

Chinese Bondage in Peru

THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES, THE EXTENSION OF CULTIVATION, AND the development of the guano industry in the middle years of the nineteenth century all gave rise to a very urgent demand for labor on the Peruvian coastal estates and the Chincha Islands. The racially prejudiced Peruvian elite actually preferred European immigrants, but the republic failed to compete successfully with the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina for European migrant farmers. The reasons for this were fairly obvious, namely, the reluctance of Peru's wealthy hacendados to make land, or indeed to have land that could be made available to ambitious European agricultural emigrants at competitive prices and also the high cost of a passage to Peru. However, neither the cost of the passage nor general political instability prevented British and other European urban migrants settling in Lima and other Peruvian cities.¹

It was when the plantation owners failed to attract European labor to their estates—no doubt because these emigrants must have realized that these planters were only looking for cheap labor and not fellow settlers—that the hacendados were obliged to turn to Asia. As already noted, Domingo Elias, grape and cotton grower and one of Peru's wealthiest politicians, together with a partner, imported seventy-five Chinese at Callao in 1849. This marked the beginning of Chinese coolie labor in Peru, the immigration at first being encouraged by the Peruvian Congress, \$30 being paid to the importer for each man arriving in the country.

On the issue of Negro slavery, unfortunately, but as might be expected, the abolition of black slavery in Peru was not linked to any redistribution of the land, the ruling white elite remaining firmly in control of this all-important commodity. The hacendados saw all these developments as "labor problems" for which a prompt solution had to be found. Indian and African labor had been exploited,

emancipation

and was still being exploited, despite the "emancipation" of the latter, but the time had now come for the Chinese to be added to this list of landless, superexploited workers. The emancipation of the black slaves, which was effected in Peru by progressive stages, was made complete in 1855 when the proprietors received a compensation of \$300 from the government for each slave released.²

Cost of emanc. on backs of Chinese

The "government" being largely composed of landed proprietors, it is perhaps not surprising that no thought of offering any form of "compensation" to the freed slaves seems to have come under active consideration. In this respect, though, it has to be said, Peru was merely following the example set by Britain, who had "compensated" her slave-owners at the time of emancipation. In this case, the offer of "compensation" was a considered tactic of the abolitionists in their ongoing struggle against the parliamentary defenders of the plantation interests. Ironically, the funds to meet the Peruvian "compensation" payments were to be met by the sale of guano, produced by Chinese laborers working in conditions akin to—if not worse than—slavery!

However, the mid-nineteenth-century Peruvian elite were not without their admirers and supporters, among whom was the celebrated historian, Clements R. Markham, the man who had written critically and objectively about the early history of Peru and the deplorable record of the conquistadors. In a highly defensive article about Peru and her record on the treatment of Negroes and Chinese, which appeared in the *Geographical Magazine* in 1874, Markham argued that the modern Peruvians had set a noble example, as regards the treatment of the laboring classes. He also felt that the landed proprietors of Peru were, as a class, most kindly and considerate employers of labor, all of which deliberately missed the point, for the issue was not employer-employee relations, but freedom or slavery, and the disputed right of any man—kindly or otherwise—to hold property in man. He continued by advising readers that he had traveled for hundreds of miles along the coast and over the Andes, and had stayed at the cotton, vine, and sugar estates in the different valleys. On these estates he states that he found that the Negroes were a happy and contented race, "endeared to their masters by the traditions and experience of kind and considerate treatment." They could also attend church and numerous fiestas, and all were well fed and housed within the spacious *galpones*. He felt that the Peruvian hacendados were, in reality, an excellent class of country gentlemen, habitually considerate in the treatment of

their dependants. He did though concede that the Chinese laborers had "introduced a disturbing element" into this idyllic scene, and that the want of women among them was deplorable and aggravating the position. Clearly holding the Chinese responsible for their own misfortunes, he concluded his thoughts on these social issues by enthusiastically praising the noble hacendados: "Such men as the Count of Monte Blanco, the Count of Torres de Oran, Don Mariano de Osma, Don Pedro Paz Soldan, Don Manuel Quintana, and a host of others of similar stamp, are not to be spoken of in the same breath with ordinary planters and speculators, whether English or American. Peruvian hacendados, such as those I have mentioned, have received their estates from their forefathers, and are not planting adventurers merely seeking to make money rapidly."

Slavery had survived in Peru for more than thirty years after independence precisely because the ruling elite considered that this institution was of vital importance to the nation's economic recovery and prosperity. Needless to say, it was equally crucial to the individual wealth and social position of all planters, noble or otherwise.³

And while one can allow for the fact that some slaveholders undoubtedly did treat their "dependants" better than others, which is in itself commendable, all things are relative, and this was only by comparison with other exploited, landless, oppressed workers and slaves whose conditions were invariably abysmal. Indeed, far from being universally satisfied with their lot, over the years thousands had tried to escape from their respective owners' estates. Slaves had actually been fleeing from their owners since the first days of African slavery in Peru and well into the nineteenth century, the incentive to flee being all too clear. The vast majority did not live well, and poor rations and bad housing were the general order of the day on many, if not most, of the estates. Illness and mistreatment among the slaves and deficiencies in health care, clothing, and excessive labor demands were all part of the abuse and exploitation that both urban and rural slaves had to face daily.⁴

conditions
of
slavery

Slave resistance was common, one example of a rising being in 1838, when slaves on the San Pedro estate forced the majordomo and employees to flee. They sacked and robbed the estate store of corn, then killed the livestock to eat and sell. Yet despite clear and continuing indications of slave discontent, for a long period the slaveholders showed but limited concern, that is, until the Chicama Valley rebellion of January 1851, which marked the culmination of slave resistance during this period. It warned the "country gentle-

men" that slaves were reaching the end of their tether, and a desire for freedom had reached the point where they were ready to fight and die for it. By the 29th of the month, this uprising had attracted about 150 slaves, and came into public view as the result of an armed confrontation on the Cajanleque estate. This northern revolt served as an example that others soon followed. Less than two months later about fifty slaves from the great Casa Blanca and La Quebrada estates in the Canete Valley arose, proclaiming "Liberty or Death." This isolated revolt was soon brought under control, but just two years later, a lone individual tried to rouse the Casa Blanca slaves again, but the local hacendados quickly armed their men, hunted him down, and executed him.

It was only through the slaveholders' continued use of terror and brutality that Markham's "happy and contented" race of black slaves were kept under control. This in itself indicated that the slaveholders viewed the slaves as a very real threat, and there can be no doubt that such fears existed ever since the arrival of the first African slaves in Peru at the beginning of the colonial era. Slaves were continually running away, attacking their owners and rebelling. While this type of resistance could not end Peruvian slavery, such actions caused much concern among the individual hacendados and revealed the dangers of maintaining this brutal, oppressive system. Soon prominent members of Peru's ruling elite began to add their weight to the call for abolition. One voice raised was that of Alfonso González Pinillos, a prominent planter and slaveholder from Trujillo. In January 1852 he freed his 136 slaves, mainly because of the recent slave rebellions, but also because of his growing awareness of the slaves' distress. His voice was now added to the growing number in Peru arguing for the emancipation of slaves.⁶ In addition to the internal forces that were weakening Peruvian slavery, during the first three decades following independence, considerable pressure was being exerted by foreign nations. Foremost among these was Great Britain, whose crusade to eradicate the international slave trade, and eventually to abolish slavery in all its guises, included Peru within its purview.⁷ Accordingly, a further brief glance at the development of this great, humanitarian movement would be in order at this point.

