the man under arrest, a sympathetic crowd soon collected and thronged over the sidewalk and across the car tracks. Seeing that any effort to force the man to accompany him to the patrol box might precipitate a riot, the detective had someone telephone for the patrol wagon to come up the lane between Hastings and Pender streets, and hustled his prisoner through a store and into the wagon before the crowd could go around the block.

Yesterday the revulsion of feeling was evident when fully sixty Chinese servants reported to various Oriental employment offices that they had been discharged, while others intimated that they had been given notice of dismissal.

On Saturday afternoon, the Chinese Daily News issued an extra edition giving a synopsis of the facts of the crime. Editorially it commented upon the domestic

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<sup>204</sup> Violence.

<sup>205</sup> From FEELING RUNS HIGH OVER MILLARD MURDER. (1914, April 6). *Daily World* (Van.), p. 4.

servant problem, and expressed the opinion that the diabolical act would result in wholesale dismissals. The fact that so foul a murder should have been committed by one of the Chinese residents of Vancouver was deeply deplored.

The fact that Kong had been a trusted servant in the Millard home for the past three years, and that they had been so kind to him, makes the killing the more repulsive to those who are employing Oriental servants, and Chinamen who have been in service for years, have been given notice.

Jack Kong's father, who lives at Mission, came to Vancouver on Saturday and has instructed Mr. Alex Henderson, K.C., to act as counsel for his son.

On Saturday night the Chinese Benevolent Society met and passed the following resolution of condolence:

"Whereas it has come to our attention, through the publication in the local newspapers this day, that Mrs. Charles J. Millard, wife of Mr. Charles J. Millard, official of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., and friend of many leading Chinese residents in Vancouver, and whereas Mr. Millard, through his official capacity, has rendered much valuable assistance to the Chinese people in Vancouver, therefore be it resolved, that the Chinese Benevolent Association, on behalf of the Chinese community in Vancouver, as a body, do hereby extend their deepest sympathy to Mr. Millard and relations in the loss of their beloved one, and express their earnest desire that the murderer be brought to justice without delay, and whereas Mr. Yip Sang, president of the association, is also Chinese passenger agent on the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in Vancouver, therefore, be it further resolved, that he, together with the secretary of the association, shall be requested to present this resolution, in person, to Mr. Millard and the bereaved family. [Signed] YIP SANG, President, [and] TSANG SAK CHIN, Secretary."

### **"Wholesale dismissals of Chinese"<sup>206</sup> (1914)**

That Chinese boys employed in the homes of Vancouver citizens, hotels and restaurants are being dismissed from service in large numbers as the result of the fiendish murder of the late Mrs. Charles Millard, was the statement made yesterday to a representative of The Sun by Hop Wo, of Hop Wo & Company, employment agents, 531 Carrall street, when seen in his office. Already, to Hop Wo's knowledge, fifty or sixty boys have been discharged, and more dismissals are expected as a result of the crime.

When The Sun representative entered the office of Hop Wo it was crowded with Chinese boys who had been discharged and who, as Hop Wo explained to the reporter, had all afternoon been discussing the act that had brought about such a condition.

"All Chinamen hate that boy for committing such a diabolical crime, and we are very sorry," he said.

"Have you had any enquiries lately asking for boys?" he was asked.

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<sup>206</sup> From WHOLESAL DISMISSALS OF CHINESE. (1914, April 6). *The Sun* (Vancouver), p. 1.

“Well, I think not, for two days I never got one enquiry. It hurt our business, and for two days we have not been asked to send any boys.”

“To your knowledge, have many boys been dismissed?” he was asked.

“Oh, yes, heap lot,” he replied. “This morning boys from white man’s house came in with instructions not to go back. Boys employed as waiters and in hotels also come, whole lot.”

“Would there be twenty or thirty of these boys discharged?” queried the reporter.

“Oh yes, heap more. Maybe twice that many, and more will be let out. My business has been ruined and soon Chinaman will not be able to live in Vancouver.”

Hop Wo was quite frank in admitting that boys were being discharged wholesale from the homes they had been employed in, some for years, and that a death blow to the employment of Orientals in Vancouver homes had been dealt by the crime of which Jack Kong has confessed.

### **“The Chinese and British fair play”<sup>207</sup> (1914)**

In Vancouver and its vicinity there are probably four thousand Chinese. One of these has confessed that he committed an awful crime. This is a community which believes in the ordinary methods of administering justice, and the condemned criminal will be tried in the regular way by the courts. There is no danger of public interference with the process of the law.

But there is danger of injustice to other Chinese residents because of the act of this man. For there can be no greater injustice than to hold a whole race responsible for even the most brutal crime of one of its members. It is reported that scores of families are discharging Chinese servants. There is a demand that Chinese shall be dismissed from hotels, restaurants and sawmills, that Chinese children shall not be allowed in the same schools with white children, and that all kinds of new regulations and discriminations shall be invented against them. The annals of crime and disorder are searched to find previous offences, and it is suggested that a general anti-Chinese movement may be at hand.

This journal has long advocated the exclusion of Chinese and other Orientals. We do not believe that a strong community can be built up here out of a mixture of European and Asiatic people. We have never based this doctrine on the moral superiority of Europeans. Moral standards of races are difficult to classify in order of merit, and there are many daily incidents to make European Canadians modest in their claim of superior virtue. But there is no doubt that the moral, social and economic condition of white Canadians, native and immigrant, deteriorate in association and competition with large numbers of Asiatics. The argument for separation is in favor of all races.

But while these reasons and arguments are sound, it would be a great wrong to make the conduct of a single Chinese criminal a special ground of attack on the

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<sup>207</sup> From THE CHINESE AND BRITISH FAIR PLAY. (1914, April 7). *Daily News Advertiser*, p. 4.

Chinese community in this province. Murders of the most cruel and revolting character have been committed by white people. The four thousand Chinese in this city and the twenty thousand in this province are as good as they were last month. People have employed Chinese as servants because they thought them efficient, honest and obedient. They have not all suddenly become untrustworthy and dangerous. It is not fair to attribute the character and conduct of one servant to all the employees. It is still more cruel and unjust to visit his offence on the innocent Chinese children who are at school. Foul murders have been committed in this province by people of several races, but they have not been treated as national or racial offences. The percentage of the Chinese population of British Columbia who have been sent to the penitentiary is not so large as the percentage of Danes, or Germans, or Greeks, or Italians, or Russians, or of natives of the United States, or of some British races.

Any questions of policy national, provincial or civic relating to the Chinese should be proposed and discussed on their merits with respect to the character of the whole population concerned, and not with regard to a particular individual. The time for such action is not when a community is disturbed, but when the subject can be discussed calmly and fairly. The precious life which has been taken cannot be restored by an attack upon innocent persons, and those who feel the greatest horror over the crime should be the first to insist that it should not be made the occasion of accusations against a whole race of people.

### **“Manslaughter found against Jack Kong”<sup>208</sup> (1914)**

Vancouver, B.C., May 22 – At the conclusion of the trial of Jack Kong, the Chinese servant, aged 16 [sic.], accused of the murder of Mrs. Charles Millard, was found guilty of manslaughter. Kong in his evidence asserted that Mrs. Millard ran at him with a knife because he had prepared the wrong kind of porridge for breakfast one morning. He took up a chair and hit her with it, as he was afraid she was going to kill him, [and then disposed of her body]<sup>209</sup>.

### **“All his years within prison walls”<sup>210</sup> (1914)**

Declaring that he thought Jack Kong, the Chinese servant who killed Mrs. Charles Millard [...], was guilty of murder instead of the lesser crime of manslaughter which the jury had decided was the crime, Mr. Justice Gregory, in Vancouver, last week, emphasized his opinion by sentencing the 17-year-old criminal to spend the rest of his life in the penitentiary. Usually a life sentence means 21 years, but Kong, under the sentence, must spend all his years within prison walls. His Lordship declared he was unable to see one redeeming feature, for he regarded the crime as one of peculiar cunning and ferocity.

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<sup>208</sup> From MANSLAUGHTER FOUND AGAINST JACK KONG. (1914, May 22). *Victoria Times*, p. 2.

<sup>209</sup> The original includes gruesome details.

<sup>210</sup> From PROVINCIAL AND GENERAL. (1914, July 9). *Vernon News*, p. 2.



## A Selection of Classified Ads

### 1. January, 1895<sup>211</sup>

WANTED – An experienced woman servant (middle-aged woman preferred) to look after children and assist in housework; Chinese servant kept; applicant must send references and be able to do plain sewing.

### 2. September, 1898<sup>212</sup>

[WANTED] AS GENERAL SERVANT, town or country, a Chinaman just returned from China, seven years in last place; can cook, harness horse, milk cow. Apply to Lai Wah, Cormorant Street.

### 3. November, 1898<sup>213</sup>

CAN RECOMMEND China Boy as general help; now disengaged. 1265 Barclay Street.

### 4. December, 1899<sup>214</sup>

A young China boy, plain cook and general servant, wants a place. 526 Pender Street mission.

### 5. April, 1906<sup>215</sup>

WANTED – Housework by day by China boy; understands English. See Lee, 54 Hastings west.

### 6. November, 1907<sup>216</sup>

WANTED – By [sic.] experienced China boy, cooking by day, preparing luncheons and dinners. Telephone 219.

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<sup>211</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1895, January 16). *Daily Colonist*, p. 1.

<sup>212</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1898, September 25). *Daily Colonist*, p. 1.

<sup>213</sup> CAN RECOMMEND [Advertisement]. (1898, November 2). *The Province*, p. 1.

<sup>214</sup> From BRIEF LOCAL ITEMS. (1899, December 11). *The Province*, p. 8.

<sup>215</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1906, April 3). *The Province*, p. 10.

<sup>216</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1907, November 21). *The Province*, p. 22.

### 7. February, 1910<sup>217</sup>

WANTED – A business man requires room and board, permanently, with private board, in modern home, where no Chinese servants are kept; location preferred, near post office or Hotel Vancouver; please state terms, which must be moderate, to “Permanent,” Box M-11, World.

### 8. March, 1910<sup>218</sup>

WANTED – [Male] Chinese servant for cook and light housework; must go home at nights. Apply 1159 Comox.

### 9. March, 1911<sup>219</sup>

WANTED – First-class [male] Chinese servant; good wages. Apply 1872 Barclay Street, between 6 and 9 p.m.

### 10. January, 1912<sup>220</sup>

WANTED – SMART CHINA BOY: MUST be good cook. Apply between 8 and 10 a.m., or 6 and 8 p.m., to Mrs. W. J. Taaffe, 787 Bute Street, corner of Robson.

### 11. December, 1912<sup>221</sup>

TO LET – Elegantly furnished large 5-room apartment; piano; for three months; near Burrard; with good Chinese servant if required; possession Dec. 20. Phone Seymour 5358.

### 12. August, 1918<sup>222</sup>

WANTED – [Male] Chinese servant, good cook; highest wages paid. Apply Mrs. C. B. Macneill, Angus avenue, Shaughnessy Heights.

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<sup>217</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1910, February 7). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 26.

<sup>218</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1910, March 14). *The Province*, p. 28. This ad was in the “Help Wanted – Male” section.

<sup>219</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1911, March 21). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 42. This ad was in the “Help Wanted – Male” section.

<sup>220</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1912, January 6). *The Province*, p. 31.

<sup>221</sup> TO LET [Advertisement]. (1912, December 9). *The Province*, p. 22.

<sup>222</sup> WANTED [Advertisement]. (1918, August 2). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 18.

This ad was in the “Help Wanted – Male” section.

## Appendix I: Chinese servants outside B.C.

### “My China boys”<sup>223</sup> (California, 1881)

**Fanny Stevenson’s second husband, who she married in 1880, was novelist Robert Louis Stevenson. She shares her experiences with Chinese servants, in detail, in this San Francisco-based account. Since her second husband is not mentioned, and she only arrived in San Francisco (from France) in 1878, all of the incidents below must have taken place from 1878 to early 1880.**

[CONTENT WARNING – PERVASIVE CASUAL RACISM]

My first China boy was sent over to me from a Chinese intelligence office in San Francisco by a “Wells Fargo” agent. I had written a note to the office asking for a cook.

