

Chinese Invasion of Australia

“The Chinese Invasion of Australia” The Bulletin 1 September 1886. Courtesy State Library of New South Wales

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The Mongolian in Australia, and especially in New South Wales, is now on his trial. Especial notice has been drawn to his doings, and the result has been to stimulate the desire to know more about him and his devious ways, with a view to deciding once and for all whether he is a desirable tenant on Australian soil. The balance of evidence is strongly against him; in Sydney only two apologists have yet been found for him... [with] but one argument - that, although the Chinaman is very bad, the Australian is awful, a species of defence which, besides being untrue, does little credit to the advocate, and inflicts fatal injury on the cause. As we have already pointed out, the average Chinaman, under present social conditions, is necessarily a sensual brute. The Australian may be immoral, and very often is, but the Chinaman must be... He has no alternative, for the utter lack of ennobling purpose and elevating ideal confines his every thought to the pleasures of his body. ...

He is the product of a peculiar national system. The oppression of long centuries of pauperism has enfeebled his sinews, as the sensual indulgence of many generations of ancestors has wasted his brain. Enslaved by the traditions of the remote past, and the writings of their sages of 20 centuries ago, the Chinese are unique among nations in that they have not advanced in thought or method as they increased in number and density of population. ...

A brief comparison of the history of the two peoples thus explains the disabilities under

which the Chinese are placed in their competition with Australians and Europeans. And it is because they cannot compete man for man with the whites that the Chinese are obliged to form themselves into a species of national trades-union wherever they settle in foreign lands. They must always act together and overpower their rivals by mere force of numbers... Were it possible for them to disperse and mingle with the citizens generally, there would be less harm in the Chinese invasion, for they might ultimately come to be counted with the rank and file of the Australian people, but all experience of the past and knowledge of their circumstances, goes to prove nothing of the kind is possible. ...The British nation is a mixture of all European strains of blood, and in the colonies there is still further admixture, but it is questionable whether a strain of Mongolian blood would give any superior force or virtue to the community during succeeding generations...

To all who will live in accordance with local laws, Australia extends welcome and protection, but the Mongolians do not pretend to obedience of any laws other than those they bring with them. Therefore, living in defiance of the law they have no claim to the law's protection; and just as the right of liberty is denied to the burglar or other criminal, so also must the right to remain here be accounted as lost to the criminal and sensual Chinese.