For two hundred years the unholy practice of slave trading had corrupted British society, choking the arteries of the social and even of the religious life of the nation. However, during the years 1787 to 1833, first under the leadership of Wilberforce, then Buxton, Britain

Why
Free
Slaves?

had moved from being a principal participant in the trade to the main international opponent of slavery. As noted, the abolitionists first worked to get a bill through Parliament banning the slave trade, which they finally achieved in 1807. Unfortunately, the slave trade had in the meantime increased, and the checking of its international development then became one of the main aims of the Duke of Wellington.⁸ In Parliament the fight for the abolition of the slave trade lasted eighteen years; for the emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies, another twenty-six years.⁹

By 1840 about 25 percent of the Royal Navy was employed in efforts to suppress the slave trade, the Africa squadron being foremost in this struggle. The British government then responded to popular demands to increase the strength of this squadron, for by 1842 this fleet, previously composed of sailing ships, was strengthened by the arrival of five steamers. During the 1840s Britain also used her imperial strength to persuade other nations to cooperate, by signing appropriate treaties, who then sent out their own anti-slavery patrols.¹⁰ The naval historian Christopher Lloyd estimated that in the middle thirties 135,000 Negro slaves were being taken across the Atlantic each year, mainly to Cuba and Brazil.¹¹ By the 1840s Buxton estimated that this had increased, and that no less than 150,000 human beings were then being conveyed each year from Africa, across the Atlantic, and sold as slaves in the Americas.¹² A large number of these slaves were being conveyed across the Atlantic in Spanish and Portuguese vessels, running the gauntlet of the British patrols.

It is of particular significance, in this chapter on Peru—and her exploitation of Chinese workers—that Portugal was then putting herself in opposition to Britain by conniving at the illegal movement of all these slaves across the Atlantic. It should also be noted that much of this traffic in slaves was being undertaken in ships belonging to her private merchants. It was, in fact, from the Portuguese colony of Macau, on the Canton River, China, that the majority of Chinese were to embark on their one-way passage to this Latin American republic. The nearby British colony at Hong Kong was also, but to a lesser extent, involved in this trade but, as will be noted, this met with a good measure of official opposition, due to the antislavery position of Palmerston and the imperial government.

The Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between Great Britain and Peru was signed on April 10, 1850. Through this document Palmerston put pressure on Peru to abandon all links

with the slave trade by proposing that the Slave Trade Article, which was included in the 1837 British-Peru Treaty, was included in the new one. The Peruvians wanted "Slave Trade" to read "African Slave Trade," but Palmerston, to his credit, refused, commenting, "Slave Trade is Slave Trade whether the slaves bought and sold be Africans or Americans; and such Traffic ought equally in either case to be put an end to."¹³ The Peruvian Congress, which had to confirm it, actually procrastinated, which meant that the document was not formally ratified and exchanged at London until October 15, 1852. The relevant clause was Article XV, which stated: "The Republic of Peru engages to co-operate with Her Britannic Majesty for the total abolition of the Slave Trade, and to prohibit all persons inhabiting the territories of the Republic, or subject to its jurisdiction, in the most effectual manner, and by penal laws, from taking any share in such trade."¹⁴

One can be in no doubt that the growing dependency of Peru on the London money market also had much to do with the final ratification of this treaty and many subsequent developments. In October 1849, a new loan had been arranged, at the instigation of the Peruvians, between the republic and William Gibbs & Company in Lima, involving substantial drafts on London. This appears to have been independent of any formal guano contract, although it was clearly the intention to repay it through guano sales. "We are to advance \$400,000 without interest," reported Samuel Went, their manager in Lima, "by paying 18% in paper, from which, and from the Exchange we shall get some 9 or 10%." Two days later he wrote that Pedro de Candamo, a Chilean merchant, had also become party to the transaction, taking a one-eighth share, Gibbs's part of the loan, therefore, amounting to \$295,000.¹⁵ As Gibbs & Company were soon to be directly involved in the employment of Chinese workers on the Chinchas, they inevitably became central to the whole issue of Chinese bondage in Peru and therefore subject to pressures from London via the local British consul based at Lima.

While Britain led international efforts to end the slave trade, she was, as mentioned, also responsible for establishing the "coolie trade." From 1837 to the early years of the twentieth century, the British shipowners in this trade were to be responsible for transporting countless thousands of indentured Indian and Chinese workers to various British colonies, notably the islands of the West Indies and British Guiana (now Guyana). Critics saw this as a thinly disguised attempt to replace African slaves with Indian and Chinese laborers,

working under conditions akin to slavery. Supporters of this emigration argued that it was a legitimate emigration, operating under stringent regulations and controls, and therefore bore no resemblance whatsoever to the slave trade. Whatever the case may be regarding British participation in this trade, it undoubtedly set the pattern for making use of cheap Asian labor as a replacement for freed slaves, which was soon emulated by other nations, including Peru.

One of the first acts of the Reform Parliament of 1832 was the Act of Emancipation, which granted liberty to the slaves of the West Indies at the cost to the English people of £20,000,000. This sum was the amount required by the slaveholders of the West Indies to “compensate” them for their loss of “property.” While the abolitionist forces in Parliament were strong at this time, and growing stronger, the plantation owners, opposed to emancipation, also had much support. The planters were, in effect, bought off by this large payment. Never was money better spent, and yet it was a gross injustice. It was like paying a man for property to which he had no intrinsic moral right, and for which, according to the highest law of equity, he could establish no claim.¹⁶ In fact, many planters received in “compensation” payments that amounted to more than the value of their estates. However, despite reservations about the “justice” of these payments, it remains to the credit of the British people generally, who met these payments, that they had, collectively, broken the chains that bound black Africans in perpetual slavery. } BR

Soon after the British government had bribed its own planters and the slavers of foreign nations to free their slaves, it became apparent that the plantation economies of many colonies would collapse. That is, if alternative sources of cheap labor could not be found, who could stand the severe tropical conditions on the coffee, sugar, and cocoa plantations. In just one colony, Demerara (British Guiana), 100,000 slaves were freed; the actual number on which compensation was claimed was 82,824.¹⁷ Soon after emancipation many of the plantations lay in ruins, for the freed slaves, quite understandably, refused to cultivate the fields and work the mills anymore. It was under these circumstances, and the resulting urgent quest for labor, that the eyes of the West Indies planters focused on the “Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire—India—and also China, with their huge populations and “surplus” labor.

As far back as 1834, the year after slavery had been abolished throughout the British dominions, forty Indian coolies were exported

to Mauritius.¹⁸ In 1837, the first "Coolie Emigration Act" was passed which, among many other things, laid down very stringent regulations concerning the safe transportation of emigrant labor from the Far East to the West Indies. Notwithstanding these stringent regulations, many shipowners entered this trade. However the "main players" in the coolie trade were, undoubtedly, John Allan & Company of London, James Nourse & Company, and Sandbache Tinne & Company of Liverpool.

The clipper ships employed in this trade, at least by these three named firms, were, indeed, a far cry from the vessels used by earlier generations of British shipowners and mariners, for they were among the finest ever built. Sleeker than the legendary tea-clippers of the period, some would also carry up to 50 percent more canvas than was normal for vessels of their size. Capable of circumnavigating the globe with ease, the Sandbache Tinne emigrant ship *Shiela* once outsailed the legendary tea-clipper *Cutty Sark*.¹⁹ Getting to the colonies safely was one thing; working conditions when they arrived, and ever getting the "guaranteed" return passages were quite another matter. It was, of course, these crucial factors that continued to cast a long shadow over the whole trade, making it a highly controversial issue for a period of more than sixty years. Apart from these major enterprises, which were subject to proper controls, many other ships were also employed in this trade, which escaped from, or were not subject to, United Kingdom legislation, and conditions on these vessels were invariably atrocious.

So far as the general emigration of Chinese workers from Hong Kong is concerned, this can, in the main, be traced to the opening of the gold fields in the Sacramento Valley in 1848. This discovery set in motion a rush of prospectors and general workers to the West Coast of North America. Many nationalities, including Chinese in great numbers, headed for the western states. Alas, there was no "pot of gold" in line for the vast majority of these Chinese men, many of whom soon found themselves dragooned into the ranks of railroad construction gangs, work that was virtually as bad as working the guano islands in Peru.²⁰ By the close of 1849, it should be noted, the population of California was about 100,000. (Interestingly, a state constitution was ratified on November 13, 1849, that prohibited slavery, the actual admission of California as a free state forming part of Clay's famous "Omnibus Bill" of September 9, 1850.)²¹ The massive influx of "Gold Rush" adventurers into California in 1849 and the early 1850s placed many demands on the

limited resources of the area, which obliged the Californians to turn to Hong Kong, where they bought such items as clothes and wooden houses, which were shipped in frames. Chinese artisans were sent to California to set up these houses. These were followed by an annually increasing stream of Chinese emigrants embarking at Hong Kong for San Francisco and a steadily developing trade in all sorts of articles. In 1851 forty-four vessels left Hong Kong for California, and this line of trade was to remain constant throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century.²²

Almost synonymous with this development was the establishment of the Chinese contract labor system, by which means African slavery gave way to a thinly disguised form of Chinese slavery, in which many nations participated.