“Here’s a parcel for you,” laughed the Wells Fargo agent as he lifted a small mummy swathed in blue cotton from the wagon and stood him up against the wall. Before I had recovered from my astonishment and dismay, the agent was gone and I was left alone with the blue-cotton mummy.

“What *am* I to do with you?” I soliloquized, rather than asked. Then for the first time I saw in the middle of the queer little face a pair of brilliant, oblique black eyes, very small, in accordance with the size of the creature, but sparkling with the vitality of a dozen lives.

“Plenty cook,” said an eager voice.

“But you are so little.”

“Plenty cook.”

“You cannot reach to the top of a kitchen-table.”

“Plenty cook.”

It was too late to send back the infinitesimal cook until the next day, so I gave him permission to show me what he could do in the mean time.

At once he became possessed of a fury of work, sweeping, dusting, washing windows, and performing the various household duties like a silent whirlwind. Every few moments there was a pause, the twinkling eyes appeared, and the question “Do?” (“What shall I do next?”) was put to me with unabated eagerness. Never before or since have I seen any one work with the same honest enjoyment of physical labor.

When everything had been scoured and cleaned and put into the most perfect order, and the question “*Do?*” was thrown at me again as from a catapult, I was at my wit’s end. “Do?” he repeated, as I paused to reflect. Fortunately I happened, in my perplexity, to look out of the window and saw the garden hose. I was saved.

Always, after that, when the “*Do?*” became too alarmingly imperative, I sent Ah Choon out to water the garden. It was a never-ending source of delight to him,

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<sup>223</sup> From Stevenson, F. M. V. (1881, March 9). MY CHINA BOYS. *Butler Citizen*, p. 1. Written by Fanny Matilda Van der Grift Stevenson (1840 – 1914). Originally published in *Lipincott’s Magazine* for March, 1881. I’ve silently replaced offensive “phonetic” spellings with standard spelling, e.g. “much” instead of “muchee,” and “little” instead of “lilly”.

and an employment that might be prolonged indefinitely, Ah Choon not considering the work properly done until the water stood in pools on the surface of the ground.

I did not send Ah Choon back the next morning, as I had intended. He amused and interested me too much, and then I very soon began to be really attached to the little fellow. Some of my neighbors tell different stories of their experience with the “peculiar institution,”<sup>224</sup> but my Chinese servants have been invariably so gentle, willing, affectionate and clever that, whether I sent away my boy or he left of his own accord, I have always felt sad when he said goodbye, and pleased when he came to see me afterward.

Ah Choon’s beginning was no flash in the pan. He kept his unabated energy to the end, which, alas! came too soon. I gave him a dollar and a half a week afterwards increased [his pay] to two dollars. He surely could have been no more than ten when he came to me, but in a few weeks he not only did most of the cooking and all the chamber-work, but took entire charge of a pony and phaeton<sup>225</sup>, and attended to the light work of a large garden.

An old lady came from the east to visit me, and my health not being good, volunteered to take all home cares off my hands. Then came the tug of war. First, “grandma,” as we called her, came to complain that the China boy would not obey her. When I sent for Ah Choon and asked what he meant by such conduct, he said:

“You buy this house?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Old lady no buy him?”

“No.”

“Then old lady no boss. You boss-woman. Old lady too much sass.”

I explained the situation as well as I could in Pidgin-English, and remembering the respect paid to their parents and elders by the Chinese, I reminded him of that, and asked how he would like to have an American boy treat his mother as he treated grandma. He listened to all I had to say, seeming impressed by it, repeating many times, “Elka klukla me; me no sass old lady.” Shortly after he ran over to his cousin to borrow a phrase-book; “elka klukla me,” means “excuse me”.

In a little while grandma came back again, crying, “I do believe that China boy is swearing at me in Chinese now.”

Again Ah Choon stood before me, his big shining eyes dimmed with tears.

“Ah Choon,” I said reproachfully, “you said you would be good to the old lady, and now she says you talk badly in Chinese to her.”

Ah Choon’s dark face flushed, and the tears poured down his cheeks.

“No can do! No can do!” he cried. “I no sass old lady ‘Merican talk. Old lady talk, talk, too much sass – all time too much sass. Little China boy no can talk; little China boy no can sass. By-and-by little China boy *die!*”

I am bound to say that my sympathies leaned toward the “little China boy”. To grandma I counseled moderation, advising her to show Ah Choon a little latitude, and

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<sup>224</sup> An euphemism for slavery, especially in the south of the United States prior to the Civil War. At the time this article was published, slavery had been illegal in the United States for less than 20 years.

<sup>225</sup> A type of horse-driven carriage.

take no notice so long as he confined himself to his mother-tongue, which from that time he did religiously.

Very soon Ah Choon became an expert operator on the sewing machine. In the evening, after studying his lessons with an assiduity that might put an American boy to shame, he amused himself by making full suits of Chinese clothing for my little daughter's dolls. Success firing his ambition, he went further, and produced coats, trousers and feminine apparel of all sorts, that were as complete in detail and fit as though fashioned by the most able of dolls' dressmakers. With a set of old modeling tools and a lump of clay he molded grotesque and realistic images with a genuine artistic feeling that, similarly shown in a white boy, would be pronounced a budding genius.

One Sunday we found that the entire dinner had been stolen by tramps the night before. All the shops were closed, and, as we lived some little distance in the country, there seemed but a gloomy outlook for us.

"If I had only known it before the chickens were turned loose!" I remarked; "but I doubt if they are large enough to eat, even if they could be caught."

I had hardly turned away before I heard Ah Choon's voice calling from the chicken yard. He had a pair of the largest fowls tied together by the legs with his queue, and was weighing them with the cock-scales. He certainly was a boy of resources. Was anything broken, Ah Choon mended it. He invented novel uses for pots and pans that were past their prime, [and] made new articles out of old ones – in fact, [he] was a sort of Chinese Robert Penfold. Nor, though easily moved to tears, as are all Chinese, was Ah Choon without personal courage. Some incipient hoodlums attacked him one Sunday as he was returning from Sabbath-school, which he attended regularly. Just in time to save the little heathen, a couple of passers-by interfered, stopped the persecution, and sent Ah Choon home with an ugly knife-cut that almost severed an ear from his head and a slash across one hand. He very reluctantly allowed me to bind up his wounds, saying, "All right; by-and-bye get well; nev' mind."

When I asked him how it happened, he drew himself up with all the pride of a fighting general, saying, "One, two, sixteen British, bad British boy, fight one little China boy. Little China boy plenty fight; little China boy no 'fraid; little China boy no run; too much like fight!"

Many times after that I had to rush to the "little China boy's" rescue. When the schools closed, some of the boys who had taken up the feud rode their ponies at Ah Choon, who ran out when he saw them coming and stood in the street. No expostulation or threats could keep him in the house after he heard the ponies' hoofs.

"Little China boy no 'fraid die," he would say. "Merican boy ride over China boy, kill him; go jail one, two, sixteen years! Maybe p'liceman hang 'Merican boy. He no like that. Little China boy like that very much."

An old man nearby, retiring from the photographic business, presented me with his camera and chemicals. I had a skylight let into the stable-roof and made a dark closet in one corner. Nothing could exceed Ah Choon's delight and wonder at these mystic preparations. Between the turning of the muffins he would dash out to

take a look at the blood-red landscape through the stained window. When everything was complete, as the family were all away, I took Ah Choon for a model. Fearing lest he should meddle with the chemicals when I had my eye off him, I showed him a bottle of cyanide of potassium with a skull and cross-bones under the word "poison" upon the label.

"Savvy! Savvy!" said he. Rapidly opening an imaginary bottle, and swallowing an imaginary piece of cyanide, he dropped suddenly at full length on the floor and went through all the writhings and contortions of a fearful death by poison. After one last, long, struggling gasp he crossed his hands upon his breast, turned up his eyes, and dropped his jaw.

The simulation was a little too horribly exact for my nerves, so I composed a speedy resuscitation of the corpse and placed him in front of the camera. When he saw it turned toward him he gave one start of dismay, then stood perfectly still as I bade him, grinning, in spite of his evident fear of this unknown instrument that had to do with deadly poisons and skulls and cross-bones, at the comical appearance I presented with my head under the black velvet camera-curtain. Nothing could exceed his delight at the result, unless, perhaps, his disgust at the position he had taken; he was so unhappy about it that I made another trial, allowing him to pose himself. He placed himself stiffly upon a chair, elbows out, both hands upon his parted knees (the Chinese position of dignity), regretting meanwhile that he had neither a fan nor a vase of flowers at his side, both of which, from a Mongolian point of view, are necessary accessories to a portrait.

This picture, though a perfect success from his own aesthetic stand-point, he had no desire to possess, but only to look at occasionally. I offered to give it to him to send to his mother, but he said she would not be pleased, but, on the contrary, very angry, explaining, as well as I could understand, that the whole affair savored too much of witchcraft, and she would probably fear that in consenting to it he had in some way placed himself in the power of the "white barbarian," adding, however, with his favorite remark, "Little China boy no 'fraid; mother, she 'fraid; little China boy, he no 'fraid."

Ah Choon's reign in the kitchen might have continued until this day but for an unfortunate accident; he set the house on fire. All the family but myself and the little children were out<sup>226</sup> at the time (midnight), and Ah Choon, who had been reading a Chinese novel in bed, fell asleep and knocked his candle over on the chair. The light and crackling noise woke me. I instinctively knew what had happened, and flew up to his room, where I found the poor boy almost dead from suffocation. I threw a pail of water over him and dragged him from the fire. He recovered his senses in a few moments, and I sent him for a hatchet to chop open the floor, as the fire was running between it and the ceiling. It seemed as though he was back in the twinkling of an eye, but he had found time, as I afterward discovered, to carry the two little children, without awakening them, into the front garden, where he left them wrapped in a blanket, quietly sleeping on the grass. With a less intelligent ally than Ah Choon the fire would have beaten me, but with his deft fingers and quick brain to help me, I

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<sup>226</sup> Sic. This statement is contradicted later in the paragraph.

soon got it under, and we sat down, drenched with water, smoke-begrimed and panting, to rest.

Curiously enough the fire had burned nothing belonging to me but the chair and a spot through the floor; but, like a Nemesis, had followed all Ah Choon's belongings and reduced them to ashes. Even his shoes and stockings, which he had left some distance from the bed, were now charred embers. He had nothing left in the world but the extraordinary undergarments in which he sat at that moment. I pointed out his loss to him. He said that he had observed it, but it made no difference. He could get more easily from his cousin.

"What will you wear when you go to your cousin?" asked I. "Garments of mine, or – this?"

At that he laughed, but his laugh turned into a cry, and little Ah Choon went into as genuine a fit of hysterics as any fine lady could have managed.

No pleadings of mine availed: Ah Choon was dismissed. There was a tear in his eye when I shook his little claw and said goodbye, and there was a tear in mine.

Some time afterward I heard bad accounts from my washman of Ah Choon's subsequent career. He got a place with a rich lady who was in the habit of keeping several hundred dollars at a time in her desk. Ah Choon took a wax impression from the lock, made a key to it, and after abstracting four hundred dollars set out for China, where he is now in full enjoyment of his vast and ill-gotten riches.

"I am indeed surprised," I remarked to the washman; "he was such an honest boy with me."

"Oh, he like you," replied the washman; "he no take you money. Too much sass, sass, he take money, run away. Very bad," he added as an after-thought.

Our next boy, Ah Hoon, stayed but a short time; he called me mamma, and after some pressing upon the subject told us that the Chinese tag he placed upon the clothes when they went to the wash might be translated "Ah Hoon's mamma". When not asleep he spent all his spare moments bathing in a big washtub.

