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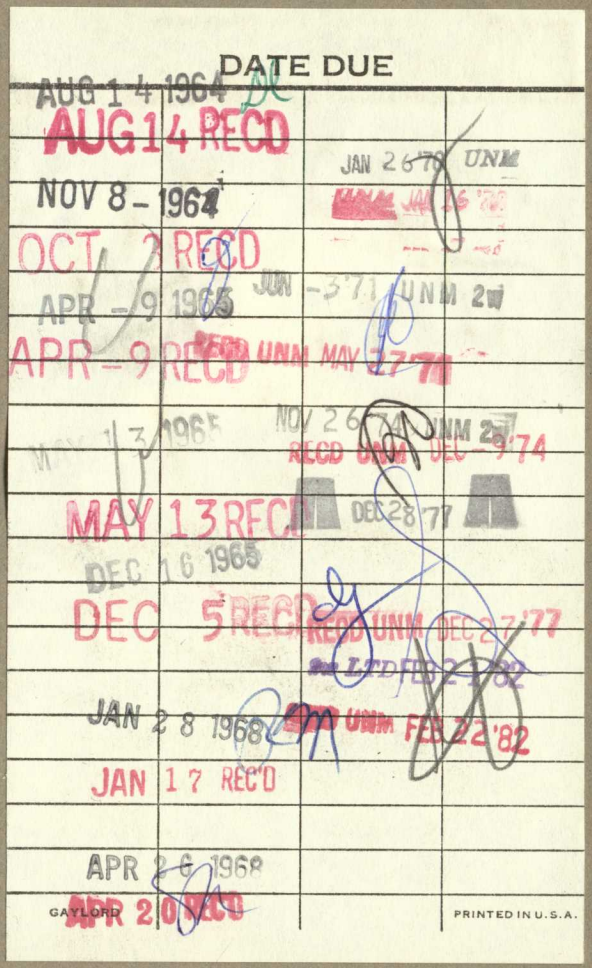
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ASPECTS OF
MARK TWAIN AS A SOCIAL CRITIC

By

Thomas A. Erhard

A Thesis

In partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in English

The University of New Mexico
1949

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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ASPECT OF
MARK TWAIN AS A SOCIAL CRITIC

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INTRODUCTTION

Mark Twain criticism has undergone several phases since 1900. At first Twain was considered merely a funny man, a genial humorist. Graduallly, however, scholars saw, or professed to see, a more serrious purpose and deeper thought in Twain's works. Then for several years after 1920 the influence of Van Wyck Brooks led critics to believe Twain a repressed social satirist. In 1932 Bernard DeVoto exploded much of the Brooobksian school of thought, and since then criticism has wavvered between the Brooks theory of frustrated satire and the DeVoto idea of tragic laughter. A look first at the ddevelopment of critical attitudes toward Twain and second at the record itself--the writings and life of Mark Twain----should help to establish Mark Twain's social attitudes.

It is the purpose of thiss study (1) to look at a representative sampling of Mark Twain criticism and see to what extent Twain was considdered a social satirist, (2) to look at Twain's own works anddl determine whether or not he was a social critic, (3) to sseee how far he carried his social criticism, and (4) to nottte the purposes for which his social criticism was employeed. The latter part of the study has been broken up into seeveral broad phases of Mark Twain's contemporary scene whichh might have been expected

to provoke his criticism: War, Westward Expansion and Imperialism, Monarchy and Progress, Big Business and Speculation, Minority Groups, and Politics and Corruption.

Humor has been interpreted as a quality that appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous--the use of laughter chiefly for its own sake.

Social criticism is an evaluation of contemporary mores and movements, involving the approval or disapproval of current moral, political, sociological, and economic trends.

We understand satire as a combination of humor and social criticism used in literature in order to expose vice or folly. Satire can be of two sorts: constructive or destructive. The former attempts to improve society, whereas the latter merely stands aside, laughs scornfully, and though diverting the reader, achieves no worthy purpose.

Originally designed to be a study of Mark Twain's literary treatment of Negro slavery, this thesis grew into its present form during a series of illuminating conferences with Dr. Lucy Lockwood Hazard. Without her invaluable guidance and remarkable patience this study would never have attained completion. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Dane F. Smith, Dr. Thomas M. Pearce, and Dr. Norton B. Crowell, all of whom offered discerning suggestions.

The University of New Mexico Library Staff have courteously made all their facilities available, and the University of California Library Staff gave kind permission for the writer to do research at Berkeley. Mrs. Marion F. Branch, of Austin, and Mr. Robert J. Erhard, of Baltimore, were extremely helpful in furnishing materials from the libraries at the University of Texas and Johns Hopkins University.

CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT OFF MARK TWAIN CRITICISM

An exhaustive studdy of Mark Twain criticism would, in itself, constitute a ccomplete thesis. A representative sampling of critical attiitudes in the three major periods of Twain scholarship, howwever, is necessary as background to the presentation of sppecific data revealing Mark Twain's social attitudes. This ssampling covers the years before Van Wyck Brooks' Ordeal cof Mark Twain, the decade dominated by the influence of Brookks' work, and the period since Bernard DeVoto's Mark Twaain's America.

I. BEFORE THEE ORDEAL OF MARK TWAIN

Many of the early opinions about Mark Twain came from his close friends. While interesting, these comments often must be somewhat diiscounted. The comment of Bret Harte, who knew Twain in San Francisco, is extremely interesting, because at an early date Harte saw traces of social satire in Twain. Harte wrote the following for the Springfield, Massachusettts, Daily Republican in 1866:

> His humor has more mcotive than that of Artemus Ward; he is something of a satirist, although his satire is not always subtle or refined. He has shrewdness and

> a certain hearty abhorence [sic] of shams which will make his faculty serviceable to mankind.[1]

Joel Chandler Harris saw more than a simple fun-making quality in Twain, for he felt that in Twain's works ". . . we are taught the lesson of honesty, justice, and mercy."[2] In an article in 1896 Twain's close friend, Joseph Twichell, called him a generally genial person, although at times capable of working up a good "hate" toward something or someone.[3] Mrs. James T. Fields, in her diary, recalled that Twain raged vehemently in private at voting abuses in 1876, and was thoroughly ashamed of his country.[4] Another close friend, William Dean Howells, who published My Mark Twain in 1910, placed Twain on the side of labor and the common people. Howells also considered Twain a great humanitarian in addition to being a successful funny man:

> He never went so far in socialism as I have gone, if

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[1]George R. Stewart, "Bret Harte Upon Mark Twain in 1866," American Literature, XIII (November, 1941), 263-64.

[2]Percy H. Boynton, A History of American Literature (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1919), p. 426.

[3]Joseph Twichell, "Mark Twain," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XI (May, 1896), 826.

[4]M. A. DeWolfe Howe, "Bret Harte and Mark Twain in the Seventies--Passages from the Diaries of Mrs. James T. Fields," Atlantic Monthly, CXXX (September, 1922), 347. One of the more interesting items in this diary stated that Twain's married life was not completely happy, and that his whole life was one long apology to Olivia Clemens (p. 348). This is extremely interesting in light of later criticism by Van Wyck Brooks, because most of Twain's personal friends thought him happily married.

> he went that way at all, but he was fascinated with Looking Backward and had Bellamy to visit him; and from the first he had a luminous vision of organized labor as the only present help for working-men. He would show that side with such clearness and such force that you could not say anything in hopeful contradiction; he saw with that relentless insight of his that in the Unions was the workingman's only present hope of standing up like a man against money and the power of it. There was a time when I was afraid that his eyes were a little holden from the truth; but in the very last talk I heard from him I found that I was wrong, and that this great humorist was as great a humanist as ever.[5]

When we pass from the affectionate tributes of Twain's friends to the impartial estimates in early periodicals, we find two general attitudes. The first group of critics considered Twain merely a humorist, while a second group saw that Twain, despite his reputation as a funny-man, had a serious side.

In the group who considered Twain simply as a humorist, an anonymous critic, in 1901, said that "Mark Twain is first and last and all the time, so far as he is anything, a humorist and nothing more."[6] The critic then observed that even Twain's humor was becoming stale, and that in a hundred years only "The Jumping Frog" would be remembered.[7]

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[5]W. D. Howells, My Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1910), p. 44.

[6]"Chronicle and Comment," The Bookman, XII (January, 1901), 442.

[7]Loc cit.

anonymous critic saw some reforming spirit in Twain, but chiefly considered him a great humorist.[8] Although in 1893 Frank R. Stockton said, "Mark Twain's most notable characteristic is courage. Few other men--even if the other men could think of such things--would dare to say the things that Mark Twain says,"[9] Stockton ultimately concluded that Twain's greatest achievement was in the field of humor,[10] and that he was ". . . the Bismarck of humorists."[11] Another early periodical article was by Howells, who reviewed A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.[12] Howells praised the work, and saw some social criticism therein, for he said, '". . . our civilization of to-day sees itself mirrored in the cruel barbarism of the past. . . ."[13] His final decision, however, was that the book was noteworthy first of all for its humor.[14] Thus one group of

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[8]"This Week," Nation, XC (June, 1940), 645-6.