During the period 1847-74, it has been estimated that between a quarter and a half million laborers were shipped from Amoy, Canton, Hong Kong, and Macao, especially from the last two ports, to Cuba, Peru, Chile, and the Sandwich Islands.

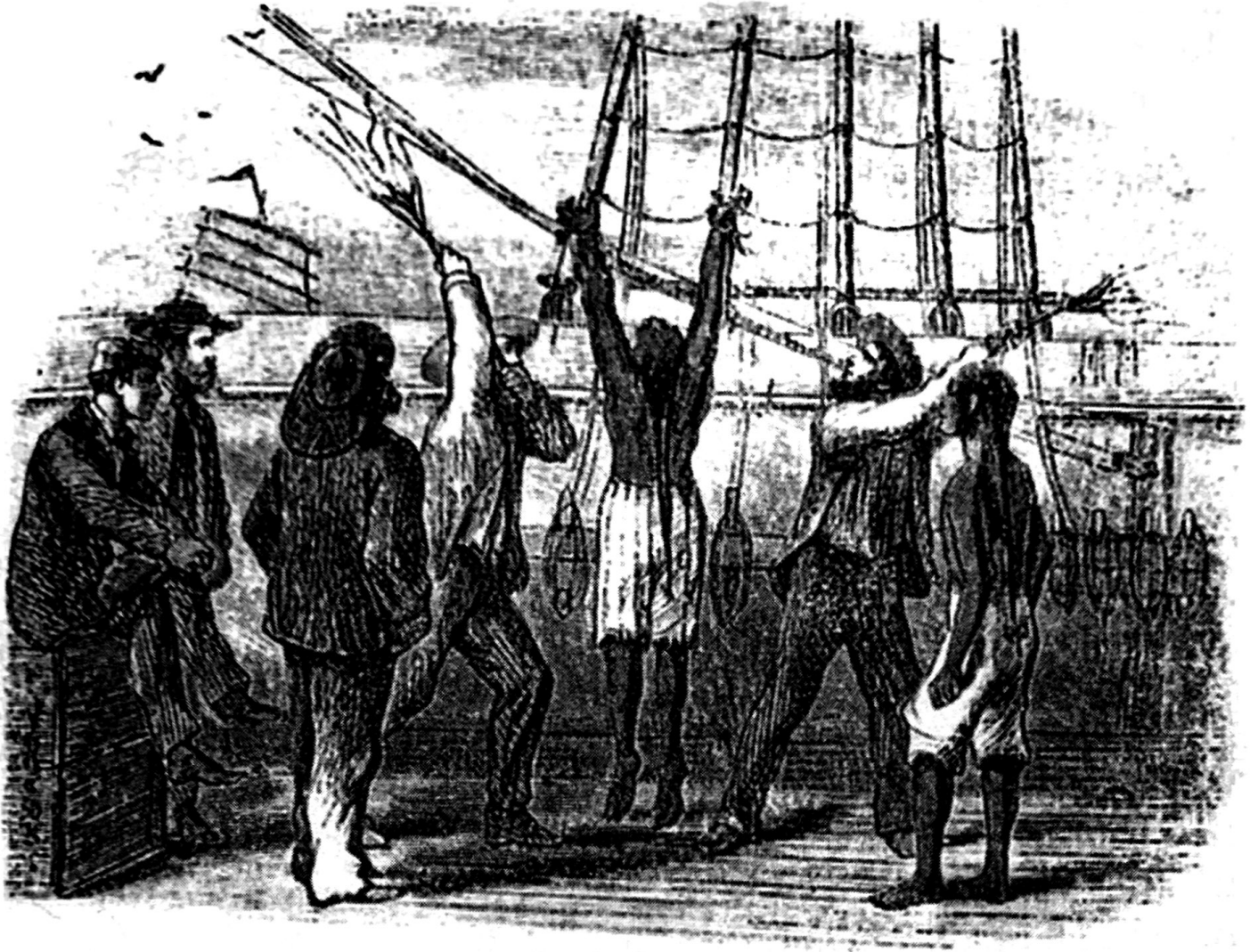
In 1864, for example, 4,479 were shipped from Macau to Cuba and 6,243 to Peru; in 1865, 5,207 to Cuba and 8,417 to Peru. Sailing under the French flag during the same years, 2,716 laborers were shipped by Cuban agents from Canton to Cuba. The need for cheap labor in the West and the overflowing population of China built up many lucrative business enterprises for astute but ruthless traders in the East and West. According to a contemporary account, the supply came chiefly from three sources: "Prisoners taken in the clan fights of the province of Kwangtung, and who are sold by their captors to Chinese or Portuguese man-buyers upon the interior waters; villagers or fishermen forcibly kidnapped along the coast; and thirdly, individuals who are tempted by prowling agents to gamble (in Macau) and who on losing, surrender their persons in payment according to the peculiar Chinese notions of liability in this respect." Others were simply duped into signing bogus "contracts," and many that were destined to work on the Chincha Islands of Peru were under the impression that they were being taken to the gold fields of California. Writing about this trade in 1933 professor Harley Farnsworth MacNair of St. John's University stated, "The suffering of these labourers caused by the methods used by European, American, and Chinese agents in getting them to leave China; the terrible conditions under which they were shipped abroad, as bad as those on the old African slave ships; and their exploitation on the plantations of the New World combine to form one of the darkest stains on the record of the relations of China and the West, a record, it may be

added, for which the blame must be pretty equally divided between Chinese and Westerners.”²³

The “crimps,” as the collecting agents were called, received up to \$10 a man delivered to the “coolie depots” or barracoons in Macau. Here the Chinese laborers were duped into signing a “contract”—which, of course many, if not most, would be unable to read—that bound them for eight years’ service. The least fortunate of all then found themselves heading for the Chincha Islands, Peru, with others, slightly more fortunate, ending up in places such as Cuba. On reaching this latter country, the surviving coolies would be put up for auction with their “contracts” and sold in a manner almost indistinguishable from that of an imported African slave, \$400 to \$1,000 being the going price for a Chinese coolie in the mid-nineteenth century. Theoretically, the coolie had the legal right to appeal to the Spanish courts for enforcement of his rights in case of bad treatment or lack of payment, but no instance is on record of such a proceeding.²⁴ So far as Cuba is concerned, of the 140,000 Chinese who are estimated to have sailed for this island as indentured labor under such schemes, it is estimated that 11.4 percent, that is 16,000, died on the passage.²⁵

As with Cuba, every Chinese laborer bound for Peru was furnished with a copy of a contract, printed in Spanish and Chinese, by which he was bound for a period of eight years. In Peru, on average, \$450 was paid by the hacendado, or employer engaged in other work, to the immigrant contractor for his service. One significant clause in these “contracts” stipulated that “the period of service of eight years being concluded, the Chinaman is free to dispose of his labor—no debt of any kind being sufficient to impede his liberation, as any such debt must be recovered by the laws of the country.” However, as there was no guaranteed right of return to China at the end of his service, this “liberation” was little more than a delusion.²⁶ In any event, those who ended up on the Chincha Islands would have been dead from overwork and abuse long before their term of service was completed.

Throughout the 1850s the flow of Chinese emigrants from Hong Kong to California continued to increase. As many as 14,683 were shipped from Hong Kong in the year 1855, and 13,856 in 1858.²⁷ But accurate figures regarding the importation of coolies into Peru at this time are more difficult to establish, since Peruvian statistics of the period tended to be incomplete. However, Juan de Arona quoted a Peruvian writer to the effect that Chinese arrivals in the decade 1850–59 numbered 13,000.²⁸ Beyond this point, Thomas J. Hutchinson, British consul general in Peru in the early 1870s and



6. Flogging a Chinese "coolie" on board a ship. *Harpers Monthly Magazine*, June, 1864.

author of the notable work *Two Years in Peru*, gave in this book the following statistics, namely that between 1860 and 1870 a total of 43,301 Chinese sailed from Macao for Callao. Of these 38,648 arrived and 4,653 died on the passage. In 1871 the captain of the port, Senor Palacios, advised Hutchinson that between January and September 1871, 9,693 had sailed from Macao, 9,021 had arrived, and 672 had died on the passage.