Owing to general illness in the family, I being an invalid myself at the time, and the management of affairs out of my hands, it was deemed advisable by the powers in authority to bring in an Irishwoman to help with the housework. Ah Hoon's indignation was intense; he went about the house sullen and silent for several days. Taking advantage of a moment when I was alone, he burst into my room with his valise and bedclothes.

"Too many boss-women in this house!" he cried. "I go away. You look, see I no steal. You boss-woman; you look see. By-and-bye I go 'way. Irish woman maybe steal spoon, steal money; go say China boy steal. Look see!" and he shook out each article violently, turned the valise upside down, packed everything back again, refused to receive his wages, and walked off, leaving his sheets and blankets beside my bed.

Then for a wearisome time there was a clanging of pans and clashing of pottery and trampling of heavy feet that betokened the presence of the ordinary servant-girl, two of whom were found requisite to fill the place of my one little light-footed, nimble-fingered heathen. How gladly would I have given him wax impressions of all my locks in return for his dexterous manipulation of the household machinery!

As soon as I was well enough to receive into my own hands again the rein of government, I made a clean sweep in my kitchen, and installed a new China boy, Ah Gim by name, instead of the women I sent away.

Ah Gim was fourteen years old – thirteen, according to our count. The Chinese reckon the year they enter as the year of their age<sup>227</sup>, instead of, as we do, the year that is accomplished. He was a slender, pretty, very graceful boy, with a face of more refinement than one usually sees in the lower classes of his race.

Unlike Ah Choon, he was an extremely timid boy, and never ventured very far from the house unless I went with him; consequently, when Ah Gim needed a new pair of stockings or a handkerchief I had to go with him to the town, where he made his purchases.

Ah Gim was much more of a fine gentleman than his predecessors, and was greatly flattered that I should perceive it and ask him what caused the difference. He, he informed me, was a schoolmaster's son, and had been educated with great care and never allowed to associate with vulgar people. He looked upon "Christian Charlie," a boy who had been converted and was made a great pet of, with all possible contempt. Charlie was so ignorant, said Ah Gim, that he didn't even understand his own religion, or he would have seen that it was almost the same as that to which he pretended to be converted. He explained his own religious belief to me at great length, saying that it was very like Catholicism.

"We are all called idolaters," said he, "because a few of us really are. But why should we be despised for idolatry and called heathen, any more than the ignorant among Catholics, who pray to images of the Virgin and to the cross in as idolatrous a spirit as any poor Chinaman prays before his joss? To us educated Chinamen our gods are merely symbols, which we use just as the Catholics do theirs," etc.

This is not given in Ah Gim's own language, which, however, was greatly superior in construction and pronunciation to that of any other Chinaman I have known, except, of course, Chinese gentlemen.

Ah Gim did his work in the deft, quick way that is characteristic of the Chinese servant, at the same time adding many little refinements of his own. He always kept a newly-plucked rose in a glass on the shelf of his kitchen-sink, taking whiffs of its fragrance as he washed his dishes. The bowls of the kerosene-lamps had rose-leaves strewn in them, and all the vases in the house were kept filled with flowers and water. He objected to the peony, fearing the smell of the stable might cling to his clothes, and refused to associate with the Chinese servants in the neighborhood, because their manners were vulgar.

Like most fine gentlemen, Ah Gim had superfine feelings which were easily wounded. Being too dignified to mention the fact when we had unwittingly injured his feelings, and yet desirous that we should not languish in ignorance, he had a curious custom, coming sometimes at awkward seasons of flattening his face against the wall and remaining rigid for a longer or shorter period according to the turpitude of the offence. When this happened during the preparation of dinner or while waiting

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<sup>227</sup> So that someone born, for example, in the summer of 1890 would be considered 11 years old in January of 1881.



upon the table, it was productive of unpleasant feeling. I said nothing at first, but waited until Ah Gim wanted to go to the city to do some shopping. As usual, he came to ask me to accompany him, at which I flattened myself against the wall and said nothing. The subject was dropped at once, and Ah Gim stole sheepishly away. After several days he took courage to speak again about going to the city, and again I promptly and silently took his position against the wall. This went on until he voluntarily promised to abstain from all flattening and sulks in the future, and I had no more trouble with him on that score.

Being too proud to associate with his fellow-servants, the poor boy had very dull evenings. Like most of the boys I have had, he spent a great part of his time in study, both in Chinese and English. But when he was tired or had finished his self-imposed tasks, time hung heavily upon his hands. It was a great pleasure to him then, for when I was alone, to be allowed to come in and talk to me. He asked many questions about the government and politics of America, some of which puzzled and many embarrassed me to answer, so that I was glad to shift the talk into other channels. But what I liked even more – shall I confess it? – than the conversation of my wittiest friends, was to listen to Ah Gim when he stood before me (he refused to sit in my presence), his little brown hands crossed upon his breast, his head thrown back, his eyes shining a narrow oblique line between his partly-closed lids, and recited what I might call the folk-lore of his country. His countenance remained impassive throughout, and his position never changed, but his voice thrilled and vibrated with the passion and the terror or the pathos of his story.

I shall never find another China boy like Ah Gim. And I lost him by what foolishness, do you suppose? By the deadly insult of requiring him to use a fine-tooth comb. He had given his word not to flatten, so there was nothing for it but to shake hands and say goodbye.

After my experience with Ah Gim, my first proposition to a new boy was the use of the comb or its equivalent. If he refused, well and good; the bargain was off. If he consented, my heart was glad, for then there was less likelihood of coming to a rupture with a good boy after I had grown to like him and he had become familiar with the ways of the house. (Let me whisper to strangers about to engage Chinese servants that it is the safe thing to compel a new boy, no matter how neat and clean he may appear, to wash his head in a solution of fish-berries in alcohol or larkspur-seeds boiled in water<sup>228</sup>, remembering that both are a deadly poison when swallowed.)

My next venture was called Ah Sin, a bright, dapper lad of fourteen, of a facetious turn of mind and a merry, most musical laugh. I took him down to Monterey with me for the summer, where we lived in a little rose-embowered adobe cottage with two Spanish ladies, Señora Bonifacio and the lovely little señorita, her daughter. Between the Señora and Ah Sin, war was at once declared. An indignant outburst of Spanish would startle me as I sat drawing at the window, and I would hasten out to find the señora, one hand clutching the shawl over her head, gesticulating with the other as she volubly explained that she would not, and could not, allow the

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<sup>228</sup> An herbal insecticidal rinse, traditionally used to kill head lice.

“Chinito”<sup>229</sup> to climb upon her garden-wall and fasten his clothesline to her favorite pear tree, thereby shaking off the unripe fruit. The more emphatic the old lady grew, the more Ah Sin’s expression became that of one serenely meditating upon far-away scenes, while knots of his rope were drawn tighter as his abstraction became deeper. When I insisted that the rope should be removed, he smiled and undid it, but as soon as my back was turned found some other means of attaining his object. He seemed entirely unaware of the Señora’s existence, and skipped about her whistling “Baby Mine,” and dodging under her arms as though he supposed her some ordinary vegetable production sprouting from her own garden.

The señora kept all gates securely locked, especially the door in the garden wall, which was strictly tabooed to Ah Sin; but no locks or bars interfered with his incomings and outgoings. Whether he said “Open, sesame!” in Chinese, or had made himself a private key, I do not know, but he smilingly came and went at his own sweet will.

During work hours, while the machinery of the house was in motion, Ah Sin went about with the air of a man of serious responsibilities; but, the dinner well under way, everything polished and in order, he rolled up his white apron – and his cares with it – and ran out into the garden for a romp with little Sam. The air rang with their gleeful shouts as they wrestled and pelted each other with fallen pears, and played ball and other games dear to the heart of boys. One of their amusements consisted in practicing with a rifle, with which Ah Sin became so expert that he could shoot a bird on the wing.

Sam had a pony. It had long been a dream of Ah Sin’s to have a ride behind Sam on his “little horsey”. I gave them permission one morning to go riding double to gather wild strawberries in fields, Ah Sin providing himself with a grain sack to carry the fruit in. Late in the afternoon I found him hiding the empty sack. He was greatly mortified at having made such a public display which ended in so poor a fiasco, for they had not found a single berry, and, as Ah Sin confessed to me a few days after, horseback riding was not all his fancy had painted it.

“Little horsey,” said he, “jump, jump jump; I jump, jump, jump; one week all time stand up: no can sit down.”

At this time there were two young ladies in the family. Naturally, gentlemen from the city were fond of “hunting” in the hills about Monterey. We found afterward that all strangers were met by confidential disclosures from the China boy as to the young ladies’ affections.

“Miss Belle,” he would say, “she very much like ‘Merican painter man; pretty soon she marry him; she no marry you. Miss Nelly, she marry Spanish man; by-and-bye she get plenty key, lock, lock door; tie up bread all same señora.”

His delicacy in the presence of the supposed lovers was extreme. If the exigencies of the situation forced him to turn his body toward them, it moved under his head as though working upon a pivot, so that the queue invariably faced them.

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<sup>229</sup> Spanish for “small male Chinese person,” not necessarily a child.

In the evening, when all the rest were drawn away by the fascinations of cascaron<sup>230</sup> parties, moonlight rides, or strolls upon the beach, Ah Sin came in to make my fire, at which I liked to sit for an hour or two in the gloaming. He squatted upon his haunches like some sort of a curious frog about to jump, laying one splinter after another upon the fire as he watched my face furtively to see if I was in the mood to allow a little talk. If my expression happened to be reassuring, I was entertained by full accounts of his family affairs – of how a wife had been bought for him while he was still an infant in arms; he was sure his future spouse would be all he could desire, as his mother, who had bargained for her, was a wise woman and not likely to make a bad choice. He spoke with scorn of having seen ‘Merican boys talking and even walking in the street with girls. “I turn my head away,” he said, “and no look at girl; walk right on; no look, no look.” In the part of China from where he came, he said, all the boys of fourteen and over were sent to a large building, where they lived together. Sometimes, he confessed, there were fights and disturbances and rough and noisy play, but that was better than being exposed to the baleful influence of woman.

“If you went home now,” I asked, “would your mother be very glad to see you, and you to see her?”

“Oh, yes,” said he. “No kiss, no hug. I stand here, she stand way off, and then talk, talk – plenty talk. By-and-bye no let my mother work. I get one wife. I make her work for mother. ‘Merican boy, he get one wife, no like mother then. Like wife very much, no like mother now. Very bad, that!”

Ah Sin’s religious belief differed from that of Ah Gim. When I told him what Ah Gim had said on the subject, he cried:

“He talk one lie! No all same that. I very bad man. I die, I get one pig; maybe I get one rat. I very good, very smart man, I get one big snake. By-and-bye snake die, he go all same god. Bad rat, he die, he get one little worm; little worm he die, go down big hole.”

“What do you want to be after you die?” I asked.

“Me? I like get one big snake; then everybody much ‘fraid. I make big wind blow hard; much like that.”

For one thing, he preferred white people to Chinese. They never, he said, made devils. The process of “making devils” he explained as follows:

“One many very poor, lend money to friend. Poor man he die, he say give money my mother; he friend no give money mother. Poor man he die, he make devil. He friend plenty ‘fraid. He no pay money to mother; by-and-bye he get too much ‘fraid, he have die. Man-devil make him die.”

He spoke of the present ill-feeling of the Irish toward his race with surprising intelligence and moderation. The Irish, he said, were slow to learn, extravagant in their habits, inclined to drunkenness, and most of them unskilled laborers. They refuse to do the work they are capable of doing, and always demand the highest wages. Now and then among them, he said, were good and clever men, but the most of them came to this country with exaggerated ideas of its freedom and wealth, only to meet with disappointment.

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<sup>230</sup> Egg shells filled with confetti, broken to festive effect. A tradition in parts of Mexico.

“You look see!” he said. “Irishman he have three-corner eyes, he bad man. Plenty Irishman have got three-corner eyes. Spanish man sometimes he get three-corner eyes all same; he bad man.”

