

almost every town and country in Europe they were a tabooed nation, despised, hunted and abused, and as the Chinese have done in San Francisco, they were obliged to live in certain poor quarters and bind themselves together for protection. Even at the present day, in Russia, the Jews are under very great disabilities, and are generally distrusted. We, in England, are more generous of late years. We could no longer shut our eyes to the fact that here were a race of men, remarkable for their accumulation of wealth, for their integrity in every walk in life, and for their industry, excluded from representation in Parliament. It was not until about the year 1847 that the Bill to relieve the Jews of their disabilities was introduced in Parliament, and for eleven years after that, year after year, the Jewish question came up for discussion in the Legislature. I think it must have been about 1867 that Baron Rothschild was returned for the City of London at the head of the poll and that brought matters to a crisis. At that time the oath which was taken by members of Parliament was on the true faith of the Christian, an oath which no Jew could take. He might be a thoroughly worthy man in every possible relation of life, but notoriously he was not a Christian—he was a Jew, and therefore could not take that oath. A compromise was agreed upon between the two Houses that they should frame an oath for members returned to either House which could be taken by Jews as well as by Christians. The Jews were entitled to seats then, and have held seats in the British Commons ever since. Now, we are more cruel still to those Chinese, and I think we are standing in our own light most seriously when we do so. I believe that those disabilities which we impose upon the Chinese tend to the importation of a class of men far inferior to what we should get if we did not place those difficulties in their road. If it were not for the restrictions we impose on Chinese immigration the probabilities are that respectable families would come over and settle amongst us, and that would be a thing to be desired instead of objected to, where there is such a vast territory to be settled, and so much to be done which we have not hands or means to

perform. Another point is this: the great Empire of China is very fast letting loose its old prejudices. It is on the high road now to civilization. China is bent now upon the introduction of the railway system, and it is quite likely that a vast amount of Chinese labor will be required in their own country, and we are not so likely to be flooded in the future with such immense numbers of Chinese laborers as we were threatened with in former years. We are projecting and intending to establish a line of fast steamships on the Pacific, amongst other things, and are we to limit the traffic on those steamships merely to carrying chests of tea? If a profitable passenger traffic should be established, are we to burden it with all sorts of difficulties by statute. It is against our rules to attribute motives. A gentleman while speaking has no right to attribute motives to another who precedes him; but I know of no parliamentary regulation which prohibits one from attributing a motive to a member of a government who attempts to introduce a new system of legislation, and I think it would be well to inquire into the motives which influenced the gentleman who brought a measure of this kind into Parliament. I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion it was a mistaken understanding of the labor question. Labor is at the bottom of all this anti-Chinese legislation. I conceive myself that it will become necessary before many years have elapsed to legislate probably, or at all events very seriously to consider the new phases which are constantly developing themselves into this labor question.

I, for one, profess to be a thorough Liberal in that. I am for giving the greatest latitude to laborers to express their opinions, to combine for advancing their interests, or any other legitimate purpose but there is a limit to what a body of laborers should be permitted to do in a country like ours. They are free to work or to be idle—free to strike if they please, but we ought to say to them, "stop there: you are free to do these things yourself, but you shall not hinder others from doing the work that you reject, and if a Chinaman chooses to per-