

**CHINESE IMMIGRATION.** The immigration of Chinese in considerable numbers, which began shortly after the discovery of gold in California, early aroused strong opposition in the Pacific states, which has sought expression in numerous attempts to restrict this immigration by local legislation, and—these local measures having been declared invalid by the United States courts—in appeals for federal legislation. No response was, however, made by congress until 1879, when a bill passed both houses, limiting the number of Chinese passengers who could be brought to the United States by any one vessel to 15. This was vetoed by president Hayes on the ground of repugnance to treaty stipulations; but a commission was subsequently appointed, which, proceeding to Peking, negotiated a treaty that gives to the United States the power to limit, suspend or regulate, but not to prohibit the coming or residence of Chinese laborers, and secures to Chinese students, teachers, merchants or travelers from curiosity, together with their servants, and to laborers now in the United States, the right to come and go at pleasure, and all the privileges accorded to citizens or subjects of the most favored nations. This treaty was ratified

by the senate in March, 1881.—The discussion of the propriety of prohibiting or restricting Chinese immigration which is opened rather than closed by the treaty, and which, no matter what legislation is now taken, is apt to recur in the future, ranges over economic, social, political and ethical ground, but begins with a question of fact. On the one hand, it is asserted that the Chinese are an inferior and brutalized race, incapable of understanding our political institutions or entering into our social life; on the other, they are pictured as models of industry, thrift and docility, thirsting for a knowledge of western civilization and religion. The truth lies in about the mean between these extreme characterizations.—Chinese civilization widely differs from ours, and, from a western standpoint at least, is unquestionably lower than ours; but there is no reason for regarding the Chinese as an essentially inferior race. Their civilization had certainly attained a relatively high development when what are now the most advanced of the European races were yet in a very rude state; and although decadence on the one hand and rapid progress on the other have now carried European civilization far in advance of that of China, the possibility of the Mongolian race at some time arising from its long lethargy and reversing present conditions, is one of those grand questions which can hardly fail to rise in the imagination of whoever considers what this race has accomplished in the past. In natural characteristics the Chinese seem to be in nowise essentially inferior. Physically, those who have as yet come to the United States may be upon the average somewhat smaller and lighter than the Anglo-American, but this immigration has been as yet exclusively drawn from the southern provinces of China, whose people are said to be less robust than those of the north. Nor is there any evidence of natural intellectual inferiority. They are shrewd traders and sharp bargainers, are quick at learning what they care to learn, and it may be more than doubted whether there is anything in our knowledge that could not be acquired by a Chinaman under the same circumstances that a white man could acquire it.—Their standard of morality differs more, perhaps, in kind than in degree. On the filial virtues they set a higher estimate than we do; of the political virtues they seem to

have little idea. In courage, either active or passive, they are certainly not deficient. Their religion appears to be practically that materialism which among a people of active intellect seems always to follow the deterioration of creeds, mingled with much superstition, and something of that decorous regard for forms which survives the decay of real belief. They have that habit of patient attention to details characteristic of a country where population is dense and machinery little used, but it would be hard to say that the Chinese are either more or less industrious than our own people. They work steadily when they have an object to work

for; and their "standard of comfort" being much lower than that of our people, they will work, if need be, for a return upon which an American would not deem it possible to support life; but no more than white men do they work because they like it, nor do they idealize industry. Those who are raised above the necessity of manual labor are proud of this fact, and let their finger nails grow long to show it; the fat man is their ideal of the prosperous and enviable man. They are fond of amusements, having a keen taste for theatrical representations, and are greatly addicted to gambling. If less given to the use of intoxicating liquors they are more given to the use of intoxicating drugs.—The fact is that the Chinese seem, in all essential things, to be about such human beings as we are, differing from us only as men of the same race might differ who had been from birth subjected to the influence of widely different social environments. But this is a difference which is of as much practical moment as a difference in natural capacity—a difference so wide as clearly to distinguish Chinese immigration from any which has previously set upon our shores.—Between the various European peoples from whom our population has been drawn, there are differences of race, language, tradition, custom and religion. Yet these differences are trivial as compared with the differences between the Chinaman and the European. The European peoples belong to the same primary subdivision of the human family; their languages are derived from the same parent stock, their religions are but modifications of the same great creed, their civilization is essentially one, and their customs, methods and habits of thought have even in their variations a family likeness. Differences probably nearly as great as those which exist between the Irishman and the German, or the Englishman and the Italian, exist between the people of the various provinces of the great Chinese empire.—Yet as these are indistinguishable to the unpracticed European, so differences between Europeans are as nothing when compared with the vider differences which separate the Chinese from the European. The only immigration we have ever received which in point of difference can be compared with the Chinese, is that which in the early days of American settlement was brought by the slave trade. But the negro as landed from the hold of the slave ship, was merely a naked barbarian. He had everything to learn, but had little to unlearn. The difference between the negro as he came among us, and the Chinaman as he now comes among us, is like the difference between the child ready to imbibe whatever he is taught, and the full grown man whose habits are formed.—The Chinaman is not a simple barbarian but a civilized man, of a civilization to which ours is but a thing of yesterday. The Chinese have a written language, a literature, codes of manners and of morals, national and religious traditions, arts, beliefs, customs and habits of thought which