Drunkenness, he said could be easily cured, though he had unfortunately forgotten the remedy. His brother had developed at an early age a strong appetite for drink. His mother, when she discovered it, simply went out into the fields, gathered an herb, made her son drink the tea from it, and the cure was soon complete. Could it be, I wondered, the new remedy for dipsomania – red Peruvian bark – accounts<sup>231</sup> of which had been going the rounds of the papers?

After a time Ah Sin’s merry laugh was hushed. The singing and whistling in the kitchen of Chinese songs (so curiously similar to Methodist hymns), American street songs, and bits of operas caught from the young ladies – for he had a quick and correct ear – were heard no more. He fell back in his work; the romps in the garden were at an end. One evening he poured out his heart to Miss Nelly. He had fallen in with a bad set, who had enticed him into gambling. He had not only lost all the savings that had been meant for his mother, but was in debt besides. The bad influence about him he felt too strong to resist. There was no salvation for him, he thought, but in leaving Monterey entirely. He waited until we found his successor, breaking off from his work every few minutes to hold long farewell conversations with the cats, telling them how “too much sorry” he was to leave them.

The new boy came, and Ah Sin went, regretted by all. See Yung came from the country; I engaged him from his brother, a very valuable man on a dairy-farm. See Yung was not so prepossessing in appearance as Ah Sin, but I came to feel very kindly toward him, he was so gentle and docile, so invariably good-natured and so affectionate toward animals and children. Most servants, after dinner has been eaten and the table cleared, and they are sitting in their own rooms resting from the toils of the day, look with considerable disfavor on visitors who appear at eight o’clock dinnerless. This often happened at our house, and See Yung prepared the second dinner with as smiling a countenance as though he were one of the guests himself. Yet there seemed to be always a touch of pathos in his smile; the expression of it was that of a dog fond of a master who abuses him.

Of all my boys, See Yung, though the most stupid, was the closest student. Alongside his bed stood his ink, his writing-brush and books, as well as his English

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<sup>231</sup> “The physicians and temperance men of Chicago are very much excited over a new remedy discovered by Dr. Robt. D’Unger, which not only cures intemperance, but leaves the drunkard with an absolute aversion to spirituous liquors. [...] ‘My medicine,’ said the doctor, ‘can be bought at any first-class drug store. It is red Peruvian bark (*cinchona rubra*). [...] I use the bark from the small limbs of the red variety. Druggists call it the quill bark, because it comes from twigs about the size of a quill. [...] I take a pound of the best fresh quill red Peruvian bark (*cinchona rubra*), powder it, soak it in a pint of diluted alcohol. Then I strain it and evaporate it down to a half pint – so it is a pound to a half pint. Anyone can prepare it. [...] I give the drunken man a teaspoonful every three hours – occasionally moisten his tongue between the doses the first and second days. [...] The patient can tell by a headache if he is getting too much. The third day I generally reduce the dose to a half-spoonful, then to a quarter-spoonful, then to fifteen, ten and five drops. [...] [I continue the medicine] from five to fifteen days, and in extreme cases to thirty days.” DRUNKENNESS CURED. (1879, June 27). *Valley Sentinel*, p. 2.

reader, pen and paper. I never sat down a moment alone in the evening but a stealthy step crept up beside me and a soft, meek voice hesitatingly asked, "Teach me now?"

See Yung had probably brought some malaria in his system from the Carmello Valley. He was taken with an ague-chill. As soon as the fever went down, I gave him a large quinine pill which I desired him to take.

"By-and-bye," was his reply.

A few minutes after, I heard a rustle on the stairs. I was just in time to prevent See Yung's precipitate retreat; the sigh of "Merican man's medicine" had frightened him more than the chill. He still held the pill in his hand. I sternly ordered him to sit in a chair and open his mouth. In a tremor of agitation he dropped into the chair, threw back his head and opened his mouth; down went the pill. He opened his eyes, gave me one reproachful glance, and fled the house. The second day after, he waltzed through the kitchen and into my room, seated himself upon the same spot, in the same chair, and solemnly said, "Very good pill; like heap more all same," threw back his head, shut his eyes, and opened his mouth. I had mislaid the box, and hunted for some time before I found it, but See Yung never moved a muscle until I popped the pill down his throat, when he said, "Thank you," and went about his work again. He doubtless looked upon the magical pill as a preservative of health as well as a cure for disease, for he took position at the same hour every day and waited for his pill until I showed him the empty box, which he viewed with the deepest dejection.

Suddenly and unexpectedly it became necessary to break up<sup>232</sup> our little establishment. No one had the courage to tell the news to See Yung. At last circumstances became so imperative that I was forced to do it. No words of mine can describe the awful depression that enveloped him like the folds of a pall as the full meaning of my words dawned upon him. He said nothing, and I could say no more; but I felt as Cain must have done after he killed Abel.

### **"Solved by Chinese"<sup>233</sup> (Ottawa, 1899)**

"Where can we obtain Chinese servants?" is the question people are asking now. A couple of months ago two Ottawa families tried for the first time in the city to solve the servant girl problem by the employment of Chinese servants.

The experiment was a grand success. The almond-eyed Celestials proved to be attentive, intelligent and clean beyond cavil. And the fortunate inaugurators of the new movement told their friends of the success of their venture. As a result there is a scramble to obtain pig-tails at almost any cost. Society has adopted the fad, and at the "at homes" of the future no one may be surprised if they are attended by a regulation Chinaman.

As a result of this sudden popularity, the Chinamen are beginning to learn their own value through the laws of supply and demand, and they are now asking much higher wages than they did a couple of months ago. If the present demand keeps

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<sup>232</sup> Presumably, upon the author's marriage to Robert Louis Stevenson in May, 1880.

<sup>233</sup> From SOLVED BY CHINESE. (1899, December 2). *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 5.

up, there will be a famine in the laundry market, as domestic service seems to be as natural for these people as the laundry.

A rather comical mistake happened in an Ottawa home recently, from the lady of the house not realizing that Chinese take everything very literally. She had a new Chinese servant, who was not used to the ways of the house. On going out she ordered him to scrub the hall.

Now this particular hall was laid with fine Brussel carpet, and there was a border of hard wood around the edge that the lady wanted washed. On her return home she was horrified to find that the Chinaman, with soap and water, was vigorously going over the carpet, and applying the scrubbing brush.

The poor Celestial howled long and loud, when he heard that the carpet was almost ruined. His distress was so great that the lady could not find heart to scold him very much – but she took care to make her instructions very explicit in the future.

## Appendix II: The Chinese Question in 1890s B.C.

### “A great deal of harm”<sup>234</sup> (*The Province*, 1897)

The intensity of feeling in British Columbia on the Chinese question may be judged from the letters and comments on the subject which are appearing in the papers. In THE PROVINCE to-day a correspondent begins a study of the Chinese character in an interesting communication, and as a long residence in China has made him thoroughly familiar with it, his remarks are entitled to every consideration. The Chinese are doing British Columbia a great deal of harm. They are draining the country of money and lessening the chances of our own people for employment. Effective measures of some sort will have to be adopted to prevent the country from being overrun with Chinamen.

It is possibly too much to expect a change in the laws dealing with the Chinese while the present Government is in power, but if the present Government is unwilling to make a change, the present Government must go. The whole country cannot be sacrificed because of the whims and wishes of a small coterie who may have the best of financial reasons for desiring a continuation of existing conditions. The Chinese are no good to British Columbia. The money they make here is not spent here. It is carefully kept out of circulation and when a sufficient amount of it has been accumulated, it is sent out of the country. Not a Chinaman comes to Canada but comes with the hope of making enough money here to return home and be a prince among his own people, which he can be on a very small income.

### “A dumping ground”<sup>235</sup> (“I”, 1897)

The United States, Australia and New Zealand have all passed laws excluding Chinese. Why should Canada, and more especially British Columbia, remain a dumping ground for the dregs of the population of China? The ignorance or apathy in this province regarding this question seems lamentable. Chinese do not emigrate from choice, but as a rule it is only the poorest of the poor who, from poverty or necessity and the inducements offered by “coolie catchers”<sup>236</sup> leave their country. The latter are the exporters of emigrants who pay expenses and to whom probably ninety-nine per cent of the Chinese in this province are virtually slaves until their debts are paid. The “coolie catchers” live in Hong Kong, for if they went to the mainland their heads would be taken off if they had not sufficient money to satisfy the Mandarins, for the Chinese Government does not favor emigration and has laws against it.

When it is remembered that the population of China is between three and four hundred millions and that at present only Chinese from the neighborhood of Canton and Macao emigrate, it is evident that an enormous increase in Chinese emigration

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<sup>234</sup> From MEN AND THINGS. (1897, December 25). *The Province*, p. 964.

<sup>235</sup> From I. (1897, December 25). CHINESE IMMIGRATION. *The Province*, p. 986.

<sup>236</sup> “Coolie” was a term for low-cost Asian laborers who worked in exploitative conditions. See the appendix for more details. Please note that the term ‘coolie’ is now offensive.

is possible if the coolie catching business becomes profitable. It has now become profitable owing to the fall in the value of silver and the consequent drop in exchange in China. Five or six years ago a Chinaman remitting money from Victoria or Hong Kong got about one Hong Kong dollar for every Canadian dollar, but now for every dollar he sends or takes with him he gets rather more than two Hong Kong dollars, and the cost of living in China is not much, if at all, greater than it used to be. A considerable portion of the fall in exchange has occurred during this year, and it is evident that it benefits not only the coolie catcher, but every Chinaman in Canada, and also cheapens the cost of Chinese food and articles imported here from China for their acts. I have not seen public attention drawn to this point, which is one of the unfortunate results of the anti-silver legislation of recent years, and I commend it to the leadership of the Liberal party who advocate discouragement of Oriental labor. In my opinion, if they went further and secured the exclusion of all Chinese except merchants and shop keepers they would gain many supporters.

The policy of the Chinese Government is "China for the Chinese," and that of our government should be "British Columbia for the white man." Foreigners in China are only allowed to trade at the treaty ports and to live in certain settlements set apart for that purpose by the Chinese Government. A foreigner attempting to work in the gold mines of North China, if ever he got there, would soon be murdered, and the same fate would befall any one interfering with fishing or any other native means of livelihood. Yet in British Columbia, beyond a futile tax of fifty dollars on each immigrant, no restriction is placed on Chinese. They can go anywhere and do anything in competition with the white man for a living.

### **"The Chinese and money"<sup>237</sup> ("Fairfax," 1898)**

In your last week's issue, referring to the Chinese question you say: "They (the Chinese) are draining the country of money and lessening the chances of our own people for employment." This appears to me as rather an extraordinary statement, as it implies that both money and employment are fixed quantities in British Columbia. Now, whether this may be so in regard to employment, I am not now concerned, but surely it is not actually the case in regard to money?

Suppose a Chinaman takes home \$1,000, which he has earned and saved here. Is that money really lost to this country? I think not. If he takes gold it will be foreign coin, and if currency it will shortly be returned through the banks; while for the gold he must have left the same amount of currency in exchange for it before leaving. In either case there can be no permanent loss of money to this country.

But suppose our returning "heathen" buys and takes back a bill of exchange for \$1,000, what happens then? In the first place, the currency which he may have hoarded for years is deposited in one of our banks and is put into circulation. Then when "John" arrives in the Flowery Land he draws his \$1,000 in Chinese currency and the bill of exchange is passed through the clearing house in due course and

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<sup>237</sup> From FAIRFAX. (1898, January 1). THE CHINESE AND MONEY. *The Province*, p. 23.



eventually returns here to be canceled when \$1,000 worth of goods have been exported to China or some other country trading with China. The exporter of the goods will be paid with the \$1,000 left here by our Chinaman, and the Mongolian importer will pay into his bank for the goods \$1,000, which the bank advanced to “John” for his bill of exchange.

