
CHINESE CHEAP LABOR.

Colonel Bee, Vice-Consul for China, who is very well known in San Francisco, has settled the Chinese question out of hand in an interview with a reporter of the New York *Tribune* in that city. Colonel Bee says there is no such thing in California as Chinese cheap labor, and that it is a misnomer on the Pacific coast. The Chinese get better wages, he says, as domestic servants than white servants get, because they are more proficient and learn more quickly. They have a characteristic, too, says Colonel Bee, which is doubtless as priceless to housewives of the East as to those of the West—they cannot carry family secrets out of the house to be made the common property of the neighbors.

It seems hardly necessary to point out that Colonel Bee has evaded the entire labor question in his interview. The objection made to the Chinese in California has not been, in chief, that they supplanted white labor in our kitchens, but that they intruded upon nearly all kinds of mechanical industries as well as becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water; and that while their wages were very much higher than in China, they were constantly low enough to underbid white labor and get possession of the labor market in many branches of industry.

It is true that Chinese are chosen as house servants by very many people, and that some of them get quite as good wages as white house servants, if not better; but one reason for this is that the Chinese have degraded the rank of domestic service until it has been given over to them in a great degree. So long as they found it necessary they worked very cheaply. When they had succeeded in driving out competition they raised the scale of wages.

But Colonel Bee knows better than to waste time on that branch of the labor question on the Pacific coast. He knows perfectly well that California would not have voted overwhelmingly in favor of Chinese exclusion if the imported Chinese were merely cooks and dishwashers. He knows that a Chinese workman in this city, who is doing the work that a white man might do, lives for about \$55 a year, and earns from 90 cents to \$1 50 per day, say, on an average, \$320 a year; and yet, knowing this perfectly well, this Chinese-American has the effrontery to declare that there is no such thing as Chinese cheap labor in California because the Chinese are liked as domestic servants. Colonel Bee would seem to have imbibed Chinese notions of veracity in his official position.