[9]Frank R. Stockton, "Mark Twain and His Recent Works," Forum, XV (August, 1893), 673.

[10]Ibid., p. 677.

[11]Ibid., p. 679.

[12]William Dean Howells, "Editor's Study," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXXX (January, 1890), 319-21.

[13]Ibid., p. 320.

[14]Ibid., p. 321.

reviewers thought Twain largely a humorist, although the group was divided on the evaluation of this humor.

The second portion of early periodical criticism has considerable significance because there has been a prevalent idea that no one saw a serious side to Twain before Van Wyck Brooks in 1920.[15] Actually several critics saw this seriousness, although they did not probe deeply into the question. Laurence Hutton, in a review of Joan of Arc in 1896, said Twain had a serious purpose not known to many readers.[16] In addition, an anonymous English critic, reviewing A Connecticut Yankee in 1890, said, "It is not a novel; it is a ponderous political pamphlet. . . ."[17] He then spoke of Henry George and Edward Bellamy, and their influences on the social-democratic movement in England, and added, "Mark Twain's book is a third contribution in the same direction."[18] In 1910 another anonymous critic

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[15]Another type of early Mark Twain criticism has been pointed out by Arthur Lawrence Vogelback, in "The Publication and Reception of Huckleberry Finn in America," American Literature, XII (November, 1939), 260-72. There had been considerable criticism of Twain, but chiefly on moral, not social grounds.

[16]Laurence Hutton, "Literary Notes," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCIII (June, 1896), 1.

[17]"Mark Twain's New Book, A Satirical Attack on English Institutions," The Review of Reviews, I (February, 1890), 144.

[18]Loc cit.

said, "Mark Twain had always the spirit of the reformer."[19] The writer said George Bernard Shaw considered Twain more of a sociologist than a humorist, and quoted Shaw: "Mark Twain is in much the same position as myself: he has to put matters in such a way as to make people who would otherwise hang him believe he is joking."[20] The anonymous author then concluded by mentioning how readers have misunderstood Twain:

> They (the people) could understand his swift sorties into literary criticism . . . but they were never quite at home with his savage denunciation of the American policy in the Philippines, of looting missionaries in China, of Leopold's cruelties in the Congo, of Russian barbarities and atrocities. Yet Mark Twain's attitude toward life was nowhere more clearly revealed than in just such indictments. . . .[21]

The attitudes of early literary historians toward Mark Twain can also be divided into two major groups. The first, and larger group, thought Twain a humorist and nothing more. These critics were often unimpressed by his humor. The second group saw traces of satire and social criticism in Twain's writings, but failed to develop this interpretation to any marked degree.

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[19] "Mark Twain as a Serious Force in Literature," Current Literature, XLVIII (June, 1910), 666.

[20] Ibid., p. 663.

[21] Ibid., p. 666.

In group one Mildred Cabell Watkins treated Twain cursorily in 1894,[22] amd Huckleberry Finn was not mentioned. It is interesting to note here that although Leon H. Vincent in 1906,[23] and John Erskine in 1910,[24] devoted sections of their literary histories to George Bancroft, John Lothrop Motley, Donald Grant Mitchell, William Gilmore Simms, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Francis Brett Harte, neither one even mentioned Mark Twain. In 1895 Henry A. Beers considdered Twain a poor humorist, and nothing else.[25] He said Twain was ". . . a western newspaper reporter without any historic imagination."[26] In 1898 Henry S. Pancoast also wrote that Twain was merely a not-so-funny humorist.[27]

There were also those in group one who appreciated Twain's humor. In 1912 William Peterfield Trent and John Erskine (who had ignored Twain two years earlier) considered Twain not only a fine humorist, but also a great and

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[22]Mildred Cabell Watkins, American Literature (New York: American Book Company, 1894), pp. 204-5.

[23]Leon H. Vincent, American Literary Masters (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906), 518 pp.

[24]John Erskine, Leading American Novelists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910), 301 pp.

[25]Henry A. Beers, Initial Studies in American Literature (Meadville, Pennsylvania: The Chautauqua-Century Press, 1895), pp. 196-202.

[26]Ibid., p. 202.

[27]Henry S. Pancoast, An Introduction to American Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1898), p. 330.

skilled literary novelist."[28] They thought Twain could have become an excellent critic of the expanding West, had he attempted the task.[29] This is noteworthy as one of the earliest suggestions that Twain did not entirely live up to his potentialities.

In 1912 William Lyon Phelps also called Twain a fine literary artist; although he said nothing about his social criticism, he did point out that Twain was a great democrat who believed in the sacredness of individual rights.[30] He also said, "Mark Twain believes in the Present, in human progress,"[31] an implication, perhaps, that Twain was more a participant than a spectator in the Gilded Age.

No chapter dealing with those men who wrote about Twain would be complete without at least a brief mention of the official biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine. His work, Mark Twain, A Biography, appeared in 1912. Although Paine presented facts in great abundance, he rarely interpreted them. The book, therefore, was not a critical study, but is still valuable because of its tremendous detail.

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[28] William Peterfield Trent and John Erskine, Great American Writers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1912), pp. 231-50.

[29] Ibid., p. 236.

[30] William Lyon Phelps, Essays on Modern Novelists (New York: The Macmillam Company, 1912), p. 102.

[31] Ibid., p. 103.

The second group of early critics saw traces of satire in Twain. In 1909 William Edward Simonds stressed Twain as a humorist, but he did say, "Mr. Clemens was the author also of numerous short stories distinquished by their originality, rather in the vein of the satirist than in that of the mere humorist."[32] Reuben Post Halleck went even farther, when in 1911 he spoke of "Mark Twain, philosopher, reformer of the type of Cervantes, and romantic historian. . . ."[33] He said, "While his humor is sometimes mechanical, coarse, and forced, we must not forget that it also often reveals the thoughtful philosopher."[34] Halleck's prediction of Twain's future niche was not entirely correct, but it does exemplify the changing attitude toward him: "Mark Twain's future place in literature will probably be due less to humor than to his ability as a philosopher and a historian."[35]

In 1913 appeared the first penetrating study of Mark Twain when John Macy devoted thirty pages to Clemens in

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[32]William Edward Simonds, A Student's History of American Literature (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), p. 309.

[33]Reuben Post Halleck, History of American Literature (New York: American Book Company, 1911), p. 364.

[34]Ibid., p. 362.

[35]Loc. cit.

his Spirit of American Literature.[36] He was the first writer to make a detailed critical study of Twain. Like many other early critics, Macy had several arguments not wholly acceptable today, but generally his theories were valid and important because he tried to think for himself and present the truth. Part of Macy's importance is his excellent re-evaluation of American writers who had been glossed over by the critics. According to Macy, Twain was a satirist, ". . . a preacher in cap and bells . . ."[37] who ". . . hated the lords of the earth."[38] A ". . . powerful, original thinker,"[39] he "". . . looked on the world with a serious, candid and penetrating eye, analyzing the human fool, affectionately tolerant of his folly except when it is mixed with meanness and cruelty."[40] Macy continued, "Americans, complaisant and sentimental, do not yet know the power of Mark Twain's Swiftian attacks on our flimsy-minded patriotism and religiosity."[41] Macy said the medieval Englishmen in A Connecticut Yankee were modern

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[36]John Macy, The Spirit of American Literature (New York: The Modern Library, 1913), pp. 248-77.

[37]Ibid., p. 248.

[38]Ibid., p. 263.

[39]Ibid., p. 249.

[40]Ibid., p. 253.

[41]Ibid., p. 269.

Americans, and through these characters much social criticism had been expressed.[42] Despite this increased awareness of social satire in Twain, which Macy pointed out again when he spoke of Roughing It as an important social study,[43] Macy discerningly considered Twain more a social historian than a social critic,[44] and said, "For his philosophy most readers properly care nothing. They care for his portrait of Mankind. And that is the greatest canvas that any American has painted."[45] Although Macy's criticism of Twain was not complete and final, he did probe more deeply than the earlier critics, and helped bring about a new spirit in American literary criticism.

Between 1913 and 1920, the period between Macy and Van Wyck Brooks, Twain criticism retained its duality. Some critics persisted in listing Twain among the clowns, whereas others saw his more serious side.

In the first group Roy Bennett Pace called Twain a genial humorist and an idyllic prose writer,[46] while Leon Kellner thought him ". . . the king of humorists,"[47] and

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[42] Ibid., p. 263.

[43] Ibid., p. 256.

[44] Loc. cit.

[45] Ibid., p. 275.

[46] Roy Bennett Pace, American Literature (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1926), p. 262. First published in 1915.

[47] Leon Kellner, American Literature, Julia Franklin, translator (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1915), p. 209.

". . . a merry andrew . . . ."[48] Walter C. Bronson said Twain's non-western works contained some satire in which the thinking was shallow,[49] but thought Twain's great achievement was the depiction of the American West:

> These books constitute his distinctive contribution to literature. He himself would have scornfully rejected this view, for he prided himself most on his ability as a satirist and radical philosopher; but the verdict of time will be that he could see and describe far better than he could think, and that even his humor is less valuable than his work as a painter of American life in the Mississippi Valley in days that have passed away forever.[50]

Stuart P. Sherman was, to a certain extent, in both groups. He called Twain one of the "divine average,"[51] and added, ". . . nothing is holier to him than a joke."[52] Sherman, however, did see some seriousness in Twain, and emphasized his democratic spirit by saying, ". . . he was of the

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[48] Ibid., p. 201.