By the system of exchanging credits no money has left British Columbia, but what has left is probably a cargo of coal to San Francisco, salmon to London or flour direct to Hong Kong. Are we “draining” the country of these things when we export them, and doing ourselves an injury by exchanging \$1,000 worth of our products for \$1,000 in money earned here?

I am no friend of the Chinese and believe the country would be better in many respects without them, but I submit that, economically considered, a Chinaman who goes home with money earned here is in precisely the same relation to our trade and commerce as a resident of a foreign country who orders a bill of goods from us to the same amount. The wealth which the Chinese take with them is analogous to wealth drawn from the country as interest on productive investments. They both represent legitimate returns of labor and capital, and we cannot consistently complain of the going of one any more than the withdrawal of the other. I find in the Trade and Navigation Returns for 1896 that British Columbia exported that year bullion and coin together to the amount of \$18,576 produced in Canada, and \$36,257 worth of foreign bullion and coin, a total of \$54,833. How much of these sums went to China I have not learned, but it is safe to say the total amount could have no influence whatever on our circulation.

The idea that the Chinese “are sending the money out of the country” is a very popular one, but it, like a few others, will be found on examination to be a bogie, and a mischievous fallacy to boot.

### “A deal to learn yet”<sup>238</sup> (*The Province*, 1898)

The province does not in the least object to being assaulted with the theories of the political economists, but why should they be dragged in over a simple matter of fact that a child can understand? If a Chinaman works in British Columbia for a few years, spending about one twentieth of what an ordinary white man would spend for living expenses during that period, and manages to save money enough to keep him for the rest of his life, takes his money to China, banks it there and lives comfortably in China on the proceeds, is that money not taken out of this country? When he can buy a pair of shoes in China, does he buy them in British Columbia? When his fancy runs to a diet of duck eggs preserved in mud for a few hundred years, does his purchase benefit the egg and poultry dealers here? If it does, it seems evident that some of us have a deal to learn yet.

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<sup>238</sup> From MEN AND THINGS. (1898, January 1). *The Province*, p. 1.

## “A question of political economy”<sup>239</sup> (“Fairfax,” 1898)

I have perused the comments of THE PROVINCE on my letter in last week's issue with considerable interest and amusement. But it fails, it seems to me, to see the point at issue between us, and its conundrums, though witty, throw no light whatever on the subject. It is right, however, in perceiving that it is a question of political economy that I am discussing, and that there should be no misinterpretation “over a simple matter of fact that a child can understand.” But no one, child or grown person, can understand the question if they persistently confound “money” with the things for which money is only the medium of exchange, and speak of money and wealth as meaning one and the same thing. THE PROVINCE, I think, falls into this error when it refers to “the odd tons of gold dust and nuggets brought here from Klondike” as being the same as so much money leaving that region, when, as everyone knows, there is absolutely no money at all there. But this illustration shows clearly enough that my contention is proved, and that it is not “money” which is sent to China from here, but wealth.

Now, when the Chinese send their wealth home in the shape of products – the only way that it can be sent – what does this province lose? No goods go to China or anywhere else unless they are paid for before going or after arrival at [their] destination. This being the case, our actual and only real loss is the profits and advantages that would have resulted to us from the exchange of our products for the products gone to China; just as if in the Klondike all the gold now being produced there could remain and be exchanged for other things, instead of being sent away, the sum total of wealth there would be increased enormously.

But so far as China is concerned, this loss we sustain is far more than offset by the vast difference between our export and import trade with that country. In 1896 British Columbia imported from China goods to the value of \$398,923 and exported to China goods valued at only \$55,675, showing that China sends us more than six times as much wealth as we send to her. This difference, of course, has to be balanced by exports to other countries trading with China. But from these imports \$159,000 were collected in duties, nearly three times the value of all our exports to China put together. The rice alone imported from China that year was valued at \$87,000, on which no less than \$63,500 duty was collected. As nearly the whole of this rice would be consumed by Chinese, they paying the duty, it is safe to say that at least \$50,000 of duty so paid was about equivalent to being a free gift from “John” to the Government. Yet some people think the Chinese are “no good to this country”!

The Trade and Navigation Returns from which these figures are taken say nothing about “money” being sent to China from British Columbia. If any was exported the amount would certainly appear in the returns, as it does for other countries. But as no such figures appear the inference, I think, is plain. Should anyone have evidence to the contrary, however, it is in order now to produce it. The

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<sup>239</sup> From FAIRFAX. (1898, January 8). THE CHINESE AND MONEY. *The Province*, p. 17.

figures will give the lie to the Blue Book and be hailed with joy by all true anti-Chinese patriots.

FAIRFAX.

(What THE PROVINCE said was that the Chinese were draining this country of money. The statement was a statement of fact, which is not affected at all by the theories of political economists. Every bank manager in the country knows what the drain is and why. It is estimated that the Chinese take from \$60,000 to \$70,000 out of this country every month in actual cash. – Ed. PROVINCE.)

### **“White labor instead of Chinese”<sup>240</sup> (“I,” 1898)**

Your comments on Fairfax’s two letters on the above subject I think may be supplemented by the following remarks: Fairfax in his first letter makes the statement that “the idea the Chinese are sending money out of the country is a mischievous fallacy,” but he qualifies this in his second letter by saying that it is wealth and not money which is sent to China. What difference does it make to this country whether it is deprived of money or wealth?

Everybody knows that Chinese labor here is really paid for in China, and that it is chiefly provided with food and clothing also paid for in China. Therefore it is natural to say that the money earned here by Chinese is sent to China, though nobody supposes it is taken in currency. Fairfax says the only way for Chinese to send their wealth to China is in the shape of products, but if no more profitable means existed it would be sent in our silver currency and melted into Chinese tael. Fairfax says that “if all the gold being produced in the Klondike could remain and be exchanged for other things instead of being sent away, the sum total of wealth there would be increased enormously.” Just so, but what is the necessity for our employing Chinese labor, which prevents a similar increase in the wealth of this province?

If Fairfax will focus his mind on the fact that it is not necessary or advantageous to send the earnings of labor out of the country, he will probably be able to expatiate on the increase of the wealth of the province to be gained by employing white labor instead of Chinese.

A Chinaman, when buying a draft in China, does not “deposit,” but pays his money to a bank and that bank has to use that money in meeting its indebtedness to the bank drawn upon. If no other possible means existed it would have to export currency. Such drafts are not “returned here to be canceled,” nor is there a “clearing house” in China.

Fairfax asks: “Are we draining the country by exchanging \$1,000 worth of our products for \$1,000 in money earned here?” Yes, if the money earned here is sent away. If an exporter or producer ships to Hong Kong and sells a bill on a Chinaman there for \$1,000 to a bank here, paying the proceeds for wages to a Chinaman who buys from a bank a draft on Hong Kong for \$1,000, the result is that one Chinaman

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<sup>240</sup> I. (1898, January 29). THE CHINESE AND MONEY. *The Province*, p. 124.

has the produce and the other the money in Hong Kong, while nothing is left in this province except the small profit in exchange made by the bank. In this instance the produce, which most people would call wealth, pays for the bank draft, which most people would call money. On the other hand, without Chinese labor the produce would be in China and the money for it would remain here. The result to this province would be just the same if the shipment were made to any other country.

Fairfax also says we can not complain any more of a Chinaman taking his earnings to China than we can of a capitalist withdrawing the interest on his investments. There is, however, a great difference. The Chinaman benefits nobody's pocket but his own and leaves nothing behind him but the result of his labor, which should be done by a white man, whereas the capitalist, by bringing and spending his money and employing labor, benefits the province and others besides himself.

Fairfax states that in 1896 British Columbia imported from China goods for \$398,923 and exported only \$55,675, which he thinks shows that China sent us six times as much wealth as we sent to her, but since all such imports have to be paid for it would be more advantageous to use if China took more than she does of our exports. It should also be noted that a large portion of our imports is distributed as far off as the eastern cities of Canada and the United States, there being more than one commission house here engaged in such business, and a large portion of the remainder would be for the Chinese themselves.

Fairfax further estimates that the duty paid by Chinese on rice amounts to \$50,000, which he considers a free gift by the Chinese to the Government, but it would be more interesting to know the difference to the Government revenues if white men were employed here instead of Chinese, for the above free gift would look paltry compared with it.

The amount of coin and bullion exported from British Columbia as published in the Trade and Navigation Returns has nothing to do with this question. The Chinamen are not likely to incur the expense of shipping in that way when they can take away their money more easily and profitably. They take their earnings to China chiefly in their pockets in the shape of United States gold coin or bank drafts on Hong Kong, nine times out of ten the former for small amounts and the latter for large ones. There are only two banks in Hong Kong on whom Chinese here buy drafts, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China. Banks do not disclose the business of individual customers, but no doubt the Government or any member of it would readily be supplied by those two banks with statistics for the last few years showing the total amount of United States gold coin passing through their hands and the total amount of drafts on them issued in British Columbia and payable to Chinese.

Of course, the Chinese can take their money in other ways not so easily traced, such as in gold dust, sovereigns or any other gold coins they can get hold of, or by drafts on Chinese native banks or merchants, or by goods. But by ascertaining also from those two banks the total amount of drafts on them payable to Chinese issued from the Pacific Coast cities of the United States a relative amount from the United States gold could be calculated as coming from British Columbia, and a fairly accurate

knowledge would be gained of a very large proportion of the money of which this province is drained through Chinese and which is lost to it absolutely.

**“It meant exactly what it said”<sup>241</sup> (*The Province*, 1898)**

An able correspondent of THE PROVINCE returns this week to the discussion of the question of the amount of money taken from this province by the Chinese. THE PROVINCE made the statement that it is estimated that the Chinese take from sixty to seventy thousand dollars a month out of this country in actual cash, whereupon this paper is told in effect that it does not know the difference between a ten dollar bill and a bag of potatoes and knows no more about political economy than a bulldog knows about a summer sunset.

With no desire to seem insistent, THE PROVINCE wishes to state that when it said the Chinese were taking money out of the country it meant exactly what it said. There is no occasion for a general discussion on the subject of political economy over the head of it, because, however excellent the theories of the political economists may be where they are applicable, they have nothing whatever to do with the particular fact which THE PROVINCE pointed out.

The estimate of the amount of money actually withdrawn from circulation here by the Chinese was made for THE PROVINCE by a leading local banker who knows all about the matter from actual experience, and is in a better position to know than the ordinary bank man would be because it is in the Victoria banks that the big funds are kept and where final settlements are made. If this matter is now sufficiently clear to “Fairfax,” it might be as well to drop the subject, or at any rate to stop theorizing about it and get down to the consideration of the fact itself and what it means.

**“Leaves far more wealth behind him”<sup>242</sup> (“Fairfax,” 1898)**

In your last week’s issue a correspondent, “I,” makes some “supplementary remarks” to your comments on my letters on this subject, which are intended probably to still further demolish the contention I have raised and effectually settle this vexed question. Were the remarks referred to in line with the comments of THE PROVINCE I would not consider it necessary to say anything more than has already been said regarding the matter in dispute, but they are not, and for that reason I would like to make some observations respecting them.

THE PROVINCE states distinctly that “Chinese take from \$60,000 to \$70,000 out of this country every month in actual cash.” “I” tells us that “nobody supposes it is taken in currency,” and further along in his “remarks” says: They take their earnings to China chiefly in their pockets in the shape of United States gold coin or bank drafts, the former in small amounts and the latter for larger ones. Both these statements of “I” are against the assertion of THE PROVINCE, and instead bear out my contention, which is that this country is not being drained of its money by Chinese.

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<sup>241</sup> From MEN AND THINGS. (1898, February 5). *The Province*, p. 139.

<sup>242</sup> From FAIRFAX. (1898, February 5). THE CHINESE AND MONEY. *The Province*, p. 155.