During the period from January 1 to October 3, 1872, it is interesting to note that twenty-six ships arrived in Peru, bringing 10,977 Chinese emigrants, out of a total of 11,933 who had embarked, 956, or about 8 percent, had died on the passage. Of these ships none were British, 18 were Peruvian, 4 were French, 2 were Portuguese, and 2 were Dutch. But the average rate of mortality distorts the picture, for the horrors of this traffic are exposed by the facts relating to several of these ships. One of these vessels, the French barque *Antares*, commandeered by Captain Nantle, arrived in Callao at the end of June with a "cargo" of Chinese from Macao. Out of 263 put on board at the port of embarkation, only 181 reached Callao, hav-

ing had the appalling mortality rate of 31 percent on the voyage. During the same period the 1,043-ton Peruvian ship *Lama Canevaro* arrived at Callao with 547 passengers on board; having left China with 739 emigrants, this gave a mortality rate of 26 percent for the passage. The Portuguese ship *Emigrante* lost 107 of her 499 passengers and the 1,562-ton Peruvian ship *America* that arrived on June 13 lost 105 of her 690 passengers.²⁹

On July 3, 1852, a particularly sad case concerning a British ship and Chinese emigrants was brought to the attention of the public, which will serve to illustrate just how bad things could be in this trade. In June 1852 the British ship *Lady Montague* arrived back in London after a voyage of nearly four years' duration. The Board of Trade was then advised that 274 people, principally Chinese emigrants bound for California, had died while on board this ship. The 760-ton vessel had left Southampton in May 1848, laden with coals for Aden, and under the command of Captain Wells. About six weeks later Captain Wells died, and the chief mate, Mr. Samuel Robinson Smith, assumed command of the vessel. After discharging the coal at Aden, Smith proceeded to Bombay, then to Canton, Amoy, and Shanghai, and continued trading backward and forward between those ports, eventually chartering the ship at Cumsingmoon to take Chinese emigrants to California via Callao. Why Smith should have chosen to take Chinese emigrants to North America via South America is not abundantly clear, unless he was trying to hide the true destination of the vessel from his passengers. It is worth noting that the statistics regarding ships that had been engaged in the Chinese emigrant trade, presented by Samuel Went to Chargé d'affaires Sullivan on September 21, 1854, clearly lists the *Lady Montague* and notes that she "had lost many men from sickness," all of which probably confirms that she was engaged in the Peruvian, rather than the Californian, emigrant trade.

However, she eventually sailed again on February 11, 1850, having on board, including passengers and crew, no less than 500 people. Within a few days of her departure, the crew and passengers began to go down with sickness and fever. The water and provisions that had been provided for the emigrants became putrid, a fact that was duly recorded in the log. Soon scores of men had died, and the suffering of the sick was almost beyond description. Many also committed suicide by jumping overboard, and by the time the ship put into Hobart Town, no fewer than 193 had perished. At Hobart the governor responded promptly by sending all the assistance that was possible to alleviate the suffering on the ship. By April

30, the medical officer, who had gone to the relief of the emigrants, succeeded in restoring those who survived to a better state of health, and the ship resumed her long voyage to Callao. Within days, however, the sickness broke out again, and before she reached her destination, nearly 100 others had died. The only letter that Mr Vaux, the owner of the ship, had received from Samuel Robinson Smith regarding this tragic voyage, reads as follows:

To John Vaux, Esq. Southampton.

Callao, July 13

Sir, I beg to advise of having arrived here on the 20th ult. I have had a most awful passage of it, dysentery and fever having broken out among the Chinese emigrants shortly after leaving China, which carried off 274 souls, including 26 of the ship's crew. Among the latter were poor Mr Brazier and the apprentice J. G. Paul. I had promoted Mr Brazier to second officer on leaving China, but, poor fellow, he had only one week of duty, ill all the passage, and died the night the ship got to Hobart Town. I was obliged to make for the nearest port to save the ship, the remainder of the crew, and passengers. I have also been attacked, and lay at death's door for a whole fortnight; but Divine Providence spared my life a little longer. The only person in the ship who has not been sick is the apprentice Huscroft. You may be sure I have had a dreadful time of it on the passage. For weeks and weeks I have had no more than four, five, and six men besides myself to navigate the ship. No officers neither, and in a high southerly latitude, with a cold stormy weather to contend with. Happily, through the blessing of Almighty God, I have arrived with the ship here safely. I was put in quarantine until the 9th at St. Lorenzo Island, allowed to go on shore on the island, and everything that was required was sent to us at Callao.

James R. Smith

The above was the sum total of all information that the Board of Trade had initially been able to obtain respecting this disastrous voyage. Only three out of a crew of thirty-six who went out with the *Lady Montague* eventually got back to the United Kingdom. Soon after receiving this note, however, the following letter from the owner of the ship was received by the board:

Sir, I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, of the 9th inst., respecting the number of deaths on board my ship, the *Lady Montague* on her voyage from Cumsingmoon to Callao. I regret to say I was unable to furnish any information beyond that already obtained by you from the log-book, or to give the number of passengers who originally embarked. My order to the captain who originally sailed in the *Lady Montague* was to bring her directly to England. He unfortunately died, and the com-

mand was assumed by the chief mate, James Robinson Smith, who, in disobedience to my orders and entirely contrary to my wishes, chartered her for a time at a fixed rate per month, to be employed [to] carry emigrants to Callao. The number taken on board was not communicated to me, but it was stated that the charterer and a surgeon sailed in the ship. I so strongly disapproved of his conduct that I despatched another captain to China, with a power of attorney to supplant him, which, on the return of the *Lady Montague* to China was done, and Smith returned as passenger in another ship. He is now in London, but I have not seen him. There has been no dispute between us, though I expect there will be.

Should I be able to throw any light upon this lamentable occurrence, I shall be most willing to do so.

I am, Sir, &c.,

To Mr T. H. Farrer

John Vaux³⁰

Soon after this trade had started, news about conditions in Peru, and other states Chinese emigrants were being taken to, clearly got back to China, and cases subsequently occurred of coolies deliberately attacking the crews or setting fire to their ships, obviously preferring death to slavery. A "memorial," compiled by a group of English master mariners addressed to the lords of the Privy Council of Trade, which was later published by the press, throws an interesting light on one of these incidents and also confirms previously mentioned disturbing reports about the Chincha Islands. First, the mariners made the point that Don Elias, as the main labor contractor, was the man responsible for the atrocities taking place on the islands. Then they drew their lordships' attention to the fact that, from time to time uprisings had taken place on board emigrant ships sailing from China to Callao. Reports also indicated that in one of these uprisings the brother of Don Elias was killed. Whether this story was true or not, it was being given by many as the reason for the cruelties taking place on the islands. If true, it was all the more reason why no more Chinese workers should be placed under the vindictive and brutal control of this man. Their account continued:

No sooner are they [the Chinese workers] landed from the ships than they see tall African Negroes placed over them as boatswains, armed with a lash of four plaits of cowhide, laid up in the form of what seamen call "round Sennet." Five feet in length, and an inch and a-half in diameter, tapering to a point, and such as we, who have never been in slave-countries without witnessing floggings, could not have thought could be applied to human beings without causing death, and can only compare to the Australian Stockwhip.