[49] Walter C. Bronson, A Short History of American Literature (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1919), p. 290.

[50] Loc cit.

[51] Stuart P. Sherman, On Contemporary Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1917), p. 36.

[52] Ibid., p. 37.

people and for the people at all times."[53]

Three writers, Percy Boynton, Edith Wyatt, and Waldo Frank fall into the second group who saw a more serious Mark Twain. Boynton thought Twain a satirist who ". . . upheld the simple virtues . . ."[54] and compared him with his own creation, Colonel Sellers.[55] Boynton believed Twain's thinking was dual in nature, combining some originality with some echoes of the spirit of the times.[56] In 1917 Edith Wyatt, shifting from the more common critical attitudes, called Twain a great social critic, and said his criticisms were numerous, far-sighted, penetrating, and courageous.[57]

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[53] Ibid., p. 41. Sherman, in his article on Twain in the Cambridge History of American Literature (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), III, 1-20, brought out even more emphatically this idea of Twain's democratic spirit. He thought (p. 2) Twain incarnated the spirit of the time, and was ". . . permeated to the marrow of his bones with the sentiment of democratic society and with loyalty to American institutions." Sherman did not deny all satire in Twain, but thought his occasional satire was directed principally at monarchial governments and institutions.

[54] Percy H. Boynton, A History of American Literature (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1919), p. 392.

[55] Ibid., p. 384.

[56] Ibid., p. 390.

[57] Edith Wyatt, "An Inspired Critic," North American Review, CCV (April, 1917), 603-4. Miss Wyatt's evidence, however, does not seem to bear out her conclusions. As an example of Twain's "unabated" social criticism, she referred (p. 605) to his criticism of some farmers near Buffalo who had attacked a couple.

The most important of these three critics was Waldo Frank, who in certain aspects anticipated the Brooksian theory.[58] He did not consider the effects of family or genteel friends on Twain, but like Brooks, thought Twain's life a tragedy and spoke of ". . . the bitter wreckage in his long career."[59] Twain was a balked satirist, for ". . . underneath the gibes and antics of the professional jester, brooded the hatred and resentment of a tortured child."[60] In his conscious mind Twain accepted contemporary standards, but the repression of inner talents led to his ultimate defeat:

> The generic Clemens was a tender and dreaming and avid spirit, in love with beauty, in love with love. But he was born in the ranks of a hurling and sweating army. He forced himself to move with it at its own pace. He forced himself to take on its measure of success: to take on that distrust of life and love which so well defended the principal business of its march. For this betrayal of his soul, his soul brought him bitterness, and the mass of his works are failures.[61]

II. BROOKS AND HIS DECADE

Mark Twain criticism reached maturity in 1920 when Van Wyck Brooks published his first edition of The Ordeal

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[58] Waldo Frank, Our America (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), 232 pp.

[59] Ibid., p. 38.

[60] Ibid., p. 40.

[61] Ibid., p. 44.

of Mark Twain. His lengthy study, admittedly not a conventional biography, was a startling interpretation of Mark Twain's personality. Using psychoanalysis to study a writer, Brooks probed to new and unknown depths in Twain, and presented an over-all picture different from any previous interpretation. Many critics before Brooks saw Twain's satire, but often their criticisms were obtuse and failed to point out the significance of it in Twain. Brooks saw the significance and explained it according to two theories: Freudian psychoanalysis and the belief that America's long-needed native literature had been suppressed by the combination of Gilded Age and genteel tradition.

A summary of Brooks' idea is found in this oft-quoted passage from The Ordeal of Mark Twain:

> That bitterness of his was the effect of a certain miscarriage in his creative life, a balked personality, an arrested development of which he was himself almost wholly unaware, but which for him destroyed the meaning of life.[62]

According to Brooks, Twain was a frustrated and repressed satirist.[63] First his mother, Jane Clemens, repressed Twain

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[62]Van Wyck Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1920), p. 14. All quotations from this book in this thesis are from the 1920 edition.

[63]Ibid., p. 125.

by forcing him into the narrow and non-creative path of Calvinism.[64] Instead off growing up normally, he was filled with inhibitions. He showed a certain moral disintegration when he went west, and pioneer life helped repress his natural artistic spirit.[65] Twain also surrendered when he married Olivia Langdon. She, according to Brooks, not only urged him to earn large sums of money, and thus further repressed his artistic spirit,[66] but also ruined his literature by making him defer to her genteel taste.[67] The final harmful influence was William Dean Howells, Twain's literary confessor. Twain submitted his manuscripts to Howells for additional censorship, and Howells, along with Mrs. Clemens, continually toned down Twain's literary works.[67]

As a result of all these disastrous pressures, Twain failed to live up to his tremendous possibilities. Instead of writing deep and biting satire, he appealed only to rudimentary minds.[69] There is some satire in Twain, but it is chiefly in the privacy of his letters.[70] It is usually

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[64] Ibid., p. 33.
[65] Ibid., p. 78.
[66] Ibid., p. 113.
[67] Ibid., p. 120.
[68] Ibid., p. 119.
[69] Ibid., p. 15.
[70] Ibid., p. 207.

made public only when opinion is largely with him,[71] and according to Brooks it is not profound: "One would say that Mark Twain had never thought at all."[72] Brooks concluded, "He was the supreme victim of an epoch in American history [the genteel tradition], an epoch that has closed."[73]

It was only natural that these startling ideas would evoke considerable response from literary critics. In a few years many men adopted the Brooksian viewpoint, but at first the critics moved cautiously in evaluating this novel theory. The book reviews of The Ordeal of Mark Twain serve as excellent illustrations of this caution.

Although William Lyon Phelps, in his review, thought The Ordeal of Mark Twain challenging and informative, he did not wholly accept the thesis.[74] He agreed that Twain never lived up to his potentialities, but did not consider Twain's mother, wife, and Howells harmful influences.[75] According to Phelps, Brooks failed in the long run because he tried

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[71] Ibid., p. 241.

[72] Ibid., p. 152.

[73] Ibid., p. 267.

[74] William Lyon Phelps, "Mark Twain Chief of Sinners," The New York Times Book Review and Magazine (June 27, 1920), 1-2.

the impossible--fitting a man to a theory.[76] Phelps concluded that Twain was a great artist rather than a great thinker, and that Brooks' study of Twain would warn youths not to misuse their tallents.[77]

Another reviewer who did not wholly accept the Brooksian idea was Alvin Johnson.[78] He admitted that "There can be no disputing the fact that Mark Twain's environment was largely responsible for his deviation from what he felt to be the line of artistic duty."[79] Johnson also saw traces of genius in Twain, but did not feel that he had produced many artistic successes.[80] Shifting away from Brooks, Johnson warned, ". . . it is a treacherous business for a critic devoid of a sense of humor to hold an incorrigible humorist too strictly to account."[81] This attitude, somewhat akin to the later DeVoto criticism, was developed further by Johnson:

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[76] Loc. cit.

[77] Loc. cit.

[78] Alvin Johnson,, "The Tragedy of Mark Twain," The New Republic, XXIII (July, 1920), 201-3.

[79] Ibid., p. 202..

[80] Ibid., p. 201..

[81] Ibid., p. 203..

> Mark Twain was not in revolt against American institutions; therefore he could not have made of himself a satirist according to Van Wyck Brooks's taste. Mark Twain was essentially a pioneer, with his character formed under pioneer discipline or indiscipline.[82]

Johnson's final decision was that Twain had no desire to be either a satirist or a humorist, but merely wanted to show mankind the truth about itself.[83]

An anonymous reviewer in The Literary Digest summarized various English opinions of The Ordeal of Mark Twain, and the attitudes were about evenly divided between adoption and rejection of the Brooksian thesis.[84] Another reviewer, Richard Burton, who evidemtly had known Twain personally, added little worth-while opinion.[85] Somewhat distressed at Brooks' references to Twain's wife, Burton admitted that Brooks was readable but not accurate.[86] Burton believed Twain was unrepressed, was a great humorist, a great moralist, and a great satirist.[87] He concluded with a statement that seemed more eulogistic than critical: "The out-

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[82] Loc. cit.

[83] Loc. cit.

[84] "Taming Mark Twain," The Literary Digest, LXVII (November 13, 1920), 34.

[85] Richard Burton, "The Mystery of Personality," The Bookman, LII (January, 1921), 333-37.

[86] Ibid., p. 334.

[87] Loc. cit.

spoken deliverance of his views, however unpopular, was a chief characteristic of the man, and made him the reformer he was."[88] "Whitewashing Jane Clemens," an even more outspoken denial of one part of the Brooksian thesis, was published several years later by Doris and Samuel Webster.[89] Twain's mother was portrayed as a non-Puritanical frontier woman, who possessed many of the traits later seen in her son. According to this portrait, it would have been almost impossible for Jane Clemens to have repressed young Sam. The Websters concluded, "Van Wyck Brooks's mistake is that he has sketched a consistent character. . ."[90] whereas they depicted Mrs. Clemems, like her son, as a mass of inconsistencies.