And the reason must be apparent to anyone who considers the matter fairly. Foreign gold coin is not Canadian money, and therefore must be bought with currency by returning Chinese, who wish to take it with them, in the same way that they would buy any ordinary commodity. Their money is also left here when they purchase a bank draft, so that in neither case does Canadian money leave the country. Where the “actual cash” comes in THE PROVINCE only knows! But our friend “I” is clearly in error when he asserts that “the Chinaman benefits nobody’s pocket but his own and leaves nothing behind him but the results of his labor.” Mr. Dunsmuir knows better than that. The cannery men, railroad contractors and others who largely employ Chinese labor all know better than that, and have acquired fortunes from the toil of the despised Celestials.

The Chinese are not employed in any capacity for their own sakes, but for what we can make out of them, and when we cease to make anything out of them they will not be employed. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a Chinaman leaves far more wealth behind him as the results of his labor than he takes away; his employers see to that well enough. We denounce the Chinese for taking their earnings in Canada to China, but see nothing wrong in Canadians working in the border States and bringing their earnings to Canada, and we consider American legislation cruel and unjust that would prevent them.

Consistency, like charity, should begin at home. But, sir, what are your readers to think of the astonishing “supplementary remark” of “I” that “everybody knows that Chinese labor here is really paid for in China and that it is chiefly provided with food and clothing also paid for in China?” The first part of this “catchy” statement is palpably absurd and cannot be proved, while that relating to food and clothing is misleading, and simply means that Chinese import some kinds of food and clothing the same as other people are doing all over the world in exchange for their own productions.

The two elementary truths which so many ignore or do not understand, are that our money being a paper currency cannot be drained away to any foreign country, and that wealth exported in the form of products, whether gold, silver, potatoes or pork, must be paid for with other products or with money which can be exchanged for them.

### **“The Chinese are kindly treated”<sup>243</sup> (G.R. Maxwell, 1898)**

The Chinese are kindly treated in British Columbia. I make that statement, because some might imagine otherwise. Small boys and dogs are their worst enemies – especially the latter. It is strange, but true, every dog has a growl for a Chinaman. I can give no explanation. You must draw your own inferences. There have been a few assaults made on our Celestial band – but very few. They enjoy the same

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<sup>243</sup> From Maxwell, G. R. (1898, February 19). THE CHINESE QUESTION. *The Province*, p. 211. Written by George Ritchie Maxwell (1857 – 1902), Presbyterian Minister, founder of the Nationalist Party of British Columbia, and Member of Parliament for Burrard. As a member of Parliament, he proposed raising the Chinese head tax from \$50 to \$500.

protection as any other member of the community, and an assault upon a Chinaman would be more severely punished than one upon a white man.

They are, as a whole, specially favored. They are permitted to congregate, to huddle together, when white men would be brought up and fined for violating the sanitary laws of the city. Every church is open to them. Every denomination has special classes for them. They are given secular and religious education often without money and without price. To draw them more powerfully, a great many young ladies become their teachers. Ninety per cent. of them make fairly good wages, but John is like many Scotchmen – he won't pay if he can get out of it. No doubt he is amazed betimes at his own self-importance, as manifested by the solicitude on the part of the churches, and when he sees them so eager to bring him into industrial competition with his white brother, he says, it's a good joke, but let them pay for it.

The kingdom of money is of far more importance to John than the Kingdom of Heaven. Our gaols are open to him, and judging from statistics, he occupies far more than his share of such places, at the cost of the Canadian bread-winner and taxpayer. So, then, John has fair play given him. However the British Columbian may growl, and he has good reason, as we shall see, John is as safe, and as highly respected, as if he were in his own land.

Again, we do not ask for the expulsion of the Chinese. A great many speak as if this was our contention. Nothing of the kind. We are willing to allow those who are with us to remain and make their pile. Granted what some say is true, that a certain amount of cheap labor is required; we reply that we have enough, and more than enough. We wish to treat fairly and squarely every Chinaman who has been brought into the country; but, at the same time, we claim the right to have a law that will make it difficult for intending immigrants to get in. No injustice is intended.

Again, the demand made that the [head] tax should be raised to \$500 per capita is not a new thing. Of course, neither its newness nor its oldness makes it right or wrong; but there are some people who have a perfect horror of a new thing. To say that a thing is new is sufficient to condemn it in their eyes. History teaches that it is hard to establish new things. So far as this question is concerned, there are quite a few who think that this demand is a new thing, and therefore unprecedented. In short, because it is new, it ought not to be granted. Other countries before us have had to grapple with this self-same question. History is only repeating itself, so far as Canada is concerned.

Selfishness is responsible for what has taken place and what is taking place. Sometimes Chinamen "spot" a country and make a rush for it. They crowd in, and keep crowding in. More often it is employers of labor, who, having failed to carry out their avaricious designs, have invited Chinamen to come and help them to make more money than they could or can make by means of the white working man. That's where and how the evil has begun, and the reason why this immigration is commended and encouraged. One of the Australias has had to impose a \$500 tax. New Zealand has followed suit. Hawaii has closed its doors against the Chinaman, and we know what America has done. We in Canada, then, who are asking the House of Commons to increase the tax to this amount, are but asking for legislation that other countries

have passed, and have been compelled to pass. The very same things are staring us in the face as were before them, and I cannot see how we can avoid doing what they have done.

Again, it has been urged by some, that were our House of Commons to increase the [head] tax to the amount desired, it would be vetoed by the British Government. This objection is purely imaginary. It is one of those hobgoblins which an objector will raise for the purpose of frightening the agitators; but there “ain’t nothing to it.” The very reverse will happen. While Great Britain might for her own interests wish that we shouldn’t do anything of the kind, and while she might think it objectionable legislation, yet she would do as she has done already with the colonies previously mentioned; that is, she would do nothing. Our problems are different from hers, and she is wise enough now to allow us to settle such questions as this, as circumstances demand.

We have now arrived at the crucial point, viz., why do we demand fresh legislation with regard to the Chinese, or, in other words, what reasons have we which together make it necessary that something along these lines should be done? To discuss this matter intelligently, one must have evidence to guide him. We may form our opinions and give our judgments either by means of what we have seen ourselves, or by means of what others have seen.

We in British Columbia have all the evidence we require at our doors. You in the East may consult the Report of the Commission which was appointed in 1884. That report is a voluminous one, well printed, and handsomely got up; but while there is a great deal of matter in it – not always bearing on the point – and while it is not so strongly representative of B.C.’s opinion on this subject as it ought to have been – if the people had been properly consulted and represented – yet one will find enough in it to convince the most skeptical that we have a great deal of right on our side. As I wish neither to overstate nor misstate the evidence, we shall glance at it as fully as possible.

Firstly – Some say the agitation against the Chinese is purely a political question. One gentleman<sup>244</sup> who handed in his evidence to the commission says: “The agitation against the Chinese has been almost coeval with their arrival. It was begun, and has been carried forward, chiefly by politicians who have sought the suffrages of the laboring man by keeping up the cry of ‘the Chinese must go.’” I haven’t the slightest hesitation in saying that that statement is not true. There is no province in the Dominion that has had fewer politicians and so-called politics than British Columbia. Party politics up till the last election have cut a small figure in provincial elections. Hence the agitation is not the work of politicians – it is the work of the people. Sometimes this objection has considerable influence in forming the opinions of others on account of the standing of the men who make it. A great many people rightly or wrongly are prejudiced against politicians, and will believe any charge that is laid against them. I will not defend the professional politician; he can defend himself; but I say it is cruel to charge these men for doing what they have not done,

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<sup>244</sup> “B. M. PEARSE, one of the oldest settlers in the country, and formerly surveyor-general”. From p. 94 of the Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration (1884).



for if every a question was a people's question, this is the one beyond all mistake. Never was there more unanimity than this, and they (the people) will fight for the triumph of their views to the bitter end.

We have no sooner disposed of this, than another from a different quarter confronts us. A doctor, when replying, and giving his learned views as to the source of the agitation, instead of laying the blame on the politician, throws the blame on those who throw their earnings away in buying whiskey<sup>245</sup>. These are the responsible ones, according to this disciple of Aesculapius. I characterize this as another departure from the truth. These may growl, but if such characters alone clamored for this, why, there would be no Chinese question in British Columbia. I make the statement without fear of contradiction, that the most sober, the most intelligent, the most moral, the most religious men we have are the backbone of the agitation, and their superior cannot be found in any part of Canada to-day.

Secondly – Moral considerations constrain a great many in demanding this legislation. I do not wish to enter into this question fully – as what I could say would not grace the pages of your *Journal* – but those who urge this point are in the right. You will no doubt be told by some that the Chinaman is a paragon compared with the white man; but these, in my opinion, spoil their case. The Chinaman is not an angel, as these would have you believe; he is, in truth, a fallen man. As the Hon. John Robson said – who was a good Presbyterian and an elder of the church – “I consider their habits are as filthy as their morals.”

Under this head we might state that their habits are quite obnoxious. A great many people, especially in the East, think they know all about this problem because they have three or four Chinamen in their town. Let me say, with all possible respect to these, that they don't know anything about it. A Chinese quarter in a city – such as we have them on the Coast – is a damned spot, a spot that no good citizen can behold without indignation. They crowd and huddle together. In small rooms they are packed like herrings in a barrel. The smell of opium is stifling. You could set potatoes in the dirt. In the words of our late Premier, their premises are filthy. But perhaps some one may ask, why don't you make them live decently? Why? Because they won't, and you can't make them. As the superintendent of the city police said, it is impossible to make them comply with any law, and especially sanitary law. That is as true to-day as it was thirteen years ago, only the evil exists in a more aggravated form. I pass over these things lightly, because this deals with evils which no one cares about handling in public. They are in there in their most malignant and revolting forms. They are Asiatics, and bring their Asiatic civilization (?) with them. They practice their vices without shame-facedness. They give us spectacle after spectacle of the opium fiend, and breed leprosy in our midst. Why should a self-respecting people be

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<sup>245</sup> Dr. E. Stevenson of Victoria. Among his statements to the Commission, he said (p. 93): “I doubt not you see already the source of all the anti-Chinese clamor. A man who throws his earnings away for whiskey; who buys demoralization and debasement, physical, mental, and moral; who often fails to report for duty on Monday morning, cannot easily compete with the Mongolian, who is ever ready, ever sober, ever industrious, ever faithful. Aside from this, however, it is probable that the whites would not be able to compete with the Chinese on account of the much less costly diet of the latter.”

cursed with such things? Why should the fairest province in the Dominion be compelled to nurture such things at its heart? Why should we be forced to admit within our gates such a mass of corruption, then have to look at it from day to day, and at last to suffer from its corruptive influence? Why, I ask, in the name of our common humanity? I hold no reasonable man can answer.

Thirdly – Chinamen give endless trouble. A great many of them are criminals; in fact, we could not expect anything else, considering the class to which most of them belong. They commit offences, minor and major. A Chinaman can take a hand at anything in that line. From keeping houses of prostitution, to gambling, stealing and smuggling, they make up a pretty creditable record every year. A large portion of the time of our police is devoted to these Celestials without wings, and I believe our police force has to be augmented in order to meet their demands. They are expert liars. As one capable witness says: “We have great difficulty in tracing crime through their reluctance to give evidence, and because their evidence cannot be relied upon.” Another: “If any crime is committed, you cannot get anything out of them. They tell you, when asked, ‘They do not savey.’ They are strangers and foreigners to the truth.”

Fourthly – Their secret societies are a positive nuisance and menace to our civil institutions. It is not necessary to enter into the vexed question of secret societies, but such as are founded for benevolent and charitable purposes require no defense; their good deeds vindicate them at all times. If such were the kind of societies which the Chinamen imported, they should have my warmest praise. Unfortunately for our country, they are of another kind. They baulk our laws, and frustrate the ends of justice. Within their secret conclaves conspiracies are hatched, and murders determined. As yet these rival organizations have not dared to show their demoniacal machinations to any great extent; but we are familiar with their workings in places like San Francisco. What they do there will be done here whenever it suits their purposes. We are alive to the possibilities, and we are determined that such things shall not be tolerated under the “Maple Leaf.”

