

## Britain, China, and Colonial Australia

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### Abstrak

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the British empire was confronted by two great Chinese questions. The first of these questions (often known as the Far Eastern question to contemporaries) related specifically to the maintenance of British interests on the China coast and the broader implications for British foreign policy in East Asia. While safeguarding British interests in the Far East presented British policymakers with a range of significant challenges, as they wrestled with this first Chinese question, another kept knocking at the door. Since the eighteenth century, when plans for the establishment of a British colony at New South Wales had begun to materialize, Australias potential relations with China had attracted considerable interest. During the first sixty years of European settlement, China retained a prominent place in both metropolitan and colonial schemes for the development of British Australia. From the 1850s, however, when large numbers of Cantonese miners travelled to the Pacific gold rushes, these earlier visions began to appear hopelessly naive. By the late 1880s the coming of the Chinese to Australia, and the reaction to their arrival, had developed into one of the most difficult issues within British imperial affairs. This book sets out to tell that story. Reaching back to the arrival of the British in the 1780s, it explores the early history of Australian engagement with China and traces the development of colonial Australia into an important point of contact between the British and Chinese empires.