During the forenoons, except for regular offences [or such as the overseers please to term such] this instrument was not so much used, but

Relationship
to Af. (slaves)?

at, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, many of the weakest had not performed their task work, the boatswains [when the middle island, on which Chinese only were, was under the control of Kossuth] freely used it to start those behind to bring the day's supervision to a close. The slightest resistance was punished by a flogging little short of murder, as on many melancholy occasions we witnessed, being nearer than we desired. The first six to twelve cuts started the most agonising cries, that range through the fleet—cries that we heard day by day, but only then knew the full amount of suffering that called them forth. There was no tying up; the nearest Chinaman being compelled, by a cut of the lash, to lay hold of an arm or leg and stretch the miserable sufferer on his stomach on the guano. The mere weight alone of the lash made their bodies shake, blackening the flesh at every blow, besides cutting into it like a sabre, and when a convulsive movement took place, a subordinate placed his boot on the shoulders to keep the quivering body down; two dozen made them breathless, and when released after thirty-nine lashes, they seemed slowly to stagger over, reeled, and fell, and were carried off to the hospital—in most cases, if they recovered; committing suicide; for no human heart, unless elevated by Christian training, could, after undergoing so cruel an infliction, ever have more than two feelings, that is, death to those he suffered from, or death to himself. Accordingly, during our stay there many sprang over the cliffs, many buried themselves alive in the guano, and many hid themselves in the caves of the islands to starve to death, their dead bodies floating all around in numbers. In one instance, two, emboldened by pity shown them by a shipmaster, hid themselves on board his vessel, one of whom survives, and is now in this country. We hope this miserable fugitive may live to plead the cause of his countrymen, and that the almighty will retain him in the possession of his faculties, which so far as his appearance goes, we think impaired by the sufferings he has undergone.

The mariners then stated that all the American shipmasters at the Chinchas, from the southern as well as the northern states, declared that they had never seen slavery approaching that of the middle Chincha island. Only the good relations established between them and the American shipmasters stopped the latter, they felt, from taunting the English for engaging in slave traffic. It is also clear from this that the British felt that the Americans were primarily holding their nation responsible for events on the Chinchas, rather than Elias, Kossuth, and the Peruvian authorities. Sadly, this was substantially true because British ships at that point in time were most active in bringing these unfortunate emigrants across the Pacific. It would seem that one of the masters signing the memorial had, in fact, managed to act on a clause in the ship's charter that

enabled him to obtain permission to work with sailors on the main island. For just 1s. per ton, on top of their ship's wages, they had dug and wheeled down the guano until ordered off by the Peruvians. It was felt that this was done because this official was concerned that they would try to protect the Chinese on the middle island. However, the captains continued, "sailors were not allowed to land, for if they had they would certainly have interfered." The point was then made that while the ships lay for months waiting to be loaded by these brutally treated workers, hundreds of sailors were idle in their ships, who, if allowed to land, could have loaded their ships in a matter of days. However, even if the trade was not made free, the trifling addition of 1s. 6d. per ton would not be felt when guano was fetching £10 a ton. Surely, such a trifling addition would make digging guano a favorite pursuit of free laborers who would not have to be driven by brutal thugs, they argued.

The shipmasters objected strongly to British ships being allowed to take emigrants from China to Peru. In their penultimate paragraph the signatories urged their lordships to take steps to ensure that all future deportations of Chinese to Peru, Cuba, and other slaveholding countries were stopped without delay. "By means which your official wisdom will suggest to you, means of which, if we had the knowledge, it would be presumptuous on our part to point out to your official experience." The final paragraph of this notable document read:

We trust that your Lordships, after a hard day's labour, called for by the circumstances of war in which this country is placed, will not, when snatching a glance at your family circles, and the Christian blessings surrounding you, forget the claims the miserable Chinese have on your active sympathy; and that, amid the pressure of public business, while contributing to the discomfiture of a colossal and encroaching despotism, will you stretch out a merciful and helping hand to helpless and unresisting sufferers. That the God of mercies will direct your Lordships' most humble servants.

(Signed)

James Turnbull
 Frederick Acock
 John Henderson Smith
 John Coulter
 John Purdon
 John W. Symons
 Chas. Robertson
 William Caithness
 Edward Oager³¹

London, June 27, 1854

It is indeed gratifying to record that without a moment's delay or reservation, the "merciful and helping hand" *was* stretched out to those suffering on the Chincha Islands. In direct response, the British foreign secretary, Lord Clarendon, wrote to Chargé Sullivan at Lima, enclosing a copy of the sea captains' memorial and instructing him to take immediate action. Accordingly, on September 2, 1854, Sullivan wrote to the Peruvian minister, His Excellency Don José Luis Gomez Sanchez. Enclosed was a copy of the memorial advising him that Her Majesty's government had read this report and noted with disgust the details of the cruelties being practiced on the unfortunate Chinese laborers who were working under the authority of people responsible to the government of Peru. After diplomatically stating that he assumed the Peruvian government was ignorant of these revolting atrocities, he added that he hoped not a single day would be allowed to pass without the most stringent measures being taken to put an end to the atrocities, "the toleration of which would inflict indelible disgrace upon the Peruvian Government." On the sensitive issue of British ships being used to transport workers from China to Peru, Sullivan wrote:

Her Majesty's Government learn with deep regret that by British Agency and under the British flag these Chinese labourers have been brought to the Chincha Islands and placed in a state of slavery more horrible than any yet recorded; but this fact imposes an additional duty on Her Majesty's Government. Under any circumstances they would interfere in the defence of outraged humanity; but they are now specially called upon to protect these victims of brutal cupidity, and from that duty they will not shrink, if unfortunately the Peruvian Government should hesitate to perform the duty which in the first instance devolves upon them.³²

Sullivan continued by stating that he hoped the required orders would be issued, and that if this was done, a British officer would be permitted to accompany a Peruvian official to the islands, in order to verify the shipmasters' report. On reflection, though, it is clear that no atrocities would occur if and when such a delegation was actually on the islands making such "official" verification impossible. Apart from this fairly obvious consideration, Sullivan, speaking on behalf of the British government, continued by advising Minister Sanchez that instructions were also being sent to the Commander of Her Majesty's naval forces on the Pacific station, these unambiguous instructions calling on him to visit the Chincha Islands, "to ascertain the real state of things there, and at once to adopt such

measures for the protection of the Chinese and the punishment of the overseers and others as humanity and justice demands."

Sullivan's final paragraph opened on a friendly but firm note, stating that he was also instructed to point out how much the interests of the Peruvian government would actually be promoted by putting an end to such "misdeeds." He then concluded with a final commercial observation, for consideration by His Excellency, this being the inconvenience of ships being obliged to touch at Callao before proceeding to the Chinchas, which he was particularly requested to raise with the foreign secretary by the ships' captains.

Two days later Sullivan wrote to Samuel Went, the junior resident partner of William Gibbs & Company, at Lima, raising the issue and enclosing a copy of the memorial. In this note he pointed out to Went that the loading contract, formerly held by Elias, was now held by Messrs. Gibbs and Company. Accordingly, he requested a full report on the matter, adding, "You have the control over these Chinese labourers and it is for the honour of your House that the truth should be stated."³³ On the same day Went gave Sullivan the required assurance that the matter would be looked into with as little delay as possible.³⁴ On the 11th of the month, Sullivan wrote back to Clarendon. This advised him that matters were in hand and assured him that he had requested a full report from the House of William Gibbs. He also advised the foreign secretary that this firm had succeeded to the contract, formerly held by Don Dominigo Elias, for the shipping and loading of guano on the Chinchas, and that consequently the Chinese laborers were now principally under the direction of that British commercial house, but, he continued, "Both the Peruvian Minister and Mr Went do not deny that at the time when there was no Governor of the Chincha Islands, and when the contract was held by Don Domingo Elias the Chinese labourers employed in the digging of Huano were severely treated and the chief overseer of Don Domingo Elias, Mr Kossuth, was an individual of a cruel disposition, but he has been long ago dismissed."

Sullivan then advised the minister that Went had assured him that his first step, on carrying on the government contract taken from Elias, had been to ameliorate the condition of the Chinese laborers. These men, he claimed, were now being well fed, well treated, and not overworked, they were receiving their pay regularly, and if they chose to work extra hours, they received additional pay. Most importantly, Went had assured him that the best men among the Chinese workers had now been appointed overseers to their own country-

men.³⁵ Just ten days later, Went submitted his detailed report to Sullivan.