have been perpetuated for centuries through immense masses of people.—Of all the wrong impressions concerning the Chinese, there is probably none more erroneous than that widely diffused in this country (especially among those who are hopeful of the conversion of the Chinese to Christianity), that they are conscious of their own inferiority, and seek but to learn of us. That those who come among us recognize our superiority in the mechanical arts is doubtless true. But this is not the direction in which Chinese ideals lie, and their feeling toward us is probably akin to that with which the scholar, proud of his learning, might recognize the superior physical strength of a porter or coal-heaver, or the impoverished descendant of a noble family might regard the money-getting ability which had placed wealth in vulgar hands.—It is doubtful, indeed, if the European mind, and especially the American mind, can fairly comprehend that veneration for antiquity which leads the Chinese to regard the "outside barbarian," for all his steamships and railroads and telegraphs and ironclads, as a barbarian still. Western civilization looks to the future for its ideal of perfection; that of Chinese civilization is in the past.—Now it is not merely that the greater the difference in language, customs and habits of thought, the greater the difficulties of assimilation between different peoples brought into contact, but the greater the difference the less powerfully do assimilative forces act, for the greater are the tendencies, both attractive and repulsive, to the formation and maintenance of separate societies in which the peculiarities of each are perpetuated.—In the case of the Chinese this difficulty of assimilation is increased by a remarkable characteristic. Arising probably from the fact that for ages the political institutions of China have been so far gone on the path of decadence as to compel extra legal association for the protection of individual rights and the enforcement of individual obligations, the Chinese show a peculiar aptitude for secret associations and the maintenance of guilds resembling those trade and mercantile guilds so strong in Europe during the middle ages.—By virtue of this capacity for organization, the Chinese in a foreign country really constitute an *imperium in imperio*, really live under a Chinese government of their own—a government which finds ample means to enforce its own laws and regulations.—This is as notorious on the Pacific coast of the United States as it is in every other part of the world to which the Chinese have gone in any numbers. Without the aid of American law, and in spite of American law, Chinese regulations are enforced.—Chinese women are to-day, for instance, as merchantable a commodity in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco, as are hogs or opium. Whether the majority of the Chinese who come to the United States are or are not bound to service, they at least come with certain definite relations, whether of membership, clientage or peonage to the great organizations, the six companies.

—Instead of coming and going upon individual responsibility, as do the immigrants from Europe, they are received and placed upon arrival, by these organizations, and so absolute is this control, and so fully is it recognized by those who do business with the Chinese, that until within a recent time (if not to the present) a Chinaman could not purchase a passage ticket to return to China without a clearance from the companies. Thus the Chinaman, coming to the United States not with the intention of permanently settling, but of returning as soon as he can, and if he dies here of having his bones sent back to his native country—a

