

MR. BRYAN ON CHINESE EXCLUSION

with us, mingles with the population and in a few generations his identity is lost in our composite race. He has neither peculiarities of thought or dress to distinguish him from those among whom he labors, and his children are soon an indistinguishable part of the community. Not so with the Chinese. They are not only distinguished by their dress, language and habits, but they remain entirely separate and apart from those among whom they dwell. This difference is not only due to the wide dissimilarity in history, tradition and habit, but also to the absence of any permanent or patriotic interest in the land in which they sojourn.

The plane of living and the rate of wages are surprisingly low in China. When we were crossing the Yellow River I noticed a number of coolies unloading stone and inquired their wages. They received one hundred and fifty cash, or about seven and a half cents gold, per day. When this compensation is compared with the wages paid in the United States for the same kind of labor, it is easy to understand why Chinese laborers are drawn to our country. In discussing the immigration question with a Chinese official, I asked him what he paid his coachman. He replied that the head coachman received what was equivalent to \$10 in gold per month, while the subordinates received from \$3.50 to \$5. Out of these wages they must pay for their own food. There is considerable difference in the efficiency of labor but making due allowance for that, the Chinaman could in some occupations make twice as much in America as at home and yet work for half what Americans receive.

Long experience has taught the Chinaman to economize until he has reduced living to the minimum. Our guide in one city fixed \$1 (50 cents gold) as the weekly cost of living for one person, but many live upon less. In traveling from Peking to Hankow we were compelled to provide our own meals, and the very competent cook whom we secured was regularly receiving \$1 a week in gold.

A ride through the streets of a Chinese city furnishes ample evidence of the economy of the people. The small measures used, the tiny piles of edibles exposed for sale, the little bundles carried from the market—these explain why cash, running about ten to a cent, can be used as currency. Oranges are often sold without the peeling, the peeling being sold separately, and peanuts seem to be counted instead of measured. At Canton we saw one man trudging home from market with a satisfied air, carrying two pig tails tied together with a piece of grass. The well-to-do have many delicacies, like birds' nests soup and shark fins, some of which we tasted at the luncheon given by the viceroy at Nanking and at the Hong Kong dinner; and among those who can afford it, elaborate dinners are quite common, but among the masses the food is of the cheapest and coarsest kind.

In the matter of fuel the same scrupulous economy is exercised. Every dead leaf and twig is scraped from the ground and even the weeds are condemned to fiery punishment for presuming to grow upon such precious soil.

It would require generations to bring our people down to a plane upon which they could compete with the Chinese, and this would involve a large impairment in the efficiency in their work.

It is not just to the laboringmen of the United States that they should be compelled to labor upon the basis of Chinese coolie labor or stand idle and allow their places to be filled by an alien race with no thought of permanent identification with our country. The American laborer not only produces the wealth of our nation in time of peace, but he is its sure defender in time of war—who will say that his welfare and the welfare of his family shall be subordinated to the interests of those who abide with us but for a time, who, while with us are exempt from draft or military burden, and who, on their return, drain our country of its currency. A foreign landlord system is almost universally recognized as a curse to a nation, because the rent money is sent out of the country; Chinese immigration on a large scale would give us the evil effects of foreign landlordism in addition to its other objectionable features.

When I pointed out the fact that Chinese did not, like other immigrants, contemplate permanent residence in the United States, a Chinese official replied that they would become citizens if the law permitted it, and to the objection that they would even then remain distinct from the rest of the people, he answered by advanc-

ing arguments in favor of amalgamation. He claimed that the descendants of Chinese (called Eurasians) who had intermarried with Europeans were brighter than the average children of either race. I did not have an opportunity to test the accuracy of these conclusions, but it is evident that amalgamation has not been carried on to any great extent either in China or in the countries to which the Chinamen have gone. The instances of intermarriage are so rare that they do not affect the general problem.

The fact that the Chinese do now, and would probably if admitted to citizenship, form an unassimilated, if not an indigestible, element, separated from the remainder of our population by a race line, raises another objection to their admission as laborers. They make good servants, learning quickly and obeying conscientiously. Americans who have employed them testify to their trustworthiness and industry. If they were permitted to freely enter the United States, it is likely that they would soon solve the domestic labor problem, of which we hear so much, for as cooks, waiters and house boys they are an unqualified success. But what would be the effect upon our civilization of such a stratification of society? At present we have no racial distinction between employer and employe (except that presented by the negro problem), and one race problem is enough. If we were to admit Chinese coolies, we would find it more and more difficult to induce white people to enter into competition with them and manual labor would bear an odium which ought not to be placed upon it. We need to teach the dignity of labor and to lessen the aversion to it; a coolie class would make it difficult if not impossible to make progress in the work of cementing our society into one harmonious whole. If American ideals are to be realized there must be no barrier between the rich and the poor, no obstacles in the way of advancement from manual labor to intellectual work. China has suffered immeasurably because of the complete separation of her educated classes from her laborers.