In this long document he began by making the point that the masters who signed the memorial had, with one exception, all completed their loading between November 25, 1853, and January 23, 1854. He then stated that his house only took up the contract on January 22, 1854, therefore they had no control over loading and labor prior to this date. While they felt the memorial was exaggerated, they had to admit the charges were not altogether unfounded, but they felt bound to state—for the honor of Don Domingo Elias—that any ill treatment of the Chinese could not have taken place with his knowledge, due to the fact that from the month of August 1853, because of his “overt disaffection” to the government of Peru, he was not able to visit the Chinchas. Due to these circumstances, things were left under the direct control of the respective overseers, and Kossuth, on the Middle Island, had abused his position, taken the law into his own hands, and badly treated the Chinese workers. He then confirmed that measures had promptly been put in hand to ensure that these men were properly treated. Steps, in fact, had been taken to allow some ships to load with their own labor, and he had obtained permission for vessels to leave direct from the islands but, rather surprisingly, only a small proportion had availed them of this facility.

On the crucial question of which ships were actually bringing the Chinese emigrants from their homeland to Peru, Went stated that he understood they had been transported across the Pacific by both English and Peruvian vessels. Unfortunately, though, he was not able to state in what proportion. However, as things stood, in September 1854, as far as he could ascertain, the vessels then employed in the trade were confined entirely to those under the Peruvian flag, but concluded by giving details of ships that had been employed to carry Chinese to Peru. The following is a memorandum of vessels that were employed to carry Chinese to Peru:

BRITISH FLAG

<i>Lady Montague</i>	Lost many men from sickness, No. landed not ascertained
<i>Marina</i>	Landed about 400 men
<i>Coromandel</i>	Landed about 400 men
<i>Nepal</i>	Landed about 500 men
<i>Susannah</i>	Landed about 325 men (Afterwards sold to a Peruvian)

<i>Amazon</i>	Embarked 250 men and landed safely 248
<i>Victory</i>	Did not arrive, the Chinese having mutinied and landed on the China Coast.

FRENCH FLAG

<i>Albert</i>	Chinese mutinied and relanded
<i>Manuelita</i>	Condemned at Manilla and Chinese landed there
<i>Chile</i>	Lost

AMERICAN FLAG

<i>Ohio</i>	Landed about 300 men
<i>Tague</i>	Number landed not ascertained

PERUVIAN FLAG

<i>Empressa</i>	Three voyages landing about 1000 men in the three trips.
<i>Isabel Quintana</i>	(Formerly the <i>Sussanah</i>) Two voyages landing about 325 men each time. ³⁶

On December 12, 1854, His Excellency, José Luis Gomez Sanchez at last replied to Chargé Sullivan's letter of September 2. First he advised him that as the mediation of the British legation in this matter could only be considered as a simple notice in favor of humanity, he would respond. He did, however, point out that his government was of the opinion that the allegations made by the shipmasters were completely wrong, and as they had linked this to observations on other commercial matters, their real motives had to be questioned. His government had, in fact, conducted its own inquiry into the matter, through General Charles Lagomarcino, the governor of the islands, from which it was absolutely clear there were no grounds whatsoever for the statements "respecting the supposed sufferings of the Chinese." The government had, however, given express orders that the Chinese should be treated with humanity, and they had, forthwith, doubled their wages. Sanchez closed by assuring Went that for the honor of their own administration, they were "interested in removing every imputation which could represent it as capable of permitting the execution of acts of cruelty upon any class of men, whatever may be their race or condition."³⁷

There can be no doubt that the removal of Elias led to a great improvement in conditions on the Chincha Islands. Nevertheless, in 1853, when he was in control, it is estimated that his crew of guano

diggers included about 600 Chinese coolies, 50 slaves, and about 200 Chileans or Peruvians, a large proportion of them being deserters from the army or convicts, although a small minority were free workers.³⁸ The terrible truth about Elias and Kossuth was, however, confirmed in a letter from Sullivan to Clarendon in July 1855. In this he noted that statements made by a Captain Kennedy, of the ship *India*, only went to prove that in the year 1853, when Domingo Elias had his contract and Kossuth was on the island, the Chinese were indeed badly treated. He was, however, pleased to be able to report that he had recently spoken to many shipmasters coming from the Chinchas, and the state of the Chinese laborers was then satisfactory.³⁹ A further letter from Sullivan to Clarendon, written two years later, would tend to verify a pattern of continuing improvement:

My Lord,

As Admiral Bruce had decided to send H.M.S. *Vixen* to the Chincha Islands, I availed myself of that opportunity to visit those huano deposits, and to ascertain the actual condition of the Chinese labourers, and I am happy to be able to report to your Lordship that whatever may have been formerly the ill treatment of the Chinese labourer, no such complaint can be made now. There are at present about four hundred Chinese under contract and about one hundred and fifty free labourers. The Chinese who are under contract are paid eight dollars a month, are well fed, lodged, and clothed. The free Chinese, that is to say, those whose contracts are ended, are paid according to their work, at the rate of two and a half reals a load of about eighteen hundred pounds of which they can with ease dig four a day and many of them dig six. Most of the Chinese have saved money and some of them are wealthy, they appear to be perfectly satisfied, and the Peruvian Government connive at the erection of a temple in which they can celebrate their religious rites.

(Lima 11th August 1857).⁴⁰

All this went some way to calming British concern about the treatment of the Chinese on the Chincha Islands, and as the number of independent reports itemizing brutalities fell away sharply after the removal of Elias and Kossuth, one must assume that this provided evidence of a genuine improvement. Indeed, as Mathew has pointed out, it actually made little economic sense to allow brutes like Kossuth to have men incapacitated through sadistic actions, for they were thus rendered incapable of working. As for remuneration, while one can be sure it was never as generous as Chargé Sullivan had suggested to Lord Clarendon in August 1857, there is evidence

that it did improve to an extent. "Free labourers were paid a higher wage than coolies, and were probably required to meet their own subsistence costs." These men earned six reals a day in 1853 for moving four tons of guano to the loading bays on top of the cliffs, and the men who did the dangerous and dirty job of loading into the shoots received double that amount. However, they earned it, for there was a constant danger of falling into these huge, open shoots: "It was accordingly, reserved for free labourers: a dead contract worker represented lost money."⁴¹