duty religiously performed by the Chinese organizations—is received upon his arrival in a Chinese society, constantly being recruited by new immigrants, and is affected very slightly, if at all, by assimilative influences.—He may learn something of the languages, something of the laws, and religion and arts and customs, and may adopt some of the methods and habits of the country in which he sojourns, just as the English in India learn and adopt such things of the natives; but as the Englishman in India remains an Englishman and does not become a Hindoo, so does the Chinaman in America remain essentially a Chinaman.—Thus Chinese immigration differs from European immigration in being practically non-assimilable.—That in course of time should their immigration continue, the Chinese would bring their women and permanently settle, just as they have permanently settled in parts of the East Indies, there can be little doubt, but from all appearance and experience this would not be because they had become Americanized but because a permanent Chinese community had been here founded.—This non-assimilability of the Chinese immigration gives a practical importance to all its characteristics, which they would not have if it could be assumed that they would in this country melt away and finally disappear. And that characteristic of the Chinese which is of most practical importance is that they are habituated to a standard of comfort much lower than that of American laborers and much lower even than that of any people whom we receive from Europe. Wages in China touch the absolute minimum that will support life. This at once furnishes a powerful incentive to immigration and enables the Chinese to underbid any competitors in the labor market.—It is from this fact, that the Chinese can, and where necessary to secure employment do, work cheaper than white laborers, that the hostility to their immigration, which shows itself where they have come among us in any numbers, primarily proceeds; and the fundamental difference between those who ask and those who oppose restriction of Chinese immigration will generally be found to be a difference of opinion as to whether cheap labor is an injury or a benefit.—It is urged, on the one hand, that the competition of this cheap labor tends to the degradation of our own people. On the other hand, it is contended that the cheapness with which Chinese labor may be obtained

is an advantage of which it would be foolish for the nation to deprive itself, that the saving in the cost of production which may be effected by the use of Chinese labor is precisely analogous to the saving effected by the use of labor-saving machinery; that we should no more object to the introduction of the Chinaman because he will do more work at a less cost for wages than we should object to an improvement of the steam engine which should increase its efficiency while reducing its consumption of coal; that the effect of utilizing Chinese labor is to permit many things to be done that could not otherwise be done; to reduce the cost of production so as to bring comforts and luxuries within the power of many who could not otherwise afford them, and that the occupation of the lower branches of industry by the Chinese operates to open larger opportunities for white men in the higher.—If the question were of commerce with China, or if the Chinese who came to this country were absolutely confined to occupations in which they could not come into competition with white laborers, then the reasoning of those who thus oppose interference with Chinese immigration as economically unwise would be in the main correct. In either case the community as a whole would stand to the Chinese in the relation of employer. The greater the cheapness with which the Chinese in China or the Chi-

nese in America if absolutely confined to occupations (it is hardly necessary to say there are none such) in which they could not come into competition with white laborers, would produce for us, the greater would be the amount of wealth which we as a whole would have to divide, while the conditions of divisions between different classes would be unchanged. In other words, commercial intercourse with them, or their employment here under the conditions assumed, would, so far as our people are concerned, add to the production of wealth without affecting distribution. But this is not the question raised by Chinese immigration. It is a question of the employment here of the Chinese in occupations in which they do come into competition with white labor. They do not remain external to our industrial organization, merely exchanging with it services or commodities, in which case it is evident that the more they gave in the exchange and the less they took, the greater would be our advantage; they enter and become an integral part of it.—Now without going into the theory of wages, or inquiring as to the causes of the fact, it is a fact that under the conditions existing throughout the civilized world the competition of laborers with each other tends to force wages to a minimum which will merely support the laboring class in such condition as under their habits they are able to live and reproduce. So obvious is this under social conditions which now exist, that this point of a bare living is termed by Smith and Ricardo “natural wages” and the standard of comfort of the laboring classes is by Mill considered as the determinator of wages. The effect, therefore, of

the entrance into the labor market of a class of laborers willing and able to work for less than white laborers, is to inaugurate a competition which must displace white laborers or compel them to lower wages.—If such a lowering of wages seems to be an advantage it is only because it is considered from the standpoint of the employer, and not from that of the interests of the whole community.—The highness or lowness of wages does not primarily affect the production of wealth, but merely the distribution. A fall of wages means that in the division of the aggregate product less will go to the laborers, and more to the other parties to the division, but not that productive power is in any wise increased. Here is the fallacy in the analogy which it is so often sought to draw between the effect of a reduction of wages and the effect of labor-saving machinery. So far as the employer is concerned the effect of a reduction of wages may be the same as the adoption of an improved process of labor-saving machinery; but considering the community as a whole the effect is very different. The improved process or improved machinery adds to productive power, and increases the general fund of wealth by enabling the production of more wealth with the same exertion. The reduction of wages in no wise increases productive power; and if it is to the gain of the employer it is in the same or in larger degree to the loss of the employed. If it makes some richer by giving them a larger share in the aggregate production, it only does so by curtailing the share of others.—So with the notion that the cheapening of labor will induce the undertaking of industrial enterprises which can not be undertaken while wages are high. To reduce wages is not to increase productive power, and no matter how much wages are reduced, capital and labor will not be applied to less remunerative occupations while more remunerative occupations are open to them.

