

# JAPANESE BRING VILE DISEASES

**O**NE out of every thirty-seven of the Japanese arriving in California is found to be afflicted with some loathsome, contagious or unnamable disease. The records of the port of New York show that the proportion of diseased persons among immigrants of all nationalities is but 1 in 1300. That is the difference from a hygienic standpoint, between the brown invaders and what is often contemptuously termed "the scum of Europe." And yet the partisans of the Jap tell us that it is only the student class which comes here from the Mikado's empire. What, then, must be the physical condition of the "scum of Asia"?

Among the diseases discovered by scientific men among our Japanese immigrants are mentioned leprosy; favus, a filthy disease which destroys the hair, and trachoma, a loathsome and highly infectious disease of the eyes. Favus attacks particularly the young, and, should it be introduced into our schools by one of these much-praised Japanese students, the results can only be imagined, as words are entirely inadequate.

## Gravest of Dangers Which Come From the Orient.

**T**HE economic disturbances produced by Asiatic immigration are so numerous and so varied that they may well obscure another calamity that is none the less entitled to take precedence of them all. The question of disease and its importation is one that we cannot afford to neglect, however unsavory it may be and however great be the confidence that we deservedly place in our medical immigration officials. No worse mistake could be made than to suppose that the importation of disease can be entirely prevented by medical survey, however thorough and however conscientious that survey may be. So long as those predisposed to disease are allowed to enter the country, disease must surely follow in their train, and that this is indeed the case, a glance at the statistics will sufficiently show.

During the year 1903 one Japanese out of every thirty-seven arriving in California was found to be afflicted with a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease.

These figures only assume their true significance when coupled with certain other considerations. First, we

may notice that the proportion of Japanese thus afflicted is higher than that of any other nationality, far higher. Without entering into an analytic examination of the figures, we may point out that during the year 1900 nearly 500,000 immigrants entered the port of New York. Out of this vast mass of humanity, much of which was driven from the dirtiest and nastiest corners of Europe, only 360 were found to be suffering from loathsome or dangerous contagious disease.

Three hundred and sixty out of 500,000, or 1 in 1300!

**OF THE JAPANESE, 1 in 37!  
OF ALL OTHER NATIONALITIES,  
1 in 1300!**

### A GRAVE CONDITION.

To suppose that every case of such disease is detected would be to assume that our medical officers are endowed with superhuman powers. Without doubt very many cases enter undetected, and we may further remember that large numbers of Japanese arriving by way of Canada are practically unexamined by any United States official at all. This is a state of things sufficiently alarming, and its gravity is in no way lessened by further examination.

In 1889—that is to say, before Japanese immigration had become what it now is—T. V. Powderly, at that time Commissioner-General of Immigration, made a general statement on the subject of immigration, with some special reference to the importation of disease. Speaking of medical inspection he says:

"Its importance cannot be over-estimated when we consider that a vast tide of immigration from the Orient finds its way \* \* to this country. \* \* We get a vast number of Asiatics, and they come afflicted with a number of diseases. A prominent physician in New York assured me that great numbers of them were tainted with disease, and he had no doubt that leprosy frequently came through our ports."

Mr. Powderly was subsequently asked: "You have spoken of a class of people coming from Asia. What race or nationality are they?"

The reply was: "A number of Syrians are coming. Japanese are coming in in vast numbers, now on our western coast."

If Mr. Powderly considered the Japanese immigration of 1889 to be "vast" what adjectives would he use to describe the Japanese invasion of today?

And so the risk of leprosy is part of the price that we must pay for our ruinous hospitality. Leprosy, in its initial stages, would be highly likely to escape detection at ports of entry. It would, however, be discovered later.

But what are the other diseases from which America is naturally free, but with which she has been infected by immigration. One of these maladies is known as favus. It is a filthy disease, and it destroys the hair from the head. Once destroyed the hair never comes back and the malady itself takes months and sometimes years to cure. It is, of course, highly contagious. A few years ago favus was almost unknown in America. In the East it is now becoming quite common.

## WORSE THAN FAVUS.

Another disease naturally unknown

in America and directly imported by immigration is trachoma, and this is worse than favus. Trachoma is a loathsome disease of the eyes, highly contagious, and eventually producing blindness. There is said to be a drug by means of which the external signs of trachoma can be temporarily suppressed for a few weeks, so that during that time it cannot be detected by a cursory medical examination, but after a short time it again makes its appearance with an increase of virulence. Italian immigrants afflicted with trachoma are known to resort to this expedient to carry them past the medical inspectors at New York. This malady was originally known as Egyptian ophthalmia, because it was introduced from Egypt into Italy by the army of Napoleon. It also was practically unknown in America until

a few years ago, but now its victims are to be found by hundreds in New York and they are likely to be found also in California if we continue to welcome its probable centers of infection.

Is it not apparent, even to the most casual and careless of readers, that, not only the health of the community, but also its democratic spirit, is endangered by the introduction of contagious diseases? Suppose favus should make its appearance in the public schools, as it very well might, seeing that children are peculiarly its victims. The result would be that only the poorest children would be allowed to go to these schools. The children of richer parents would be sent elsewhere, and a most hateful caste line would be drawn that it would certainly take years to eradicate.

Japanese immigration is becoming not so much a movement as a stampede. Asia has always been the home of pest and plague, and, however enlightened official Japan may be in this respect, that enlightenment has by no means spread downward through the masses of her entigrating coolie classes. The enemy now at our doors is disease. Perhaps it has already passed the doors.