

If Asiatic Laws Were Adopted Here Orientals Would Go.

IT IS not easy to speak with patience of the placid pretensions of the Japanese immigrant when a just picture is presented of the status that the foreigner is allowed to enjoy in Japan. It may suit the cards of the Japanese apologist to represent the anti-foreign feeling as now occupying a shelf upon the mental museum of Asia, and, indeed, to draw credit from Japan's rapid extrication from the mire of anti-foreign prejudice. But the facts do not in any way coincide with the claims.

The anti-foreign animus is not dead in Japan, nor is it confined to the lower strata of her people. It permeates the whole nation, and it is part of the settled and cherished policy of her Government. Japan demands for her people an open door into every country, with equal rights, equal privileges and equal opportunities. She claims that her people shall come and go as they please, and that for them all industries, all inventions and all acquisitions shall be treasure trove. The earth is to be hers and the fullness thereof, while she herself locks all doors, closes all roads and confronts the foreigner with the earnest warning that trespassers will certainly be prosecuted.

It seems almost incredible that the people making such astounding claims upon the toleration and the benevolence of others should themselves refuse to extend to those others a recognition as persons within the eyes of their law; but such is, indeed, the fact. The Japanese Government not only refuses to accord to foreigners equal rights with its own subjects, but it seeks by every means in its power to prevent their residence in Japan, to close against them all industrial doors and to expose them to disqualifications, unjust, vexatious and humiliating. So far from there being any credit accruing to the Japanese Government for an improved treatment of foreigners, such improvements as exist have been extracted by the absolute exigencies of finance and of treaties, and in opposition to the whole trend of official sentiment and of popular desire. Japan does not wish that foreigners should, in any way whatever, earn a livelihood within her borders, and, if there has been any relaxation in her strenuous anti-foreign attitude, such relaxation has been due to absolute necessity and in no way whatever to good will.

RELAXATIONS ARE SLIGHT.

The relaxations have, however, been very slight. It is true that foreigners are no longer hustled on the street, but they are commercially hustled in the markets of industry and enterprise. It is true that the lives of for-

eigners in Japan are absolutely secure, but their commercial and industrial existence is none the less bludgeoned by disqualifying and irritating legislation. And while this process is going tranquilly forward Japanese apologists can hardly conceal their righteous indignation when the Californian workman protests against his dispossession of house and home to make room for this new chosen people, whose ten commandments are self-interest and for whom unjust competition constitutes the law and the prophets. Americans are certainly a long-suffering people, but a comparative glance at the status of the American in Japan and the Japanese in America should arouse a suitable national resentment that would quickly give birth to action.

Morris, in the International Commercial Series, says that merchants and manufacturers desiring to establish themselves in Japan will meet with "many difficulties." They certainly will, and the difficulties in question have been most artfully designed by Japanese statesmen with a view to harass and to embarrass the foreigner. Mr. Morris goes on to say that foreigners in Japan are not recognized as persons except under certain limitations.

Foreigners—that is to say, Americans interalla—are not recognized as persons in Japan! This has, of course, a peculiar and legal signification; but if the American mind is now what it used to be it will none the less convey a sense of humiliating outrage. If Japan kept her own people within her own borders, such a condition might be overlooked in the hope that education would eventually bring justice and wisdom. But that such a state of affairs should exist concurrently with the hungry hordes of Japanese coolies now in California with Japanese passports in their pockets is, to say the least of it, a little stupefying. The Japanese Government does not regard the American in Japan as being a legal person, but the Japanese in America is not only a legal person, but American laws are to be changed, abrogated, abolished, broken or ignored exactly as his needs and idiosyncrasies may dictate.

CANNOT HOLD PROPERTY

Let us see in what way Japan refuses to Americans the rights of persons. We will quote one sentence from Henry Dumolard, LL. D., Special Commissioner from the French Ministry of Public Instruction and formerly professor of French law in the Japanese Imperial University. Now Mr. Dumolard is evidently well qualified to speak, and he says "the foreigner in point of fact cannot acquire property in the soil of Japan." There are, of course, certain ways in which this and all other laws can be circum-

vented. We know this well enough, but the central fact remains as quoted, nor will we now stay to estimate the extent of Japanese holdings in American soil. The people that are now swarming throughout the United States, acquiring and holding lawfully and unlawfully all the property upon which they can lay their hands, are immigrants from a nation that refuses to Americans the right to hold any Japanese soil as property, and we are asked not only to endure this, but to applaud the dexterity with which this iniquity is perpetrated.

The further we go into our research into Japanese law the more startling are the results. Mr. Dumolard goes on to say that the inability to own land is not the greatest of the disqualifications to which foreigners in Japan are subjected. They are also forbidden to engage in agriculture or in mining. An American in Japan, therefore, may not own land, nor may he mine, nor cultivate the ground. Japan is for the Japanese, and so it would seem is America, if any inference may be drawn from these swarms of Asiatics that arrive in this country for the express purpose of doing the very things that would be forbidden to Americans in Japan. The prohibition against mining by foreigners is defended by a Japanese economist, who writes: "Gold is like the bones of the human body that do not renew themselves, while the blood and the flesh are replenished. To exploit our mines is therefore to exhaust and to impoverish the country." Without seeking to emulate the subtlety or the physiological knowledge of the Japanese economist, we may remind ourselves that Asiatics have not only mined the gold of California, and in very large quantities, but they have also most profitably exploited every other trade and every other industry.

ALMOST PROHIBITION.

Japanese legislation is hardly less severely felt by foreigners wishing to become doctors, chemists, professors and journalists, while they are not actually excluded from these professions, the conditions and exactions are so harassing as to amount almost to a prohibition. The presence of foreigners in Japan, except as tourists, is not regarded with toleration by the Japanese Government, and the foreigner who wishes to earn his living in that country will find almost insurmountable obstacles in the resistance of the Government and the unfriendly pressure of the laws and of the people.

Nor need we expect to see any speedy amelioration of the lot of the foreigner in Japan. The reforms that have already been instituted in this respect have been effected in the face of popular resistance that has sometimes become dangerous. In 1889, only a few years prior to the great Japanese influx into America, Count Okuma was the victim of a dynamite outrage, his only offense being his supposed toleration of foreigners. While the attack upon the present Emperor of Russia in 1891 was an expression of the same anti-foreign sentiment. In every instance where Americans have been employed in Japan for purposes of instructing the people in trades and manufactures their services have been summarily dispensed with at the earliest possible moment, without even that commercial courtesy and consideration almost invariable throughout civilization. There is no room for the American in Japan.

These facts are in no way cited in reproach of a people struggling upward into the light of civilization, but none the less they ought to be known and to be appreciated in view of the pained remonstrances that will not be lacking from Japan in answer to the action of California. If America were to adopt in its entirety the anti-foreign legislation of Asia hardly a single Japanese would survive in the United States. We have no wish to see measures so reactionary nor do we wish to imitate the prejudiced ignorances of the ancient world. But of all other nations, Japan should be the last to protest. If her coolies were not only excluded, but actually expelled, she at least could not remonstrate with any appearance of good grace.

No suggestion has ever been made that America should do unto Japan as Japan has done unto America. That would be a remedy far too drastic and far too severe. Nor do we wish to see in America the same public feeling against Asiatics as has been so frequently manifested in Japan against those of the white race. That also would be inexcusable, although were there now one tithe of that feeling in our midst the Japanese peril would very soon be a back page in our history. We do, however, wish and intend to see a continuous, a politic and a restrained movement in defense of justice to American workmen, for the protection of American homes and for the preservation of American ideals.