—But while the primary effect of increase or decrease of wages is upon distribution and not upon production, it is true that there is a secondary effect upon production. This, however, is the reverse of what is presumed in the notion that cheap labor is advantageous to a community. That to increase wages is to increase productive power, and to decrease wages is to lessen productive power, is evident from the fact shown by every comparison that highly paid labor is always the most efficient. The law is universal that wherever wages are highest there is invention the most active, economies the largest, production the greatest, and the growth of wealth most rapid, while ill-paid labor means wasted and wasteful labor the world over. The United States and China furnish good examples for this comparison. In the United States wages are on the whole higher than anywhere else in the world, and nowhere else in the whole world is invention so active, machinery so generally utilized, production so great relatively to population, and the increase in wealth so rapid. In China, on the

other hand, wages are lower than anywhere else, and the industrial arts have been for a long time stationary, if they have not absolutely retrograded, machinery is hardly used, goods are still transported on men's shoulders, production is relatively very small, and though there are large concentrations of wealth, the country is as a whole miserably poor. To apply to the machinery and industrial methods which are in the one country the outgrowth of high wages, the cheap labor which in the other country destroys the incentive to improvement, may for the time result in large profits to those who make the combination, but if the effect be ultimately to reduce the general rate of wages the result in that country is to check invention and lessen productive power. A Chinaman working for the lowest wages may be able to run the machinery which is the latest product of American ingenuity as well as a Massachusetts operative; but it is certain that in a country where the Chinese standard of wages prevailed, no such machinery would ever have been developed, and that just as wages fall toward the Chinese standard so must the spirit of invention and adaptation be checked, and stagnation take the place of progress.—It is thus evident that considering even the purely material interests of a community as a whole, any reduction of wages must result in loss, not gain. A reduction of wages would not in any way increase the power of any of the productive factors. It would merely imply that in the division of the aggregate produce the laboring classes would get a smaller and other classes a relatively larger share; and that this must ultimately lessen the efficiency of labor and weaken the powers of production all experience shows.—And it must be remembered that Chinese immigration does not mean an addition of so many Chinese laborers to the working forces of the nation; but, ultimately at least, rather a substitution of so many Chinese laborers for so many white laborers; for even when in sparsely settled districts the Chinese do not actually displace white laborers, they certainly take the place of those who would otherwise come. That California, for instance, would now have a larger white population had it not been for Chinese immigration can not be doubted by any one familiar with that state. In fact, it can hardly be doubted that had it not been for Chinese immigration the aggregate population of California would be greater than now; for not only do the Chinese not bring their women, but by filling vocations for which women would otherwise be required, and by the conditions which their competition necessitates among the whites in the industrial pursuits in which it is felt, their presence has operated to prevent the attainment of that due proportion of the sexes which is requisite to the freest growth of population as to healthy social life.—The social and political difficulties involved in Chinese immigration are too obvious to need dwelling upon, and are seen when the non-assimilable character of

that immigration is recognized. The healthful life of every social or political organism depends upon the assimilation of its elements.—Even differences in language, religion, customs or tradition, which are as nothing when compared to the differences between the Chinese and our own people, are sources of discord and danger when they perpetuate themselves in the same community.—But the immigration of the Chinese in any considerable numbers into a country like the United States means not only a population separated by the widest gulf, instead of a homogeneous people; it means the attempt to blend two diverse civilizations in the same social and political organization. It means not merely the introduction of a non-assimilable element, with all the jealousies and hatreds and conflicts and dangers which experience shows hence arise; but the introduction of an element which even in its effect upon our own people tends most powerfully to intensify dangerous tendencies.—The social and political dangers with which the republic is already menaced spring from the growing inequality in the distribution of wealth—the same cause, which as the long course of history shows, has everywhere brought destructive conflicts or slow decay, and turned the prosperity born of free institutions into anarchy and despotism.—And the effect of Chinese immigration is to strongly increase the tendency to the unequal distribution of wealth, and at the same time to make remedial measures more difficult. The experience of California already shows that Chinese immigration means the introduction of an element into our political and social life which is as capable of arousing violent passions as negro slavery. Even were there no other objection to the Chinese than the fact that the opposition which their presence arouses among the laboring classes leads them to lose sight of all things else, and to blindly follow demagogues, it would be a sufficient one.—The ethical considerations which are so often urged against any proposition to shut out Chinese immigration have no force when the real character and effects of that immigration are understood. A conscientious individual may fully recognize his duty toward his neighbor, and yet see that to bring under the same roof with his own family, a family of totally different habits, would be to demoralize instead of elevate, and to produce quarrels and ill will where there should be harmony. And so may one fully imbued with that higher patriotism which regards the whole world as its country and all mankind as brethren, see clearly that such an admixture of peoples as is involved in any considerable Chinese immigration to the United States would be to the degradation of the superior civilization without any commensurate improvement of the lower, and that regarded from the highest standpoint it would tend to check the general progress of the race, not to advance it.—It is not merely the supreme law of self-preservation which justifies us in shutting out a non-assimilable