Undoubtedly the best dissenting review was by Samuel McChord Crothers in 1920.[91] Beginning with the

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[88] Ibid., p. 336.

[89] Doris Webster amd Samuel Webster, "Whitewashing Jane Clemens," The Bookman, LXI (July, 1925), 531-35.

[90] Ibid., p. 531.

[91] Samuel McChord Crothers, "The Hibernation of Genius," The Dame School of Experience and Other Papers (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), pp. 214-231. While evidently first published here in a volume of essays, the article, appearing within a few months of The Ordeal of Mark Twain, can be considered in this section with the other book reviews. It should also be noted that the mild debunking by Crothers is much more effective than the later raging blasts by DeVoto. Satire is often better with a gentle touch, and DeVoto, like the man he defended, possibly attempted to beat all opposition to a pulp with a blunt club.

reminder that people often tend to blame society for thwarting geniuses,[92] Crothers, in an unacademic but thoroughly delightful manner, opposed the Brooksian idea that Twain was a natural and serious artistic genius.[93] Crothers disagreed with the various frustration and repression theories,[94] and refused to grieve because of what Twain did not write.[95] According to Crothers, a genius should be

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[92] Ibid., p. 216: "Society by taking thought might develop a sufficient number of geniuses of the first class. instead of doing this it concerns itself chiefly with the education of a vast host of mediocrities. For this it is much to blame. When now and then a genius happens to be born, he ought to assert himself and make known his wants. Society should be alert to render first aid."

[93] Ibid., pp. 216-17: "The author starts with the assumption that Mark Twain was a heaven-born genius dowered with all the gifts of the gods. He had it in him to produce a great work of literary art whose austere beauty would be the delight of the discerning and the despair of the vulgar."

[94] Ibid., pp. 217-21. "The intimations (p. 217) in regard to his early life seem scanty, but one sinister fact is discovered. In his early years the maternal influence was strong." . . . "Of course (pp. 218-19) the boy had not expressed, so far as we are told, any desire to be an artist, and if he had his mother would probably have expressed no objection; an artist being a man who took daguerreotypes. This was a respectable and sufficiently lucrative business in Hannibal. But it is the Freudian wish which we are dealing with, and it is all the more fateful when it is unexpressed." . . . "Hannibal, Missouri, (p. 221) Virginia City, Nevada, and Elmira, New York, all exerted a malign influence on Mark Twain's genius, while we are made aware of a deadly chill emanating from the literary purlieus of Boston."

[95] Ibid., p. 222. "The career of Mark Twain as thus told seems singularly lacking in any attempt at self-realization. After the age of twelve there seems to have been "nothing doing.' When duty whispered low, 'Go write the great interpretation of American life,' the youth did not even say, 'I cannot.' He only absentmindedly went and did something else. . . . The life-story is one to make the judicious grieve."

judged by what he actually produced.[96] Crothers then stated his major opposition to the Brooksian theory:

> We do not call that degree of artistic ability that can be so easily turned aside from its course by the name of genius. Genius must stand a quantitative as well as a qualitative test. It must not only be something good in kind, but there must be a great deal of it--in fact so much of it as to be irrepressible.[97]

His concluding point was that Twain's one great endowment was an abundance of natural humor:

> Grant that Mark Twain's genius was essentially humorous and his career becomes intelligible. I find it very much easier to think of him as a great humorist who succeeded rather than as a great artist who failed.[98]

Thus at first the reviewers did not wholly accept Brooks' theory. It is interesting, however, to look at Lewis Mumford's review of the revised 1933 edition of The Ordeal.[99] Thoroughly pro-Brooks, Mumford said Brooks made a painful but necessary contribution to our understanding of Twain.[100] Mumford took an attitude entirely antithetical to Burton's, mentioned previously, and said:

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[96] Ibid., p. 227.

[97] Ibid., p. 223.

[98] Ibid., p. 225.

[99] Lewis Mumford, "Prophet, Pedant and Pioneer," The Saturday Review of Literature, IX (May 6, 1933), 573-5.

[100] Ibid., p. 574.

> Not merely as a writer but as a man Mark Twain seems a small, spoiled effigy of the person he might have been. He hates the shams and hypocrisies of our society, but when he attacks them he usually pulls his punches: he dislikes the tame conventions of his Victorian contemporaries, but when he challenges them, he does so in secret, like a little boy writing a dirty word on the back of a fence.[101]

Between 1920 and 1932 Mark Twain criticism was in general a reaction to or adoption of the Brooksian thesis, and fell into three broad groups. Some critics reverted to pre-Brooksian interpretations; others accepted parts of the Brooksian thesis; while the third group followed Brooks implicitly.

Several well-known scholars were among the first group. Bliss Perry, writing the literary volume for The Chronicles of America Series in 1920, treated Twain perfunctorily. Perry did mention that Twain attacked injustices, but he considered him predominantly a western humorist and writer of romances.[102] George Edward Woodberry wrote three volumes that appeared a year later, but only once mentioned Twain, and then as a mere funny man.[103] In 1923 John Louis

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[101] Ibid., p. 573.

[102] Bliss Perry, The American Spirit in Literature (vol. XXXIV, Allen Johnson, Editor, The Chronicles of America Series, 50 vols.; New Hawen: Yale University Press, 1918-1921), pp. 236-40.

[103] George Edward Woodberry, Appreciation of Literature and America in Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), p. 206.

Haney considered Twain principally a funny man, but saw some social satire in The Prince and the Pauper.[104] A much later writer who, in part, reverted to the older ideas about Twain was Constance Rourke. According to her theory, Twain was predominantly a writer of burlesques:

> It is a mistake to look for the social critic--even manque--in Mark Twain. In a sense the whole American comic tradition has been that of social criticism: but this had been instinctive and incomplete, and so it proved to be in Mark Twain. Like the earlier humorists he was rich in notation; from Roughing It to The Gilded Age he contrived to enclose the color of a period with a thousand details of manner, ambition, lingo. But as he turned toward the inclusive or penetrative view he was invariably blocked by some preposterous extravagance that seemed to mount visibly before his eyes.[105]

Some of the critics who reverted to pre-Brooksian interpretations, notably Gamaliel Bradford and William B. Cairns, disparaged Twain. Bradford's comments were nearly all adverse, but were often enlightening.[106] He said Twain was an occasional social critic, but his thinking never went ". . . to the bottom of things."[107] There was an

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[104]John Louis Haney, The Story of our Literature (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 202.

[105]Constance Rourke, American Humor, A Study of the National Character (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931), p. 104. An extremely interesting aspect of Rourke's theory is its anticipation, by a year, of the DeVoto idea of Twain as a frontier humorist who created art from the tall tale.

[106]Gamaliel Bradford, American Portraits 1875-1900 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936), 249 pp.

[107]Ibid., p. 18.

". . . absence of steady thinking on any subject . . ."[108] by Twain, and he busied himself with effects rather than causes.[109] In short, according to Bradford, Twain was brilliant at times, but shallow.[110] Cairns thought Twain had been highly overrated, and in a few pages developed the theory that Twain, at first a mere newspaper joker who was gradually hailed by the people as a philosopher, ". . . undertook to express opinions on a variety of subjects ranging from foreign missions to politics. . . ." Cairns concluded that most of Twain's consciously serious work had no permanency in literature.[112]

Most Twain criticism between 1920 and 1932 was in partial agreement with Brooks. Using the Brooksian thesis as a starting point, most of the critics developed their own ideas in slightly different ways. William Lyon Phelps, who had several years earlier written of Twain as a humorist, now agreed that Twain had been forced into humor by other people against his will.[113] Phelps, however, saw a

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[109] Ibid., p. 13.

[110] Loc. cit.

[111] William B. Cairns, A History of American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 451.

[112] Ibid., p. 452.

[113] William Lyon Phelps, Some Makers of American Literature (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1923), p. 169.

". . . fierce passion for Improvement . . ." in Twain which had not been completely repressed.[114] Phelps quoted an anonymous German critic who considered Twain a great social critic, and said, ". . . he has as his true goal something higher and nobler [than wit], the determination to bring to the attention of mankind evil customs and alterable obstacles, in order that human beings may become better and nobler."[115] In 1927 Lucy Lockwood Hazard followed part of the Brooksian thesis.[116] She, however, discounted the importance of pressure on Twain from the women in his family, and believed the real pressure came from ". . . the larger social group whose standards, motives, and activities made up the Zeitgeist of the sensational seventies. . . ."[117] Of the two types of life on the frontier, conquering the wilderness and the later exploiting the land, Twain fell into the latter type. He ". . . was himself a product of the Gilded Age, like Hawthorne impotently critical of the forces which had entered into the very fiber of his being."[118]

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[114] Ibid., p. 186. Twelve years later Phelps, in "Mark Twain," The Yale Review, XXIX (December, 1935), 291-310, continued to hold the older attitude that Twain was, above all else, a great humorist and literary artist.