A sentimental argument is sometimes advanced to the effect that we have no moral right to exclude any who seek to come among us. Whether this argument has any force depends, first, on the purpose of the immigrant and second, upon our power to assimilate. If his coming is purely commercial and he has no ambition to improve us by his coming or to profit morally and intellectually by contact with us, he cannot demand admission upon moral or sentimental ground. And even if his paramount reason for coming were a desire to learn of us, it would still be necessary to consider how far we could go in helping him without injury to ourselves. While visiting the sick is most meritorious, one who gave all his time to such work, leaving no time for sleep would soon be a physical wreck; feeding the hungry is most commendable, but one who gave away all of his substance, reserving nothing for his own nourishment, could not long serve his fellows. In like manner, our own power to help the world by the absorption of surplus population has certain natural and necessary limitations. We have a mission to fulfill and we can not excuse ourselves if we cripple our energies in a mistaken effort to carry a burden heavier than our strength can support.

Students ought to be invited to our country; we can afford to make the welcome cordial and access to our institutions easy, for there is no better way of influencing other countries for good than through their young men and young women who, gathering new ideas in America, carry them back and apply them in their own country. A small part of the money now spent in building warships to protect us from imaginary foes would, if spent in the education of the children of foreigners, make us friends abroad who would constantly lessen the probability of war. The newspapers have given currency to the report that our government contemplates returning to China a part of the indemnity exacted because of the Boxer attack, and the Chinese were much gratified at the rumor. It was coupled with the statement that the return of the money would be conditioned upon the expenditure of the money for education. I can conceive of no greater favor that our country can bestow upon China than to make permanent provision for schools which would give to the Chinese youth an opportunity to acquire the most modern instruction in literature and in physical and political science. If the sum to be returned were divided and the larger part given for the endowment of a series of universities in China, while the smaller part endowed a college at

Washington, under the control of the Chinese embassy, it would do more to extend our commerce, our ideals and our prestige than a hundred times that sum expended on a military establishment or a navy.

There is one argument against the admission of coolies which ought to commend itself to the Chinese as well as to the Americans, viz., that the standing of China among us is prejudiced by the fact that she is judged by her lowest and most ignorant classes. There has always been an educated class in China, and while the number belonging to it has been limited and the scope of education narrow as compared with the scope of education in the western world, still there have been culture and refinement. Artists have appeared from time to time, as well as artisans skilled in porcelain, metal working, carving, decoration, etc. There have been merchants of standing and integrity (in fact, integrity is the rule among Chinese merchants.) If China could be known by these or even by the averaging of her superior and inferior classes, she would stand higher among the nations. But she is known now, except in diplomatic circles, by the coolies who are carried by contractors from one place to another until local sentiment leads to their exclusion. And I may add that it has led to their exclusion from Australia and that the question of exclusion from the Transvaal has been discussed in the English parliament.

This argument received respectful attention when presented to some of the prominent Chinese, for they recognize the injury which has been done to the nation's reputation by having the Chinese people known by their worst representatives.

There is a fourth argument, the force of which was admitted at the Hong Kong dinner by the merchants who had resided in the United States, viz., that the admission of coolies (and it would apply to skilled mechanics also) would involve the nations in constant diplomatic controversy over race conflicts. If it is human for Chinese to desire to improve their condition by immigration to the United States, it is also human for American laborers to resent enforced idleness when presented as an alternative to a lower scale of living. With any large increase in the number of Chinese laborers in the United States, it would be necessary to incur the expense of an increased army and police force to preserve order, and even then it would be difficult to prevent occasional violence, and violence in the United States would lead to retaliation upon Americans residing in China. These race riots in our country and in China would not only strain the relations between the nations but would nullify our attempt to create a favorable impression upon Chinese students and embarrass the work of our missionaries in China.

It is better to be frank and candid with the Chinese government. There are twenty times as many Chinese in America as there are Americans in China, and we give to China as much in trade advantage as we receive from her, not to speak of the money which Americans voluntarily contribute to extend education and religion in the Celestial empire. China has no reason to complain for we have been generous in dealing with her. We can still be not only just but generous, but it would be neither kindness to her nor fairness to our own people to invite immigration of such a character as to menace our own producers of wealth, endanger our social system and disturb the cordial friendship and good will between America and China.

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TRY SECTION 6

The administration is said to be greatly "perplexed" by the results of the beef trust prosecutions. If the administration has not grown weary of its "trust busting" program it might try section 6 of the Sherman anti-trust law. That section provides for the seizure and condemnation of the property of trusts, and is as follows: "Any property owned under any contract or by any combination, or pursuant to any conspiracy (and being the subject thereof) mentioned in section 1 of this act, and being in the course of transportation from one state to another, or to a foreign country, shall be forfeited to the United States, and may be seized and condemned by like proceedings as those provided by law for the forfeiture, seizure, and condemnation of property imported into the United States contrary to law."