Fifthly – A large number of these Chinese emigrants are nothing but slaves. We are all opposed to slavery. The very name is abhorrent. As things stand we have a band of the most hopeless and helpless of slaves, and the law as it stands encourages and recognizes the same. The *modus operandi* is something like this: We have Chinese Bosses. These are our slave owners, and their grip is tight. They hire their weaker brethren in China, and by paying their expenses and other incidentals become the lords of their bodies. The slaves contract to remain in their service, to do their bidding until the uttermost farthing has been paid. They land on our shores, and are at once taken possession of by the slave-masters. From that moment every device is practiced to make it impossible for these poor creatures to get rid of their indebtedness. We want to break up this slavery. The present tax only binds the fetters the firmer. The slave-master can pay it, and by paying it, makes the slaves more and more his own. To get rid of him and to get rid of his nefarious art, we must raise the

tax to such a point as will make his business impossible, and in our humble opinion the \$500 tax<sup>246</sup> is the remedy at hand.

Sixthly – The Chinese are birds of passage. They are not citizens, and have no intention of becoming citizens. They haven't the slightest idea of what citizenship means. They come for one purpose only, and that is to make money. That is, no doubt, a weakness characteristic of more than Chinamen, but every other nationality gives something back in return for what they obtain. They are suckers. They will help nothing. Every Canadian institution which is our pride and our boast would wither and die were it left to the tender mercies of the Chinamen. They bring nothing save a few rags, and take all they can beg or borrow out. They impoverish everyone and everything but themselves. They are of no use to our churches, schools, merchants; they are a burden all round, and a burden which becomes more intolerable as their numbers increase. What British Columbia requires and demands is citizens. Foreigners are out of place. We have many things to offer, we have untold wealth.

I ask any reasonable man if our demand is unreasonable, when we demand that those who come, should and must come to help us to build up those institutions which are our glory. They must be givers as well as receivers. Schools and churches must be supported. Municipal, Provincial, and Dominion Governments must be maintained, and for such the Chinaman is simply no good. He comes to us a stranger, he leaves us a stranger, and all the while he has been with us he has evaded every tax, and refused to bear a portion of any burdens being borne by the people.

Seventh – The Chinese are stumbling blocks in the way of our own working people. This is the strength of the whole agitation, and is to me the chief reason why Chinese immigration should practically end. Our working classes are those who are pinched; they deserve and demand to be heard. Of course there are some, capitalists or the friends of capitalists, who say that the Chinese make work for our own people. That is arrant nonsense. I glance over the evidence given before this commission [of 1884,] and it is overwhelmingly against this preposterous statement. The Hon. A. E. B. Davie, Attorney-General, says: "A laborer will usually find a market for his labor, but finds he cannot compete with the Chinaman." Dr. Helmcken testifies: "The Chinese take the work from the white laborer, and take it at a cheaper rate." The representative of the working classes declares: "Their mode of living, a few cents per day, and the absence of families among them, will make the white men powerless to compete against them for labor." That is the real Chinese question.

Now, my sympathies are all with our own people. Charity begins at home, so should fair play. We ought to be just before we are generous. I wish no harm to befall the Chinaman, but I say that our first duty as a church and as a nation is to see that

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<sup>246</sup> "Mr. [George Ritchie] Maxwell made a pointed speech in the House yesterday afternoon on the question of Chinese immigration. He was listened to with great attention and made an excellent impression. The Chinese, he said, on the coast, were taking away the living of the white people to hold their own. The Chinamen did not become citizens. They lived on almost nothing, and therefore he would suggest that the poll tax be increased from \$50 to \$500. At present the Chinese bosses paid the \$50 and then hired out the Chinamen until such time as they had paid the amount. He blamed the Canadian Pacific [Railway] and Mr. Onderdonk for the introduction of this pest on the Pacific slope." AT THE CAPITAL. (1896, September 10). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 1.

those who build our churches and support them, that those who are building up Canada, and helping to maintain her institutions shall have fair play, so as to earn what will support not only themselves, but also their wives and families. In spite of "gush," I say it's a crime to starve our own people in order that the Chinamen may become rich.

But it is said; We require cheap labor. I am no lover of cheap labor. As a minister, I know what that means. A cheap minister is a dear minister. Cheap laborers are not very beneficial to the country. Cheap labor is synonymous with poverty. However, it may be true that cheap labor may be necessary. Granted. Let it, then, be white and not Asiatic cheap labor. In the name of our common faith, let us not drag down our white brother, after educating him, to the level of a semi-savage. In my opinion, this cry for cheap labor is dust thrown in the eyes of the public. It's a cry for outrageous profits. Live and let live is not a bad motto, and if our Western capitalists would but carry it out, it would be found that every business would produce enough for the master and servant.

Again, it is said we require population. Yes, that is true. We require more people, but less Chinamen. God help British Columbia if it is to become a Chinese colony; and as the law stands, it may, if the Chinese are minded to make it so. We ought to have had more people. The prospects are good, the chances are inviting; in short, everything invites the settler. Why have we so few people? The Chinese are the reason. Our late Premier declared, and said what was true, that "the Chinese prevent white laborers from coming into the country, as the whites look upon it as slave labor."

What a different country we would have, had we whites instead of Chinese. Why, we would have more churches and more ministers; more schools and more teachers; more stores and more business men; more labor and more laborers. All round a glorious change would be manifest. The question, then, is not whether certain doctrines shall be carried out, but whether we shall be true or false to the interest of our brother whom we teach in the school, preach to in the church, and who is one with us in a desire to make Canada a great nation. From what I have seen with my own eyes, my duty is to my Canadian brother, and hence my work is to see that he shall have a fair share of the wealth which he produces, and that there shall be room for him in the land he calls his own.

## “I cannot stand idly by”<sup>247</sup> (A.W. Cumyow, 1896)

Whilst I must admit that Rev. Mr. Maxwell’s speech<sup>248</sup> is to a certain extent correct, yet I must take exception to some of his statements, and one of these<sup>249</sup> is that the Chinese market gardeners live off the swill of the hotels. I wish to let Mr. Maxwell know that such a statement coming from a gentleman of his erudition and research is a matter for great astonishment, that he should so far forget himself in his efforts of oratory and rhetoric as to steer wide of the truth.

From my own personal knowledge of the Chinese they are extremely particular and cleanly in what they eat and drink, and the refuse and swill of which he speaks are used to fatten their hogs, chickens and ducks, and for no other purpose. Taking all circumstances into consideration I think the majority of the Chinese are very clean and in proof of my statement I draw attention to the number of Chinese employed as general servants by white families, which would be an impossibility were they as dirty as he would lead people to suppose.

He says<sup>250</sup>: “Will it pay Canada to fill British Columbia with thousands of men who are the off-scourings of the jails and the lowest types of the Chinese?” In answer to that, I say certainly not, but what authority has he for saying that they are? Because a man comes here poor it does not follow that he belongs to the criminal or lowest class. He styles them as “barbarians.” How he can stretch his imagination to such an extent is beyond my comprehension. The Chinese civilization, although not so modern as that of other nations, yet, I presume to say, is more complete, as far as it goes. Almost all Chinamen can read and write their own language. Can other civilizations say as much?

He quotes them as “inveterate gamblers, universally addicted to opium, and grossly immoral.” I ask, what nations do not gamble from the higher in the land to the lowest? Is there one law for the Chinaman and another for all other nations? British justice forbids [it]. Opium smoking, like drinking liquor, used moderately, is declared by modern science to be a benefit than otherwise. Mr. Maxwell stretches the truth when he says it is universal amongst the Chinese, as those who are addicted to

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<sup>247</sup> From Cumyow, A. W. (1896, September 22). THE CHINESE DEFENDED. *The World* (Vancouver), p. 4. Written by Won Alexander Cumyow (1861 – 1955), a Chinese Canadian translator and activist who was born in Port Douglas, British Columbia, and died in Vancouver.

<sup>248</sup> Not the speech transcribed above, but one with similar content given in September, 1896.

<sup>249</sup> “Take our market gardeners. In market gardening the Chinese are a great success, but what does this mean? It means either that the white gardener has been driven out or that he is bordering on starvation. Why? Because the Chinaman can live like a hog, on the swill of the hotels. It means that what is a profit to the Chinamen would be death to the whites; they live on the refuse, on the swill, and they grow rich on what would be starvation to a white gardener’s family, so that there is no class in British Columbia to-day more opposed to Chinamen than our market gardeners.” MAXWELL SPEAKS. (1896, September 18). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 6.

<sup>250</sup> This appears to be a paraphrase of the following statement: “The white man may be bad enough; he may have his mistakes, his vices, and his faults; but bad as he is, he is a thousand times ahead of the Chinaman who comes from the jails of China.” MAXWELL SPEAKS. (1896, September 18). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 6.

opium-smoking to excess number only one-tenth, and five-sixths do not use it [at] all. As for being grossly immoral, I have lived in British Columbia for over 30 years and I have yet to see the first Chinaman arrested for drunkenness. As to the social evil [prostitution], I don't see that they are any worse than other nationalities of the same class.

Referring to the Chinese being employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., on the Empress [steamship<sup>251</sup>, a Canadian Pacific ocean liner traveling between China and British Columbia,] I think the combined intellects of so great a corporation are better judges of what is best for their interest, without being dictated to by Mr. Maxwell. I also wish to call Mr. Maxwell's particular attention to the fact that the sailors employed on the Empress are not Chinese, but whites, who have for the most part to be naval reserve men. As for Chinese being employed as [steam engine] stokers, they are better able to stand the tremendous heat than those who come from a colder climate. As regards waiters and cooks, no doubt the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. has equally as good reason for the employment of Chinese instead of whites.

With regard to the Chinaman's "slavish docility"<sup>252</sup> and his allowing himself to be sworn at and kicked without resenting it, on which side does the want of morality come in? On that of the kicker or that of the kicked? The latter is obeying the rule of the Good Book so often preached by Rev. Mr. Maxwell, about turning the other cheek to be slapped, etc., but I think some of those Chinese employers who talk a great deal more than what they mean, must have been stuffing our reverend friend, as the Chinese bosses on the railroad can vouch that on their trying harsh measures with one of their gang the whole gang took his part and the boss had to take to the water to save his neck.

Mr. Maxwell states that there are 20,000 Chinamen in British Columbia at the present time and would lead people to suppose that they are on the increase. Is it

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<sup>251</sup> "Another thing which has been against us in this matter is the Canadian Pacific Railway line of steamships. I do not want to say a word derogatory to that company or to their steamers. I feel as proud of their magnificent vessels as any man in this Dominion. Their vessels are indeed a credit both to this country and to the company that owns them. But we must speak the truth with frankness and soberness. You know, sir, that the company receives from this Government an annual subsidy of \$60,000 and from the Province of British Columbia an annual subsidy of \$14,000. I do not object to that, but to this I do object. If you go on board any of their steamers, you will find them manned by Chinese sailors, and filled with Chinese firemen, waiters and cooks and other servants. In fact you would almost fancy you were in a Chinese town." MAXWELL SPEAKS. (1896, September 18). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 6.

<sup>252</sup> "[O]ne of the reasons some men have for favoring the Chinese is that they are so docile, that is to say, they think there is something advantageous about a Chinaman because he just does what he is told to do. Now, I know that there is a great difference between the docility of a Chinese slave and the docility of a white man. The difference is that some of those people want men to work for them whom they can swear at, and if their temper be at the boiling point, whom they can kick. Thank goodness, no white man will ever stand such treatment; and it augurs a very low standard of morality and of humanity, when a master makes it a boast that he likes men whom he can kick, better than those whom he cannot; and that is practically the case with the Chinese. You also hear it remarked that there are no strikes of Chinese workmen. No; and why? Because the Chinaman is simply a machine in the hands of the boss who can do with him just what he pleases." MAXWELL SPEAKS. (1896, September 18). *The World* (Vancouver), p. 6.

possible that the reverend gentleman does not know that nearly all the Chinese who land here by the Empress are destined to stay here only until they get a chance to get away elsewhere, viz., to the States, Havana, Mexico, Chile and other places? They land here and pay their \$50 poll tax because they cannot buy their way into the United States, and in less than a month from that time are away on their road elsewhere, in which event the United States is the dumping ground, and the Dominion \$50 to the good. The Chinamen find little or no inducement to stay here, and to prove that this is the case I refer you to the cannery-men, who will tell you that the Chinese contractors were short-handed this fishing season and were compelled to hire a large number of [Indigenous men and women] to take their places. I venture to say that there are not more than 15,000 Chinese in the whole Dominion of Canada, much less in British Columbia.