[115] Loc. cit.

[116] Lucy Lockwood Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1927), pp. 220-30.

[117] Ibid., p. 221.

[118] Loc. cit.

She concluded:

> Not blind enough to be the idolater of the Gilded Age, not brave enough to be its iconoclast, Mark Twain evolves this ingenious compromise. He portrays the Gilded Age as a spectacle for scornful laughter.[119]

Ernest Erwin Leisy was another writer who accepted only part of the Brooksian theory.[120] He admitted the split personality in Twain, and believed that Twain's social criticism was submerged beneath his narrative writing,[121] but he attacked the frustration idea:

> Mark Twain married an estimable woman of New England stock to whose censorship of his work he readily deferred; she, with the aid of Howells and others, turned him from hoaxes and burlesque autobiographies to the fields where his true talents lay.[122]

Carl Van Doren also accepted part of Brooks' theory--the idea that Twain had a split personality, and that the desire ". . . to satirize was only a part of his mental constitution. . . ."[123]

The third group of critics between 1920 and 1932

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[119] Ibid., p. 230. This idea is extremely interesting as an anticipation, in part, of the later tragic laughter theory propounded by DeVoto.

[120] Ernest Erwin Leisy, American Literature, an Interpretative Survey (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1929), pp. 170-79.

[121] Ibid., pp. 178-79.

[122] Ibid., p. 172.

[123] Carl Van Dorem, "Mark Twain," Dictionary of American Biography, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, editors (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), IV, 194.

adopted the major points made originally by Brooks. The Ordeal of Mark Twain had gradually become rather widely accepted, and in the few years before 1932 many critics echoed the Brooksian thesis. Lewis Mumford did not mention the Brooksian theory that Twain was repressed by his own family and by Howells, but he did follow Brooks in other respects and said Twain outwardly gloried in exploitation, but inwardly his soul rebelled against it.[124] He made the significant point that Twain was chiefly interested in his own comfort at all times, and thus never antagonized society or jeopardized his own secure position with prolonged satirical criticism.[125] Vernon Louis Parrington, who in Main Currents in American Thought said that Twain had a divided self of artist and wealth-seeker, agreed that he succumbed to the pressure of his environment[126] and was a satirist who did not live up to his ability after writing The Gilded Age:

> He had opened another door to his genius and discovered the satirist. There lay the real Mark Twain.

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[124]Lewis Mumford, The Golden Day (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1926), p. 172.

[125]Ibid., p. 173.

[126]Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930), III, 88.

> But the wares of the satirist were not in demand at the barbecue, so he closed the door and fell to purveying what the public wanted.[127]

Parrington thought Twain reflected his times more than he criticized them,[128] but believed that Twain did tend more toward social criticism in his later years:

> He was no longer a good Federalist-Whig concerned about exploitation and the safeguards of property. Although he voted the Republican ticket, he made merry over the tariff and frankly hated the dominant Republican property-consciousness. Like Lincoln he was for the man rather than the dollar when the rights of the two clashed. In these later years he was steadily drifting to the left, on the side of the social underling, sympathetic with those who do the work of the world.[129]

Russell Blankenship echoed Brooks and Parrington in the belief that Twain's genius was for social satire, that he was repressed by the acquisitive spirit of the Gilded Age, and that he finally took the easy way out:

> Mark Twain was formed on the frontier into a social satirist of rare abilities for whom there was an urgent need in the seventies and eighties, but the age did not enjoy criticism so well as it liked humor, and under the urging of family and friends he became the popular and highly paid humorist of the day.[130]

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[127] Ibid., p. 94.

[128] Ibid., p. 85.

[129] Ibid., p. 99. This idea may represent wishful thinking on Parrington's part, since he is prone to attribute to any writer whom he likes a strong sense of social consciousness. A later section of this thesis will attempt to show whether Parrington's generalization is borne out by any evidence of increasing social criticism in Twain's work.

[130] Russell Blankenship, American Literature As An Expression of the National Mind (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 457.

C. Hartley Grattan also followed the Brooksian theory that censorship by both Twain's wife and Howells was a harmful influence, and that Twain was not strong enough to resist the acquisitive spirit of the Gilded Age.[131] Grattan felt, however, that Twain's social criticism had not been entirely repressed, because The Gilded Age ". . . hit hard at what he hated in American life,"[132] and Huckleberry Finn contained many passages of serious criticism.[133] A final critic to echo Brooks was Grant C. Knight, who depicted Twain as repressed and frustrated.[134] According to Knight, Twain's major achievement was as a chronicler of social history.[135]

III. CRITICISM SINCE MARK TWAIN'S AMERICA

In the preceding pages it has become evident that the new critical attitude toward Twain, first developed by Van Wyck Brooks, gradually spread and eventually was accepted by most scholars. In 1932 Bernard DeVoto, however,

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[131] C. Hartley Grattan, "Mark Twain," American Writers on American Literature, John Macy, editor (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1931), p. 277.

[132] Ibid., p. 278.

[133] Ibid., p. 282.

[134] Grant C. Knight, American Literature and Culture (New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1932), p. 361.

[135] Ibid., p. 363.

threw into the field a literary bombshell: Mark Twain's America.[136] As important a book as The Ordeal of Mark Twain, it attacked much of the Brooksian theory. DeVoto did not believe the frontier was a Puritanical or repressing environment,[137] did not think Twain's mother was a harmful influence,[138] believed the frontier was not barren of folklore as Brooks had claimed,[139] and felt sure that Twain's early life proved conclusively that he was ". . . a humorist before anything else."[140] DeVoto admitted that the conflict of frontier spirit and genteel tradition did not always help Twain's art, but he also believed that this combination was often beneficial.[141] According to DeVoto, Twain did occasionally act as a social satirist. In San Francisco, "The purposeful satirist develops somewhat: social reproof is oftener present."[142] He added that Pudd'nhead Wilson contained ". . . some of the most corrosive comment on

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[136] Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain's America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1932), 353 pp.

[137] Ibid., p. 42.

[138] Ibid., p. 82.

[139] Ibid., p. 91.

[140] Ibid., p. 265.

[141] Ibid., p. 207.

[142] Ibid., p. 164.

American life ever written,"[143] and said of the Twain who wrote The Gilded Age, "Alone among the novelists of the time he concerns himself with the national muck."[144] DeVoto's implications, however, were not that Twain did become a truly great social satirist. Twain saw the evils of society, started to attack them, but eventually realized the futility of ever completely reforming the human race, and, like the pioneer he was, gave vent to laughter--the first instance of tragic laughter in American literature.[145] DeVoto considered this the most sensible attitude that Twain could have adopted, since no amount of satire could jar mankind out of its complacency. Thus Twain stepped aside, contemplated the weaknesses of humanity, and in a mood of Olympian despair, introduced tragic laughter into the Gilded Age. Instead of attempting to reform mankind, Twain made true art out of native American humor--the tall tale--and thereby became

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[143] Ibid., p. 284.

[144] Ibid., p. 287.

[145] Ibid., p. 268.

the folk artist of the frontier.[146]

DeVoto, in his role as interpreter of Mark Twain, has reaffirmed his ideas in later books and essays. After poring over the unpublished Twain papers, DeVoto concluded that Twain's social criticism increased in later years.[147] DeVoto, however, made no other changes in his original theory, although he granted the increasing importance of religious and ethical problems in Twain's mind.[148] In "Mark Twain: the Ink of History," DeVoto's theory remained basically the same.[149] Believing that critics have always tried to fit

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[146]DeVoto's argument had been anticipated in Ludwig Lewisohn, Expression in America (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1932), pp. 212-32. Since this was published earlier in the same year as DeVoto's book, it seems probable that both men attained their positions independently of each other. The factual similarity is striking: according to Lewisohn, Twain's literary type was the folk-humor of the democratic masses (p. 214); he was not frustrated and underwent no ordeal (p. 218); probably had left none of his ideas unsaid when he died (p. 225); and although he wrote some satire, he was at his best when writing the folk-art of his boyhood days (p. 231). The interpretation of these facts by Lewisohn, however, was markedly different from DeVoto. Whereas DeVoto thought Twain's type of art truly great, Lewisohn ranked Twain--the folk artist--at the bottom of the scale. The creator, at variance with his age, was foremost in literature; the artificer, who used old materials but had some imagination, ranked second; and the bard, who merely told the people what they wanted to hear, was the lowest form of literary man.

[147]Bernard DeVoto, "The Mark Twain Papers," The Saturday Review of Literature, XIX (December, 1938), 14.

[148]Ibid., p. 15.

[149]Bernard DeVoto, "Mark Twain: The Ink of History," Forays and Rebuttals (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), pp. 348-72.

Twain into a pet theory,[150] he stated that Twain performed his duty as a "revolutionary artist" by bringing American literature into organic relationship with the national life.[151] This closely parallels his older idea that Twain was the folk artist of the frontier. DeVoto now saw much more social criticism in Twain. "From his earliest to his latest works, his books are crammed full of satirical finalities."[152] He also added that ". . . they sometimes attained a level beyond which no satire in all literature has gone."[153] Clinging, however, to his older theory of Olympian despair, DeVoto said Twain saw, before any other American writer, the folly of believing in human perfectibility, and therefore did not concentrate on satires alone.