element fraught for us with great social and political dangers, but a regard for the highest interests of the race. It is not that national vanity against which the philosopher should carefully guard, but the obvious fact which it were blindness to ignore, that European civilization as developed on the freer field of the American continent represents the highest advance yet made by humanity, and that upon the great Anglo-Saxon republic of the new world devolves in the era now opening the leadership of the nations.—What civilizing influence she will exert upon other peoples depends on her own civilization, her maintenance of ground already gained, and her solution of problems which grow in gravity with the progress of development and the increase of wealth.—Whatever will introduce into the life of the republic race prejudices and social bitterness; whatever will reduce wages and degrade labor, and widen the gulf between rich and poor, it is our duty to guard against not merely for the sake of the republic, but for the best interests of mankind.—That European civilization has in its westward march reached the verge of that ocean which has for centuries held in the vast human hive of eastern Asia, and that steam navigation, constantly being cheapened, is reducing to a mere ferrriage the distance between countries where the wages of labor are at their highest and at their lowest, may bring about one of those great migrations which change the destinies of the world.—It is easy to hold fast a door which once fairly opened it may be impossible to shut; it is easy to prevent a movement which once it gathers way may prove resistless; and unless we are quite sure that the largest possible influx of Chinese could work no harm, it is the part of wisdom to take the side of caution.—Chinese immigration to the United States has hitherto been held in check by the strong resistance on the Pacific coast, and, I am inclined to think, by the Chinese organizations which have controlled it in the interests of the Chinese already here.—But without governmental action the effect of the first check must steadily weaken. Already powerful forces are becoming interested in Chinese immigration, and this must be increasingly the case as industrial relations adjust themselves to this element, while as the stream becomes larger, and the Chinese over wider areas become used to the idea of emigrating, it must pass beyond the control even of Chinese organizations.—The enormous population of China, which the best estimates do not place under four hundred millions; the intense struggle for existence on the part of vast masses; the peculiar adaptation of the Chinese to that form of production to which our industrial organization now tends in the use of machinery and the minute division of labor, which dispenses with skill in the operation, and the rapid reduction in the cost of transportation, make, should it once gather full headway, the possibilities of Chinese immigration overwhelming.—The fact is, that under modern industrial

conditions the power of working cheaper and living on less may be quite as effective in substituting one population for another as was superior force in any previous age of the world; and that just as the Saxon supplanted the Briton on English soil, or the white race has supplanted the Indian race on this continent, so may the Chinese, if free play be allowed their immigration, supplant the white race. On a small scale this result may be seen in those quarters of San Francisco which have been virtually turned into a Chinese city, where once fashionable residences now swarm with Chinese tenants and Christian churches have been changed into Joss houses! It may be seen in mining camps which have become, in whole or in part, purely Chinese settlements; in Rocky mountain coal mines, where Chinese labor has displaced white labor; and even for a long distance further east, where along the line of the Union Pacific railroad Chinese section hands have displaced the white hands at first employed. Not more certainly does the Indian retire from before the white man than does the white man from before the industrial competition of the Chinese. The process may be observed in those branches of business which on the Pacific coast the Chinese have made their own. First one or two employers begin to engage Chinese; others are by the competition gradually compelled to do the same; ultimately Chinese employers appear where competition is as disastrous to the white employers as was the competition of Chinese workmen to white workmen, and finally the whole business is under Chinese control.—The enormous possibilities of an immigration which with the advance in steam navigation may be drawn from four hundred million people, among whom the struggle for existence is so intense that large numbers perish annually from sheer want, and the fact that these immigrants retain all their essential habits and characteristics, make the question in its final aspects nothing less than that of a Mongolization of America.

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