

coolies. We next saw the guard house where a few Chinese police are stationed.

The remaining buildings are store-houses. I asked about the hospital accommodation. I could not see the place, as it appears to be some distance from the compound, but I was told that there is a European doctor in charge of it, and that Chinese male attendants nurse the sick. As these are untrained, and apparently under no supervision except that of the doctor, who I naturally imagine cannot always be present, I expect the nursing the men can get hardly deserves the name.

But as apparently in China disease is allowed to go to appalling lengths before recourse is had to medical aid, and as trained nursing hardly exists there, one cannot say these miners are as badly off even in this respect as they would be in their own country.

So much for the compound itself. Now for the life of the coolies inhabiting it.

Work in the mines goes on night and day six days of the week; Sunday is a day of rest. The men work in shifts from six to ten hours daily or nightly, as the case may be. They are paid monthly at the rate of 1s. 8d. per day. As regards their freedom, they are in the first place bound for three years. In their off-duty time they are at liberty to go where they like till six o'clock in the evening, at which time they are bound to return to the compound. Nobody enters or leaves the compound except by the turnstile, and the men give their numbers to the porter as they go in and out. On Sundays one-third of the men are given whole day passes. It seemed to me that as far as freedom was concerned these men were no worse off than many hospital nurses, and there is no doubt they are excellently and plentifully fed.

As regards their habits, we are told they were far cleaner than Kaffirs, and far more industrious, and that they never drink, but that on the other hand they have strong thieving propensities, though, if put in charge of valuables, they would consider it a breach of honour to touch them. As an example of this we were pointed out a small boy who had been an incorrigible thief until one official, wiser than the rest, had put him in charge of the office, from that day nothing within his sphere of authority has been touched. There are two other Chinese failings which compound life may perhaps foster, and these are gambling and opium-smoking. Gambling is a passion amongst coolies, and the officials find it impossible to repress it. To show to what an extent it is carried, one coolie returned lately to China with £2,000 in his pockets, the result of his gambling successes at dice and other games of chance. As regards opium, this is dealt out in *restricted* quantities to each man, but (as a non-official pointed out to us), opium is a luxury which most of these coolies, who are the poorest of the poor, have not been able to afford in China, so that it seems probable that a taste for this deadly and insidious poison may first be acquired at the mines.

All the Chinamen we saw strolling about the

compound were attired in dingy coloured garments—a comic mixture of Chinese and European costume, and all wore their pigtailed twisted round their heads.

The manager told us they take great pride in their hair, and when off duty and on holidays let their tails down. He said that the compound was a sight on Sunday morning, when the three thousand men were to be seen squatting in the sunshine combing and brushing and plaiting their pigtailed preparatory to a day out. On Sundays parties of these coolies, dressed in their best, in the gayest of silks and satins, and with fan in hand, sally forth into the town, and are to be met lolling back in landaus enjoying their day of rest like gentlemen.

We left the compound wondering if this life could truthfully be described as a life of slavery.

Some Indispensable Books of Reference.

There are some books which no busy person, man or woman, can afford to be without, on or near his writing table, and amongst these must be noted some of the publications of Messrs. A. and C. Black, Soho Square, W.C. We may enumerate four:

WHO'S WHO.

Who's Who is mainly a Biographical Annual, and contains in short paragraphs concise histories of prominent men and women, together with their addresses and other useful information. It is an invaluable book of reference, and the increasing appreciation by the public of its merits is to be found in its increasing size year by year, so that the tables which originally formed the first part of the volume have been deleted, and are now issued as a separate book. The price of *Who's Who* is 10s. net.

WHO'S WHO YEAR BOOK.

The *Who's Who Year Book* contains such information as lists of the British Ambassadors and Ministers, the Members of the House of Commons, a list of the members of the Government and Government Officials, the London County Council, and much other useful information. The price is 1s.

THE WRITERS' AND ARTISTS' YEAR BOOK.

Also, price 1s., is the *Writers' and Artists' Year Book*, which is quite invaluable to those who desire to know where to place stories and articles. No one who comes into this category should be without this most useful book for a day.

THE ENGLISHWOMAN'S YEAR BOOK.

Last, but not least, must be mentioned the *Englishwoman's Year Book*, price 2s. 6d., which, is edited by Miss Emily Janes, Organising Secretary to the National Union of Women Workers. It is a book which should be procured and studied from cover to cover, for it contains an extraordinary amount of information concerning every branch of women's work and interests. Miss Janes appeals for voluntary help from ladies of leisure in sub-editing portions of this work. We hope she may not plead in vain.

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