In Mark Twain in Eruption DeVoto warned that Twain's later tirades were often distorted and should not be taken as complete truth.[154] DeVotto also stressed the importance of the heavy load of personal sorrows that helped twist his

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[150] Ibid., p. 348.

[151] Ibid., p. 360.

[152] Ibid., p. 365.

[153] Loc. cit.

[154] Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, Bernard DeVoto, editor (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1940), p. x.

writings away from frontier humor.[155] Not possessing great analytical powers, Twain saw that something terrible was wrong with the world, but he could not understand it:

> Mark Twain had awareness of the forces which men like Rogers and Carnegie expressed or the kind of power they were using. He saw Roosevelt's timidity and exhibitionism, he saw Carnegie's absurdity, he saw the enfranchised arrogance of the plutocracy, but he did not even speculate about the current that ran beneath the froth.[156]

Finally, in Mark Twain at Work, DeVoto regarded his thesis, after further work in the Mark Twain papers, as established.[157] Continuing to mention the heavy toll Twain's personal tragedies had upon his literary career,[158] DeVoto implied that since Twain tried to believe no man responsible for his own life, then corrective satire would be next to useless.[159] DeVoto concluded that in Twain ". . . American literature perceived for the first time, a limitation of the democratic hope."[160]

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[155] Ibid., p. xix.

[156] Ibid., p. xxvi.

[157] Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain at Work (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. viii.

[158] Ibid., pp. 123-24.

[159] Ibid., p. 116.

[160] Ibid., p. 102. DeVoto has published several other articles on Twain, but, umfortunately, they produce little more than a general "name-calling" directed at other Mark Twain critics.

The book reviews of Mark Twain's America were even less favorable than the first reviews of The Ordeal of Mark Twain. Harry Lorin Binsse said DeVoto had done a great service to American letters by placing Twain where he belonged--in the school of frontier humor.[161] Binsse regretted DeVoto's savage attack on Brooks, but thought the attack was necessary if Twain were to be evaluated properly.[162] An anonymous critic in The Forum said Mark Twain's America was stimulating, but had many "lame" ideas, and did not give a complete picture of Twain.[163] Mark Van Doren, even less appreciative, said DeVoto attacked Brooks for having a theory, but DeVoto then evolved inaccurate theories of his own.[164] Too angry to look clearly at Brooks, DeVoto went to the other extreme in his criticism.[165] Newton Arvin, who had little praise for DeVoto, called his book shallow and romantic.[166] Arvin's review emphasized the correctness of

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[161]Harry Lorin Binsse, "Mark Twain's America," The Bookman, LXXV (October, 1932), 630.

[162]Loc. cit.

[163]"Books in Brief," The Forum, LXXXVIII (December, 1932), ix.

[164]Mark Van Doren, "DeVoto's America," The Nation, CXXXV (October, 1932), 370.

[165]Ibid., p. 371.

[166]Newton Arvin, "Mark Twain Simplified," The New Republic, LXXII (October, 1932), 211.

such Brooksian ideas as the "insidious" influence of Twain's family upon him, and Twain's "debauched" integrity, caused by his obsession to make money.[167]

DeVoto's ideas, however, like those of Brooks twelve years before, gradually became accepted by many scholars. In the period between 1932 and the present there have been no completely new theories about Twain, but a tremendous number of critical opinions in which the older theories have been synthesized. A brief look, chronologically, at some of the periodical articles, and later, some of the books dealing with Twain, will round out this representative sampling of Mark Twain criticism.

The more recent periodical articles, many of them book reviews, present several different attitudes toward Twain. In an anecdotal article in 1935 Owen Wister, an old friend of Twain's, undertook a defense of his judgment and intellect.[168] Wister reluctantly admitted some repression in Twain's writings, but refused to adopt the complete Brooksian thesis, and contended that throughout his literary career Twain attacked social injustices.[169]

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[167] Ibid., p. 212.

[168] Owen Wister, "In Homage to Mark Twain," Harper's Monthly Magazine, CLXXI (October, 1935), 552.

[169] Ibid., p. 554.

According to Wister, these national evils changed Twain from a naturally buoyant man to an embittered pessimist.[170]

Three writers followed parts of the Brooksian thesis. Newton Arvin agreed that Twain's appeal is to adolescent minds and tastes.[171] Arvin, however, felt that Twain would be remembered in the future for his occasional blistering social criticism.[172] Alexander Cowie agreed with Brooks that Twain had been repressed, but believed the repressed material was indecencies of language, and not social satire.[173] Theodore Dreiser, who called Twain a powerful and original thinker,[174] followed Brooks in attributing to the genteel tradition the forces that turned Twain away from social criticism.[175] Dreiser also said Twain was influenced by ". . . the noisy and quite vacuous applause accorded him as Genius Jester to the American booboisie."[176]

One essayist, Dorothy Waples, held the DeVoto idea

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[170] Ibid., p. 556.

[171] Newton Arvin, "Mark Twain: 1835-1935," The New Republic, LXXXIII (June, 1935), 125.

[172] Ibid., p. 126.

[173] Alexander Cowie, "Mark Twain Controls Himself," American Literature, X (January, 1939), 491.

[174] Theodore Dreiser, "Mark The Double Twain," The English Journal, XXIV (October, 1935), 615.

[175] Ibid., p. 621.

[176] Loc. cit.

that Twain was a product of the Middle West.[177] She saw some satire in The Gilded Age, but felt Twain was more sympathetic than critical toward Colonel Sellers.[178] Her final judgment about Twain was that "He loved men too much or recognized too much his own sins ever to become a satirist. There was something in Mark Twain that made him forgive weakness."[179]

Many other short articles on Twain have appeared, but most of the book reviews added little original material, and the more specialized articles need not be considered at present in this sampling of critical attitudes. Much more important are the books, dealing with Twain, published since Mark Twain's America in 1932.[180]

V. F. Calverton, whose book on American literature was published the same year as DeVoto's, had one or two

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[177]Dorothy Waples, "The Middle West Finds a Voice: Mark Twain," The Culture of the Middle West, Lawrence College Faculty Lecture Series (Appleton, Wisconsin: Lawrence College Press, 1944), p. 41.

[178]Ibid., p. 52.

[179]Ibid., p. 54.

[180]It is interesting to note, however, that despite widespread mention of Twain's social satire by other critics, Oscar Cargill, in The Social Revolt In American Literature 1888-1914 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 649 pp., does not mention Mark Twain, nor is Twain included in American Issues, vol. I of The Social Record, Willard Thorp, Merle Curti, and Carlos Baker, editors (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1941), 1035 pp.

similar ideas, but principally used the Brooksian theory as a basis for his own Marxian interpretation.[181] He called Twain a product of the frontier,[182] considered the young Mark Twain of the frontier the great Mark Twain,[183] and added, ". . . Mark Twain must be credited with being the first American prose writer of any importance."[184] Although Twain always echoed the "petty bourgeois" philosophy and ideals,[185] his Gilded Age did anticipate the "attacking novels" of the future.[186] Calverton said, "Ever eager, especially in his later days, to be a Hamlet, he was forced to remain a Falstaff."[187] He concluded, however, "In the twentieth century, if he lived until our day, it is even likely that he might have joined in with Dreiser and taken a communistic stand."[188]

Granville Hicks took a few ideas from DeVoto, but

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[181]V. F. Calverton, The Liberation of American Literature (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), pp. 318-28.

[182]Ibid., p. 320.

[183]Ibid., p. 321.

[184]Ibid., p. 319.

[185]Ibid., p. 328.

[186]Ibid., p. 327.

[187]Ibid., p. 320.

[188]Ibid., p. 327.

for the most part followed Brooks.[189] A product of the frontier,[190] Twain did not live up to his potentialities, for he ". . . delivered himself into the hands of the genteel tradition. It could not suppress his inborn genius, but neither could it develop that genius. . . ."[191] Hicks believed that The Gilded Age, an ambitious but superficial satire, was Twain's only major work which dealt with important American movements of the later nineteenth century.[192] Twain saw the abuses in the land, did not understand them, and remained principally an entertainer.[193]

Minnie M. Brashear's Mark Twain Son of Missouri, which appeared in 1934, was, in many respects, in opposition to the Brooksian theory. She said in her preface:

> This book is an attempt to verify an impression, formed from personal observation, that commentaries on Mark

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[189]Granville Hicks, The Great Tradition, An Interpretation of American Literature Since the Civil War (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), pp. 38-49, 68-72.

[190]Ibid., p. 40.

[191]Ibid., p. 42.

[192]Ibid., p. 45. Hicks added, however, (p. 68) that of the paltry half dozen political novels written in and about the Reconstruction Period, only The Gilded Age and Henry Adams' Democracy are still read.

[193]Ibid., pp. 45-46.