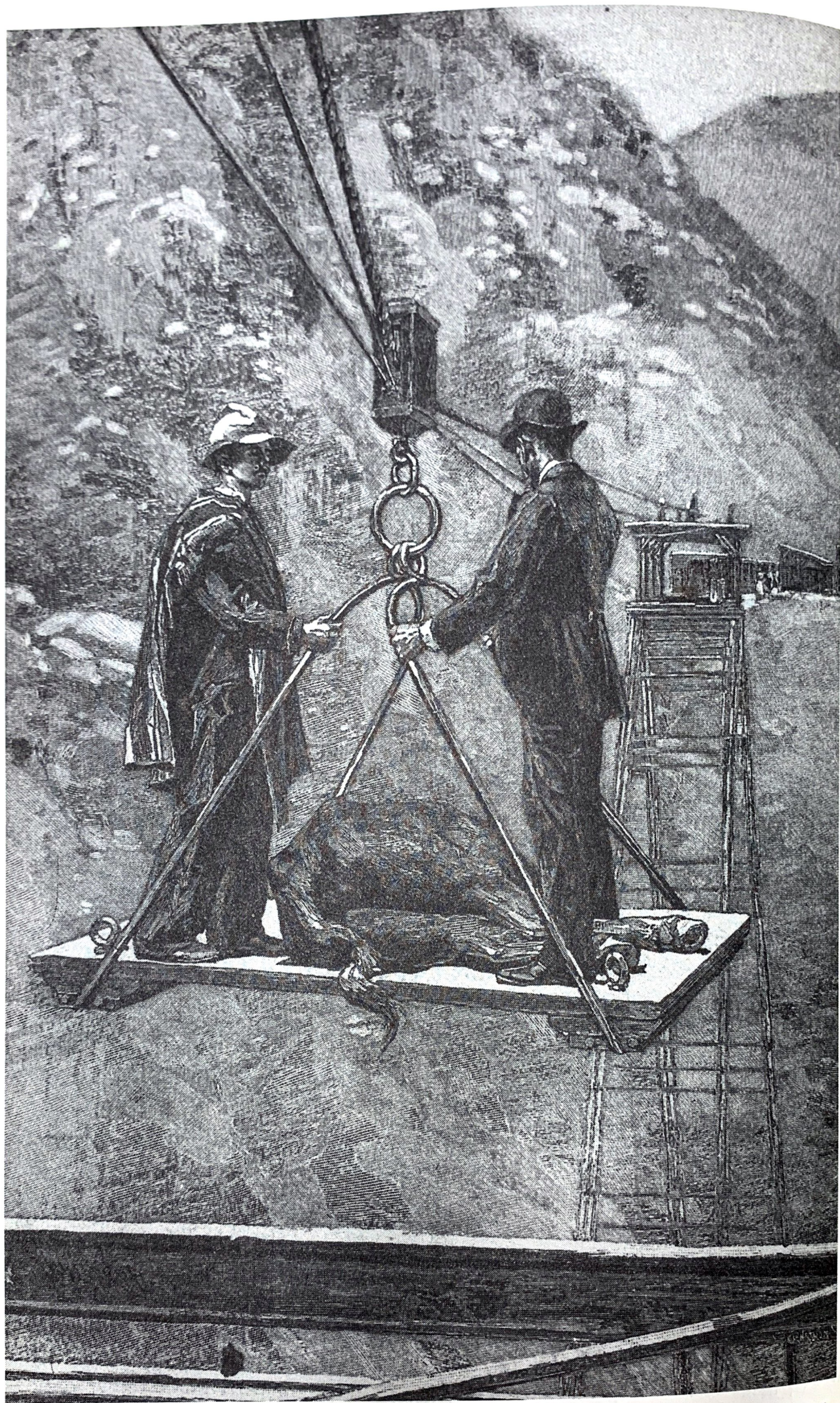
In all more than 100,000 Chinese laborers were taken to Peru between 1849 and 1873, in the main to work on the coastal cotton and sugar plantations, on railroad construction, and for guano digging on the Chincha Islands. Those who failed to abide by the disciplinary code of the hacendados were, on occasion, chained and shackled, to prevent escape, but this, we are confidently assured, was an extreme form of punishment only meted out to the most "chronic rebels."⁴² Mortality was high among these workers due in part from overcrowding on the ships and ill-treatment in Peru. Although, and in common with many European mariners taken to distant parts of the globe, many also succumbed to foreign ills to which neither Europeans or Chinese had any natural resistance. The worst recorded case of this nature was in 1870 and 1871 when the celebrated American railroad contractor, Henry Meiggs, was building the famous Oroya Railroad. Meiggs, in the main, employed Chilean and Chinese men on this and other projects. However, in the first two years of this particular project, 10,000 of these men are estimated to have died while this work was in progress, most of whom were victims of a fever that was said to be peculiar to the Rimac Valley.⁴³ It was actually soon after this catastrophe that the emigration from China to Peru was stopped. In fact, a temporary prohibition was placed on the coolie trade to the Chincha Islands on September 1, 1854, when the trade was being rated as an "aggravated form of slavery." However, this was withdrawn again on February 3, 1855, after the aforementioned measures had been taken for the better treatment of Chinese workers on the islands. All this, incidentally, conveniently coincided with an improvement in the Gibb's guano contracts, for in 1854 their monopoly trading area was extended by an additional contract that gave them the exclusive selling rights for Australia and the British West Indies.⁴⁴ One can assume, therefore, that they in particular, as the main export agents, had a vested interest in seeing labor relations put on a better footing.

At about the same time new regulations concerning the diet and provisions of Chinese passengers in emigrant ships were made (March 7, 1855). While Hong Kong continued to be the main port of embarkation from which all south China emigrants, able to pay their passage, embarked for various foreign countries at this time, Macau was soon the main port of embarkation for the coolie trade to Peru because regulations there were less stringent. The existence in March 1857 of closed coolie barracoons in Hong Kong came as a shock to the authorities and was soon put down by the order of the governor, Sir John Bowring.⁴⁵

In 1867 opposition to the coolie trade at Hong Kong was led by Sir John Smale, the chief justice of the colony, and James Whittall who, in June of that year, wrote a memorial on the subject to the governor, Sir Richard Graves MacDonald. They felt constrained to loudly condemn the trade; it was so inherently bad and so dependent on crime for its very existence that they felt it should be stopped without delay. It was, they were convinced, little more than a modern form of slavery. Their thoughts on the trade were neatly encapsulated in just one paragraph of their long letter:

We do not require to relate in detail to your Excellency the grounds which lead us to thus strongly depreciate what is commonly known as the "Coolie Emigration" and to pray that any promotion of it, within colonial waters, at least, may be made illegal. You are well aware that all assertion and evidence, so called, to the contrary notwithstanding, few Chinese peasants enter into contracts for service or labour abroad, possessed of any clear, intelligent sense of what they are doing. Too often the miserable wretches are doomed by this dreadful traffic to a lifetime of exile and slavery. (For although the trade has now existed for years, few, if any, of its victims have returned to China) are torn by violence from their friends and homes, or have been obtained by means of deception and misrepresentation; it being notorious to all persons acquainted with Chinese character, and manner of thought, that none of these people would consent to quit their native land, did they thoroughly understand the nature of the lives, which even in the most favourable localities, say the British and Dutch West Indian Colonies and the Hawaiian Islands, lie before them.

The governor promptly sent the memorial to the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. A reply, directly to Smale and Whittall from the colonial secretary's office in London, made the point, among many others, that they were asking the governor of Hong Kong to



7. The Oroya Railroad, crossing the Verrugas Bridge. *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (European Ed.) December 1890.

repeal an act of the imperial Parliament, which he obviously had no power to do. Although they had made the point that abuses were then taking place, primarily at Macao, this in itself was not grounds for stopping emigration of all contract labor from the colony. Also, it was felt many Chinese emigrants were fully aware of the nature of the work that they were contracting to undertake. Interestingly, paragraph 13 and 14 of this detailed reply read:

13. It would also appear to have escaped your attention, that to close this port to all Chinese emigration would be running counter not merely to Imperial legislation, but apparently to the action and wishes of the Chinese Government, which, in the Convention made at Peking last year with the British and French Ministers has shown its willingness to promote emigration on sufficient guarantees being given for the moral and physical well-being of the emigrants.

14. In a dispatch of Prince Kung dated 15th March, last year, whilst declaring that the emigration from Macao is wholly unauthorised by the Chinese Government, his Highness renders a just tribute to former benevolent efforts of the British Government to promote the welfare of the labourer, and expressly notifies Chinese sanction of coolie emigration, even to countries with which China has no treaty relations, if Great Britain could pay proper attention to the coolies sent there.⁴⁷

Unfortunately there is invariably a large gap between agreements entered into by governments and those responsible for implementing them. Making regulations, and actually making sure they are enforced, are two different matters. Nevertheless, during the winter of 1865–66, the British and French ministers in Peking had conferred with Prince Kung, head of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs who, it was clear, was as opposed to the malpractices of the coolie traffic as were the foreign envoys themselves. Elaborate and specific regulations for the protection of the emigrants, whether free or contract, were then put down. In the case of the latter type the specifications of the contract were prescribed, including, among other things, the hours of work, the number of working days a year, the length of the contract, provision for illness, and the return of the laborer to China. Prince Kung also made three declarations, the most significant of which was the second, which, by a law of the Chinese Empire, was to punish by death those who, by fraud or force, kidnapped Chinese subjects for the purpose of sending them abroad against their will.⁴⁸

Sadly, though, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that a large percentage of Chinese emigrant workers continued to be taken abroad against their will, or at best were duped into signing bogus contracts. This inevitably led to mutinies on the ships, when the men suddenly realized what was happening to them, and often soon after sailing. The merest hint of such an outbreak would result in captains keeping passengers belowdecks to prevent the crews being killed. Unfortunately, the 9,000-mile passage across the Pacific from Macao to Callao often took four or five months. Thus, with hatches battened down and ports closed due to bad weather, or concern that the emigrants would attack the crew, life on the unventilated emigrant decks in the humid tropical heat soon become intolerable. It was under these conditions that they rapidly fell prey to fever, dysentery, and other diseases. Even when the ships were first class and the food was adequate, these Chinese emigrants had to endure a grueling voyage. Unlike European emigrants, though, they invariably faced a grim existence when they arrived at their destination, particularly if it was Peru.