In conclusion, whilst I do not wish to uphold the Chinese in their wrong-doings, yet I cannot stand idly by and see them wrongfully accused without saying a word in their defense. Had Mr. Maxwell contented himself with stating facts as they are, and not resorted to exaggeration, I should not have troubled you with this communication.

### **Context: “Coolie-Catchers” in Macao<sup>253</sup> (1873)**

A number of the most influential Chinese residents of Hong Kong have drawn up and presented to the Governor of that place a document entitled, “A Correct Statement of the Wicked Practice of Kidnapping and Decoying.” It has been published by the British Government, and contains some important revelations, which will doubtless have their influence in stopping the infamous traffic in human flesh. The manner of conducting the trade is thus described, with the preface that the flags under which it is carried on are the Peruvian, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Austrian:

#### **DECEPTIONS AND CRUELTIES PRACTICED BY COOLIE-CATCHERS**

When a foreign vessel arrives in search of laborers, an agreement is entered into with a contractor, or “coolie-catcher,” who engages to supply the required number on a certain day. In each district and village the coolie-catcher then seeks out a subordinate coolie-catcher, to whom is assigned the task of providing a fixed proportion of the emigrants.

If the appointed day passes without the coolie-catcher having supplied the correct number of coolies, then the foreigner requires the head coolie-catcher to repay to him the money for the charter of the ship, the expense of the rice and food, and whatever money he may have already received in advance from the foreigner, as well as interest on each item of expense. Then the head coolie-catcher comes down on his subordinate to make him amends for the amount. He presses him very hard, and causes the coolie-catcher to overturn his household and dissipate his patrimony, to sell his wife and children, and even then to make up any further deficiency.

Such being the consequences of failure to fulfil his contract, it will readily be believed that the coolie-catcher is not very scrupulous in regard to the measures he

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<sup>253</sup> From THE MACAO COOLIE TRADE. (1873, August 16). *The New York Times*, p. 2.

adopts to induce laborers to emigrate. Sometimes, we are told, he practices deception, sometimes he administers a stupefying drug, and sometimes he has recourse to actual violence.

Suppose the coolie-catcher has got hold of a man of some intelligence, who understands the foreign and Chinese language and writing. After he has kidnapped him, he shuts him up in a separate house by himself, so that he may not be able to see any person. When he takes him to Macao he confines him on one of the islands, and procures another man to go to the office and assume his name. Before he effects an exchange he waits either till the coolies go down to the ship or the ship puts to sea; when this intelligent man sees any other person he assuredly acquaints him with the manner of his capture. The coolie-catcher, on the other hand, tells people a story after this fashion: "This man has already cheated me out of my money; he was asked several times before the authorities if he was willing to go, and he consented. How he has spent all his money, and is therefore unwilling to go." When he gets on board the ship the coolie-catcher's right-hand men take up the story. The consequence is that third persons looking on cannot distinguish which to believe and which to disbelieve.

Uneducated rustics are managed with much less difficulty. In the commencement they are deceived into signing the agreement by the hopes of earning a few more dollars by engaging as laborers in a foreign country, or they are made to believe that a year in foreign countries is only equal to six Chinese months, and that in a foreign land \$1 will buy as much food as \$2 in China. Sometimes, when these country people have been obtained by fraud and have arrived at their destination, they wake up to the real state of affairs and are unwilling to go. They are immediately locked up in a separate house, and are made to undergo a severe punishment by flogging. They are then taken to a barracoon, and are brought up before a pretended foreign officer, and are asked to declare if they are willing to go. If they say they are unwilling to go, they are immediately punished for having received their money and then backing out. The coolie-catcher follows them to each place and substantiates his story. The pretended foreign officer sentences them to even heavier punishment. They are then transferred to another place and undergo a repetition of the punishment, and are subjected to a more severe beating, and this continues until they express their willingness to go, and then it ceases. The next day they are taken before a real foreign officer and examined.

These measures of deception and violence are supported by the wholesale bribery of officials. And where by accident an officer is anxious to protect the kidnapped, it often happens, we are told, that he is unable to understand their complaint owing to the fact that almost every village has a separate dialect, and no interpreter can be found with a knowledge of a sufficient number of them.



## Appendix III: [The] “Chinese Immigration Problem” (1924)

**This article was originally published<sup>254</sup> in the Montreal Gazette in July, 1924, just a few months after the first national congress of the Kuomintang (中國國民黨第一次全國代表大會). In the 1930s, its author, Edward Bing-Shuey Lee, would serve as Secretary of the International Section of the Publicity Department of the Kuomintang.**

Although the Chinese immigration question was debated in the House of Commons and Senate last year, it is not a question that has been entirely settled. For Section 18 of the Chinese Immigration Act, passed on June 30, 1923, provides that within twelve months from the passing of the act, all Chinese, irrespective of allegiance or citizenship, must register. Thus, June 30, 1924, is a significant day to all Chinese residents in Canada, for it marks the expiration of the time extended to them for registration.

The Chinese began to immigrate into Canada during the latter part of the nineteenth century, primarily as a result of the discovery of gold in British Columbia, which attracted immigrants from all parts of the world. In addition, Chinese laborers assisted in a large measure in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. A head tax of \$50 was first imposed upon Chinese laborers during 1885. This amount was increased to \$100 on January 1, 1901, and on January 1, 1904, it was raised to \$500. On December 8, 1913, an order-in-council was passed prohibiting the entry of all Chinese artisans, skilled or unskilled. Finally, on June 30, 1923, the existing Chinese Exclusion Act was passed.

### RESTRICTIONS OF THE ACT

Wives and children of merchants, clergymen, journalists, scientists and tourists were struck off the list of favored classes for admittance. These, however, may enter by written application to the Minister of Immigration. According to reliable statistics compiled by the Immigration Department at Ottawa, the total number of these intellectuals admitted into Canada from April 1, 1913, to March 31, 1923, amounted to only thirty-four. A Chinese resident who leaves Canada without registering at the time of departure his intention of returning within two years will not be allowed to re-enter the country. Although the act provides for the admission of students, only those of university or college standing are eligible. The revenue derived from Chinese immigration is \$22,189,882<sup>255</sup>, but as the \$500 head tax has not proved to be satisfactory, the Canadian Government decided to abolish it entirely.

Regarding the exclusion of the wives and children of merchants, as well as the laboring class, a member of the Senate spoke thus: “We must consider human nature in these matters. Here we have a population largely adult, and largely male, who are without wives; and in the interests of social purity and morality, would it not be better

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<sup>254</sup> Lee, E. B. (1924, July 15). Chinese Immigration Problem. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 10.

<sup>255</sup> About \$335,000,000 in 2021 dollars.

to allow the wives to come in? I think that would fulfil the ideas of the social uplift and moral reform element in this country, which is very strong.”

#### WHAT THE U.S. HAS DONE

A perusal into American History shows that the United States has passed through practically the same stage as Canada is now passing through in seeking a possible solution of the Chinese immigration question. In 1880 an agreement was entered into between the governments of China and the United States restricting Chinese immigration. But restriction did not prove satisfactory, so the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882, prohibiting the entry of all Chinese laborers. The act also, similar to the Canadian act, provided for registration of all Chinese, irrespective of allegiance or citizenship. American merchants and citizens, however, saw the advantages of Chinese trade. Under their own initiative, they took steps to modify the act, encouraged trade relations, and utilized the Boxer indemnity<sup>256</sup> for educating Chinese students in American universities. Their foresight and generosity was not without reason, for a boycott of American goods was instigated in China.

The number of Chinese in Canada was 37,702 in April, 1923, according to statistics compiled by the Immigration Department at Ottawa. The population of Canada is more or less cosmopolitan in character, for out of 8,769,489, there are, roughly, 125,000 French, 167,000 Scandinavians, 126,000 Jews, 66,000 Italians, 53,000 Poles, 21,000 Finns, 20,000 Belgians, 13,500 Rumanians, 12,000 Swiss, 412,000 Germans, 6,000 Greeks, 17,000 Japanese, 1,000 Hindus and 8,000 Syrians. In addition to these, there are 750,000 classed as “other Europeans.”

#### THEIR ISOLATION

The early Chinese immigrants found much welcome and hospitality in the strange land, but it was soon found out that they could not pick up the English language readily and they could not easily forsake their ancient customs and habits. Naturally, they sought the companionship of their own kind and formed colonies in different cities, just as Italians, Syrians and Greeks are doing today. Their standards of living were lower than the average Canadian, just as new European arrivals were. It is apparent why Chinatowns are mostly situated in the slums, and as the circumjacent districts were not very elevating in character, there was very little stimulus for raising the standard of living.

What is the difference between the European and Asiatic immigrant? The European, being of a similar physiognomy and color as the Canadian, has the advantage of being absorbed into the melting-pot through a social and economic adjustment. But the outward appearance of the Chinese perpetually reminds Canadians that he is of a different race, and being placed on an unequal footing socially, intermarriage to any extent is out of the question. [...]

#### CHINESE ON THE PACIFIC

It must be admitted that the economic penetration into British Columbia by Orientals has created a situation which could not be ignored. It cannot be denied that

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<sup>256</sup> Known in China as the 庚子赔款奖学金, this was a United States scholarship program designed to allow Chinese students to study in the United States.

Canada is within her rights as a nation if she chooses to select her future citizens, but in making her intentions known diplomacy must be used instead of impetuosity. It may be proper for Canada to shut the door to a certain race of people, but thinking men and women will realize that a settlement can be more easily reached by a gentle closing of the door than by shutting it in the slam-bang fashion.

When Dr. Alfred Sao-Ke Sze<sup>257</sup>, Chinese Ambassador at Washington, visited Ottawa he announced that China would rather forego the privilege of sending a single coolie or working man into Canada than sacrifice the friendship of this country, if the sending of any laborer whatever into Canada was liable to be at the cost of that friendship. He recognized the immigration problem, and said frankly that the Chinese people would not take offence at a law which was aimed at restriction. He emphasized, however, that the Chinese would still desire to have the just respect of other countries, and would not want to be subjected to the indignity which exclusion from another country would involve.

#### THE REAL DIFFICULTY

The critical state of affairs is created by the failure of the intellectual class of both sides to study the underlying causes, and offer practical remedies. It has been stated that the whole question hinges on economic grounds, and that it is not a racial or sociological question. If the standard of living of the Chinese were raised to the same level as Canadians, would the whole question be solved? There are Chinese immigrants who have assimilated Canadian ideas, and have raised their standard of living. There are Canadian-born Chinese who have imbibed in them western culture, western ideas, western methods, and whose ideas are more profoundly western than Chinese. I am acquainted with refined, well-bred university men whose standard of living is high above the average Canadian laborer and who can conduct themselves with perfect ease in social intercourse with Occidentals. But the question is not solved by merely raising the standard of living. The difficulty is – I may state – not due so much to difference in standards of living or civilization, but to difference in facial characteristics and color.

#### A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

It would be futile on the part of the writer to offer a solution that has the pretension of solving the problem. The only thing that can be suggested is that the cards should be laid on the table by both sides and that a friendly feeling should be created, for agitation merely fans the fire. By letting China solve her own problems; by helping her establish herself on her own feet; much will be done toward solving the Chinese Immigration Problem. The growth of her industries will prevent her masses from emigrating to foreign countries and may serve to lure back those who are now abroad.

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<sup>257</sup> 施肇基 (1877 – 1958).