> Twain which have pointed to his Middle West up-bringing as unfortunate, even tragic in its suppressions, are not true accounts.[194]

Her principal thesis was that Twain was a well-bred product of Missouri, who was benefited by a well-developed Southern culture, much of which had stemmed from Europe. Not as concerned with the "native" or "frontier" aspects of Missouri as DeVoto, Brashear pointed out the relatively high degree of culture present in Hannibal in the 1830's and 1840's.

Although her study dealt more with Twain's backgrounds (especially his reading in eighteenth century English authors) than with Twain himself, and did not consider Twain's social criticism at great length, Brashear did believe much of Twain's satire was important and powerful. Twain was a genius,[195] America's greatest humorist,[196] and one of the sources of his strength was his sensitiveness to social distinctions.[197] Emphasizing Jane Clemen's beneficial influences,[198] Brashear stated, "From her must have been derived what was most fanciful and unusual in the boy,

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[194]Minnie M. Brashear, Mark Twain Son of Missouri (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. xiii.

[195]Ibid., p. 24.

[196]Ibid., p. 225.

[197]Ibid., p. 74.

[198]Ibid., p. 84.

his humor and sure satire, and his passionate hatred of cruelty."[199] Although in many of his early writings Twain seemed to have faith in the manifest destiny policy, and at times was almost the epic spokesman of the movement, he eventually rebelled against it, and in his disillusion turned to satire.[200] Brashear, comparing Twain to the great eighteenth century humorists and satirists, said his Hadleyburg story was ". . . as relentless in its indictment of mankind as anything in Gulliver's Travels. It belongs in the eighteenth-century tradition."[201] She continued her comparison of Twain and Jonathan Swift:

> Both contrast animals with men to the discouragement of men. Both are stern moralists. It would be difficult to find two writers, in fact, who more consistently employed their satirical pens to reveal how far the human race falls short in disinterested social ethics, and what a sorry failure civilization is, than Swift and Mark Twain.[202]

Brashear did not consider Twain entirely successful in his satire, for he ". . . had to flounder with his fellows,"[203] when his high ideals had to submit to the realities of life.

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[199] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[200] Ibid., p. 75.

[201] Ibid., p. 234.

[202] Ibid., p. 240.

[203] Ibid., p. 252.

His later years, however, were tremendously significant because of the ". . . fight which he fought to the last. His defiance of the powers that ruled the cosmos, as he conceived them, is of heroic proportions. At the end he was an American Prometheus. . . ."[204] Brashear concluded that ". . . his hope for social justice, for the raison d'être of America, was a passion larger than that of ordinary men. In that passion he called to account the very gods of the universe."[205]

One of the most important studies, Mark Twain, The Man and His Work, was published in 1935 by Edward Wagenknecht. Many other critics had stressed the influence of environment on Mark Twain. Wagenknecht, however, placed less emphasis upon this, and instead stressed Twain's own temperament as the most important influence in his development. More detached in his attitude toward Twain than many of the earlier critics had been, Wagenknecht attempted to arrive at a middle ground between Brooks and DeVoto without being carried away by either extreme. Brooks had built his entire case around the repression theory, and DeVoto had insisted Twain was a great folk artist of the frontier, but Wagenknecht, with an attitude somewhat similar to Samuel

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[204] Ibid., p. 262.

[205] Ibid., p. 263.

McChord Crothers, judged Twain not by what he might have been, but by what he actually produced. He called for a look at the record. On the frontier controversy Wagenknecht sided with DeVoto.[206] His ideas on repression and frustration were mixed. Olivia Clemens had a taste for Twain's poorer literature,[207] and did not truly understand her husband.[208] Olivia's censorship, however, was usually beneficial,[209] and Jane Clemens had not been a thwarting influence upon her son.[210] Wagenknecht also gave the general impression that Twain, truly a perpetual "Youth," had to depend upon his wife, Howells, H. H. Rogers, and others, and that he, of his own accord, leaned upon them. Wagenknecht felt that Twain's mind was not great,[211] and had a marked degree of instability.[212] He exaggerated everything in his life, including his moods. When he was angry, he was violent; when he was melancholy, he was immersed in his own bitter gloom; and when he was happy, he was hilariously

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[206]Edward Wagenknecht, Mark Twain, The Man and His Work (New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1935), pp. 69-71.

[207]Ibid., p. 65.

[208]Ibid., p. 184.

[209]Loc. cit.

[210]Ibid., p. 183.

[211]Ibid., p. 119.

[212]Ibid., p. 107.

exuberant. Satire, a delicate weapon, was difficult for an adolescent thinker like Twain, but despite his natural penchant for humor he had a serious side:

> Mark Twain was a born reformer; nothing could be further from the truth than to imagine that he was a humorist pure and simple in the early days and became interested in more serious matters only toward the end when personal sorrows had hurt him and bitter reflection imposed the feeling that all was wrong with the world.[213]

Wagenknecht, developing his point, also said, ". . . there never was a time when he was indifferent to corruption and cruelty, when he was not ready to smite the serpent whenever it should raise its ugly head."[214] Thus Wagenknecht recognized more social criticism in Twain than had many earlier critics. However, to balance the scales, Wagenknecht pointed out that Twain's extreme emotionality often led him to champion someone merely because he was an underdog.[215] Twain's satire also failed at times because he grew so angry at the object of his intended satire that he could only rage incoherently at it. Petty incidents, rather than great evils, usually aroused his ire.[216] Wagenknecht, then, seeing more social satire in him than has

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[213] Ibid., p. 234.

[214] Loc. cit.

[215] Ibid., p. 237.

[216] Ibid., p. 97.

usually been acknowledged, also saw his limitations as a reformer, and felt that the "problem" of Mark Twain, which had existed for over a decade, was not unsolvable by an objective look at Twain himself.

Another important book which appeared in 1935 was the Mark Twain volume in The American Writers Series, edited by Fred Lewis Pattee. In his introduction Pattee developed further many of the ideas he had held for twenty years.[217]

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[217]Fred Lewis Pattee, Mark Twain, Representative Selections, Harry Hayden Clark, general editor; The American Writers Series (New York: American Book Company, 1935), pp. xi-lii. Pattee's criticism of Twain first appeared in his A History of American Literature Since 1870 (New York: The Century Company, 1915), pp. 45-62. Pattee said, (p. 58) "There are three Mark Twains: there is Mark Twain, the droll comedian, who wrote for the masses and made them laugh; there is Mark Twain, the indignant protester, who arose ever and anon to true eloquence in his denunciation of tyranny and pretense; and there is Mark Twain, the romancer, who in his boyhood had dreamed by the great river and who later caught the romance of a period in American life." According to Pattee, this third Mark Twain was the only one who would live on in American literature. Yet Twain still did not live up to his potentialities, and Pattee said (p. 61) that if he had possessed more constructive skill and the ability to develop character, he might have said the last word in American fiction.

Pattee's next major Twain criticism was "On the Rating of Mark Twain," American Mercury, XIV (June, 1928), 183-91. Pattee admitted, with Brooks, that Twain was a thwarted genius, but he blamed Twain's environment, not his family and friends (pp. 187-8). Not a true literary great (p. 191), Twain had been overrated. He was first of all a lecturer (p. 189), and was not a great reformer: "A large area of Mark Twain's writings (p. 187), the most arid of all, was written in the crusader spirit, with the suppressed premise always that it was still possible to make the world over."

Twain was still overrated,[218] and had harmed himself by attempting unsuccessfully to join the aristocrats of literature. He could have achieved literary greatness by remaining in his Missouri environment.[219] Pattee then added, "All of the great masters have been men with a message--Mark Twain taught us nothing: he entertained us, he told romantic stories, he made us laugh.[220] Pattee said that the Gilded Age had been in dire need of a dictator:

> But no dictator arose, only a satirist. Mark Twain did lay about him lustily. Satire he wrote in the hotness of wrath, satire touching every sore spot in the national life. A Don Quixote figure, he rode furiously in every direction tilting at the windmills of religious fanaticism, political chicanery, social inanity, judicial injustice, sentimental romance.[221]

But despite Twain's vehement attacks, Pattee considered him a failure as a social critic:

> He accomplished nothing. Only a few, when the whole population is considered, ever read The Gilded Age, and these few read it not for its satire: they read it in spite of its satire. . . . If it was a bombshell thrown at entrenched wickedness to make way for justice and right, why the hundreds of farcial illustrations in the first edition? Why the sentimentality of the love story, even in Mark Twain's sections?
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> Mark Twain was no economic critic, no thinker let

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[218] Pattee, Mark Twain, Representative Selections, op. cit., p. lx.

[219] Ibid., p. xlviii.

[220] Ibid., p. li.

[221] Ibid., pp. xli-xlii.