According to Markham, between 1850 and 1853, 2,516 coolies landed in Peru, and from 1860 to 1872, the number increased to 80,458. Agents and brokers, for enlisting coolies, Markham conceded, set up business in Macao, and there was much kidnapping, overcrowding, and ill-treatment. Nevertheless, he was convinced that "these evils have been grossly exaggerated." According to Markham the ships taking coolies from Macao to Callao could be divided into two classes: those belonging to the emigration companies established at Lima and those that were chartered. The first class consisted of large well-found ships, with 6' 6" between decks and sufficient space for each emigrant. These ships, he was confident, were well ventilated, and there was provision for medical attendance. He continued:

The *Isabel*, *America*, *Camilo*, *Cavourr*, *Fray Rentos* and *Rossalla* are good of their class; and Messrs Samuda have recently built a steamer on purpose for this traffic, in which hygiene and ventilation have been especially studied. The rations for the Coolies are sufficient, and include rice, frijoles, preserved vegetables, and fish, tea, and tobacco. The vessels of the second class, which are generally French, and are hired for the voyage, are not so good, and it is on board these that the abuses and cases of neglect, which have been so much talked of, and so seldom proved, have occurred, or are alleged to have occurred.⁴⁹

The uprisings on the emigrant ships were explained by some as being due not to poor provisions, but more to the fact that such a

large percentage of these Chinese workers had been deceived or kidnapped to get them on board.⁵⁰ The coolies were, in many cases, so determined to avoid going to Peru—or for that matter other destinations—where they felt they faced a grim future, that they set fire to or scuttled their respective ships. To illustrate this, such an event happened on one of the largest sailing ships owned in New York, this being the *Norway*, which, in 1859, took on board at Macao 1,000 coolies for Havannah.⁵¹ Unfortunately, this practice continued, for during the year 1870, the author, Thomas J. Hutchinson, then serving as British consul-general in Peru, recorded that during that year a few dreadful cases of burning of ships had occurred, when bringing Chinese coolies to Callao.⁵² In an editorial that appeared in the Peruvian newspaper *El Comercio* on July 25, 1871, it was stated that ships with more than 3,000 coolies on board had been scuttled, burned, or in other manners destroyed. In other cases the ships were taken over by the Chinese, and often with great loss of life. This allegation was made while making reference to a particular case, that of the ship *Nouvelle Penelope*. In the same article mention was also made of the case of the Chinese emigrant ship *Maria Luz*.⁵³

The case of the *Maria Luz* is particularly interesting. She was a Peruvian vessel of 600 tons, commanded by Captain Herrera. She sailed from Macao with 225 emigrants on board and put into the Japanese port of Yokohama from stress of weather in July 1872. It appears that during the night of July 13, one of the emigrants swam across to the man-of-war *Iron Duke* and asked the captain for help because the emigrants were being badly treated. This was promptly brought to the attention of the Japanese authorities, the result being that Captain Herrera was tried and sentenced to receive 100 lashes. A pardon was subsequently granted, but all the emigrants were taken out of the ship, and the owners were subjected to heavy losses. This was all brought to the attention of the Peruvian government, and the president, Don Manuel Pardo, resolved to dispatch an envoy to Japan to demand reparations for the "outrage," and at the same time to establish treaty relations with Japan and China.

After reaching an agreement with the Japanese about the *Maria Luz* affair, which was based on putting the case to independent arbitration, a treaty of commerce and friendship was drawn up between the two nations, which was signed on August 21, 1873. The Peruvian envoy, Senor Garcia y Garcia, then proceeded to China, reaching Tientsin on October 31, 1873, where he opened negotiations

with Prince Kung. Because of reports (which Markham, characteristically, considered either false or exaggerated) about the condition of their compatriots in Peru, namely, that they were being insulted, overworked, and ill-used, and the emigrant ships taking them out were overcrowded and ill-found, the Chinese were in a hostile mood. The first Chinese dispatch concluded with a demand that all the Chinese emigrants should be returned to China forthwith. However, after it was pointed out that this was impractical, and that many regulations had been introduced for the protection of the emigrants, a treaty was eventually signed between the two nations, this being on June 26, 1874. As part of the deal it was also agreed that a Chinese commission could visit Peru in order to inspect and report on the conditions and prospects of the Chinese emigrants.⁵⁴

Prior to these developments in 1871 Senor Palacios, captain of the port of Callao, provided Hutchinson with the following immigration statistics, to which some reference has already been made. The data throws much light on the total scale of this emigration. It will be noted, however, that for obvious reasons, the Peruvian official based at Callao, who was responsible for recording the arrival and departure of vessels, would not be in a position to include details of emigrant ships that had left Macao bound for Callao but failed to arrive! The inclusion of all the many China-Peru emigrant ships lost due to mutinies (and shipwreck) would clearly paint a very different statistical picture. Nevertheless, the information provided from this source is disturbing enough:

Immigration of Chinese to Callao

Year	Arrived	Sailed from Macao	Deaths on Passage
1860	1,413	2,007	594
1861	1,440	1,860	420
1862	1,003	1716	713
1863	1,628	2,301	673
1864	6,410	7,010	600
1865	4,540	4,794	254
1866	5,929	6,543	614
1867	2,184	2,400	216
1868	4,266	4,387	121
1869	2,291	2,366	075
1870	7,544	7,917	373
Totals	38,648	43,301	4,653

Immigration of Chinese into Callao from January 1, to October 3, 1872

Arrived at Callao	Nationality of Ship	Name of Ship	Tons	Embarked in China	Died on voyage
January 20	French	<i>Mille Jonnes</i>	735	432	39
January 21	Peruvian	<i>Hong Kong</i>	458	314	8
January 24	Peruvian	<i>Providencia</i>	574	416	5
February 12	Peruvian	<i>Peru</i>	570	400	10
February 12	Peruvian	<i>Callao</i>	1,049	629	19
March 24	Peruvian	<i>Lola</i>	890	592	04
April 12	Peruvian	<i>Fray Bentos</i>	410	375	6
April 24	Portuguese	<i>Cecilia</i>	533	380	8
April 25	Peruvian	<i>Clotilde</i>	1,314	760	9
May 16	Dutch	<i>Johan den Villen</i>	494	260	13
May 17	Peruvian	<i>Lama Canevaro</i>	1,043	739	192
June 11	Portuguese	<i>Emigrante</i>	965	499	107
June 12	Peruvian	<i>Rosalin</i>	816	457	64
June 13	Peruvian	<i>America</i>	1,562	690	105
June 30	French	<i>Antares</i>	401	263	82
August 31	Peruvian	<i>Camilo Cavour</i>	854	650	57
Sept. 10	Peruvian	<i>Sara</i>	638	346	23
Sept. 12	Peruvian	<i>Hong Kong</i>	458	314	37
Sept. 16	French	<i>Canadienne</i>	853	507	19
Sept. 19	Peruvian	<i>J. Righam</i>	337	193	7
Sept. 22	Peruvian	<i>Callao</i>	1,049	695	10
Sept. 22	Peruvian	<i>Providencia</i>	574	422	10
Sept. 27	Peruvian	<i>Peru</i>	570	406	34
Sept. 28	Dutch	<i>Inrust</i>	836	453	45
Sept. 29	French	<i>Radama</i>	487	305	4
October 3	Peruvian	<i>Macao</i>	603	436	39 ⁵⁵

As part of the China-Peru Treaty of 1874 it was agreed that if cases should be found of ill-treatment of Chinese immigrants, whose contracts had not expired, these could be put to local tribunals for consideration and even carried to higher courts of justice for further investigation. Cases with immigrants whose contracts had expired were dealt with under a separate clause; namely, where there had been a stipulation that the employer should send them back to China, the Peruvian government agreed to compel the employers to comply with their contract. In similar cases, where there had been no return stipulation, the Peruvian government promised to "cause them to be repatriated gratuitously in the ships which leave Peru for

China." With the ratification of this treaty, to which this special agreement was appended on August 7, 1875, the worst abuses of the unregulated Chinese contract labor came to an end.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, what percentage of all these Chinese emigrant workers ever got back to China, under these improved provisions, still remains decidedly unclear.