> loose in the economic jungle of an epoch. Emotionalism, Peter Pan logic, picturesqueness, but no criticism. The man lacked honesty, lacked detachment, lacked ability to see himself in perspective. No man more completely a citizen of the Gilded Age than Mark Twain himself.[222]

Edgar Lee Masters published a full-length volume in 1938, Mark Twain, A Portrait, and although chiefly an echo of Brooks and larded with scholarly inaccuracies, Masters' volume did contain several telling points on the occasions when he considered the satire in Twain. In addition to seconding the Brooksian repression theory, Masters added that Twain himself was weak, and with little resistance allowed his life to be guided by others. Admitting that Twain, in his literature, gradually turned to satire, Masters followed with his most acute critical observation:

> Twain did laugh a good deal to the last. But he laughed at manikins, at small frauds, at petty cheats. The great mountebanks and influences who were devouring his country had his friendly and unsuspecting association.[223]

Although Twain did have a natural genius for satire, he never succeeded in it because he had no philosophy of life, no genuine convictions about any important thing,[224] and possessed a permanently immature mind.[225] Masters con-

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[222] Ibid., p. xliii.

[223] Edgar Lee Masters, Mark Twain, A Portrait (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 85.

[224] Ibid., p. 169.

[225] Ibid., p. 100.

cluded that Twain, unlike Whitman who risked his popularity by attacking the really important national evils,[226] never jeopardized his own position: "Mark Twain means safe water. He chose his pseudonym with fatal accuracy, whether meaning to do so or not. He always sailed in safe water."[227] Masters, like Brooks, regretted that Twain did not become a great national satirist,[228] and also said, "It was reserved to Mark Twain to be the most tragic victim of the Gilded Age."[229]

In 1942 Walter Fuller Taylor, considering only one phase of Twain's satire, said his economic criticism was not profound or steady, but was, nevertheless, abundant and important.[230] Taylor considered A Connecticut Yankee the best economic novel of its time--better than Looking Backward or A Hazard of New Fortunes.[231] Twain, however, was not the greatest economic critic of the time. Taylor pointed out that the economy in The Gilded Age was that of the frontier,

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[226] Ibid., p. 98.

[227] Ibid., p. 101.

[228] Ibid., p. 9.

[229] Ibid., p. 238.

[230] Walter Fuller Taylor, The Economic Novel in America (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1942), p. 144.

[231] Ibid., p. 121.

not the machine,[232] and that Twain was not keenly aware, in 1873, of the problem of attaining social justice in an industrialized society,[233] nor did he ever see dangers that might be caused by technological unemployment.[234] He also adapted himself to conditions, rather than attack major evils,[235] and did not satirize the "machine," because he was carried away in enthusiasm for it.[236] Taylor's conclusions were:

> As a businessman, he joined his contemporaries in glorifying the machine, fascinated with the possibilities of exploiting it and of controlling nature through it. As a satirist, he joined his contemporaries in attacking never the machine itself, but certain economic abuses, such as speculation, which the machine, with its enormous release of energy, had made more dangerous.
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> . . . . . .
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> Mark Twain's, then, was a comparatively simple, coherent philosophy of acquisition, control of obvious abuses, and concern for the interests of the whole people. Within him, satirist, capitalist, and democrat worked toward the same object--that of enjoying the uses of the machine, and lessening the abuses.[237]

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[232] Ibid., p. 124.

[233] Ibid., p. 127.

[234] Ibid., p. 131.

[235] Ibid., p. 129.

[236] Ibid., p. 132.

[237] Ibid., p. 146. Taylor's ideas were largely carry-overs from his earlier article, "Mark Twain and the Machine Age," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1938), 384-96.

In 1943 another full length study of Twain appeared--John DeLancey Ferguson's Mark Twain: Man and Legend.[238] Not as important as Wagenknecht's work, this book nevertheless is important because it clears away several fallacies about Twain that had evolved through the years. Ferguson took more of an anti-Brooks than a pro-DeVoto stand. A son of the Southwest,[239] Twain's natural instincts were for humor,[240] and in later life he never regretted that he had been a humorist.[241] Neither Twain's mother, wife, nor friends had been repressing influences upon him;[242] he, however, was by nature extravagant, emotional, moody, and inconsistent.[243] Ferguson, who depicted Twain's life as a series of personal misfortunes that helped embitter him, believed that he had many shortcomings as a social critic. Confident that the present was better than the past, ". . . Mark still accepted unquestionably the nineteenth-century

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[238] John DeLancey Ferguson, Mark Twain: Man and Legend (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), 352 pp.

[239] Ibid., p. 15.

[240] Ibid., p. 36.

[241] Ibid., p. 319.

[242] Ibid., pp. 41, 152, 123.

[243] Ibid., p. 215.

dogma of progress. In common with most of his contemporaries, he identified material conveniences with moral growth. . . ."[244] Twain's satire against rulers and governments was also often ineffective because his mind, not the greatest in the world, failed to achieve any clear understanding of the "state" and of the problems which arose in governing it.[245] He also had a tendency to avoid satire whenever it might touch his personal friends. He would often bitterly excoriate some ruler whom he did not know personally, but if a personal acquaintance did something harmful to others, he remained strangely silent.[246] A final shortcoming of Twain as a critic, according to Ferguson, was that with him always fluctuating between invective and burlesque in his critical writings, ". . . there was seldom a middle way between these when Mark's feelings were stirred. . . . True satire calls for a cool head and a cool heart, and Mark's were inflammable."[247]

Two good short studies appeared in 1943. Floyd

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[244] Ibid., p. 205.

[245] Ibid., p. 244.

[246] Ibid., p. 249. Twain's refusal to publish a work arraigning Standard Oil, with which his friend H. H. Rogers was associated, is a good example of this point.

[247] Ibid., pp. 194-95.

Stovall,[248] following DeVoto for the most part, believed the Bostonian literary influence was extremely beneficial to Twain. "He remained a Westerner, but his intellectual life was deepened and his literary style was improved by acquaintance with the culture of the American East and of Europe."[249] Twain satirized the Gilded Age, but he was not a great satirist, for the reasons advanced by many other critics: he was too contradictory, emotional, and swept up by the tide of the times.[250] "He was the greatest American writer of his generation, but he was not great enough to understand either himself or his country."[251] The second work, by Thomas M. Pearce,[252] depicted Twain as highly interested in social reform, but not completely capable of writing successful social criticism:

> In San Francisco, he had written about corruption in the police department. Beneath the surface his passion for justice was a deep as Thoreau's, and his zeal for shedding light on dark places as earnest as Whitman's.[253]

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[248] Floyd Stovall, American Idealism (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), pp. 112-16.

[249] Ibid., p. 112.

[250] Ibid., pp. 113, 115.

[251] Ibid., p. 116.

[252] Thomas M. Pearce, Democracy in Progress (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1943), pp. 204-13.

[253] Ibid., p. 207.

Pearce, speaking about The Gilded Age, then said:

> The authors intended it as a satire on speculation in western lands, Congressional subsidies to railroads, fee to lobbyists and even to Congressmen for filling the "pork barrel." Neither Twain nor Warner could write such a book. Frank Norris could and Upton Sinclair, but they were not to publish novels for another thirty years.[254]

Pearce then contrasted, in the section immediately following, Twain's lack of social criticism by describing William Cullen Bryant's many reform activities.[255]

Carl Van Doren revised some of his earlier ideas when, in 1946, he published a revised edition of his study of the American novel. In the early edition[256] Van Doren had followed Brooks. Twain's satire had been repressed by his wife and Howells;[257] he was primarily a fun-maker, although he grew out of this somewhat in later years;[258] and ". . . he shared in the furor of exploitation which followed the war and against which he had no artistic ideals to fortify him.[259]

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[254] Ibid., p. 209.

[255] Ibid., pp. 210-12.

[256] Carl Van Doren, The American Novel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), pp. 157-84.

[257] Ibid., p. 165.

[258] Ibid., p. 158.

[259] Ibid., p. 164.

In the revised edition of 1946[260] Van Doren still believed, but not so firmly as before, that Twain had been repressed, and still did not regard him as a great satirist:

> Though his sensitive conscience had accused him of playing safe, he had probably spoken out on most of the matters which most concerned him. He was not primarily a thinker, but rather a natural force which had moved through the world laughing. . . .[261]

Speaking of The Gilded Age, Van Doren said:

> The age was gilded. Mark Twain, just arrived from simpler regions, mocked the tedious formalisms and accused the brazen corruption of the capital. To judge by his share of this joint record he was ready to become a national satirist and to hurl his laughter against a thousand abuses deserving scorn.
>
> He did not become a national satirist or assume at least in public the unpopular role of critic of the age. Instead, urged by Howells, he turned back to his Middle Western recollections. . . .[262]

Van Doren concluded that what satirical attacks Twain did make were merely typical of the "average" American of his day.[263]

Three writers who in 1947 dealt briefly with Twain will serve to conclude this chapter. The first, Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr.,[264] considered Twain only as he fitted

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[260]Carl Van Doren, The American Novel 1789-1939 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), pp. 137-62.

[261]Ibid., p. 162.

[262]Ibid., p. 145.

[263]Ibid., p. 159.

[264]Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr., American Dreams, A Study of American Utopias (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1947), pp. 43-50.

into his own study of American utopian literature. Referring only to "The Curious Republic of Gondour," Parrington pointed out that Twain's idea of awarding votes according to intellectual capacity was ". . . at cross purposes with his own, more fundamental faith in democracy."[265] Parrington stated, as a reason why Twain did not concern himself more with reform, that "The post Civil War period was not one in which attacks on the established system were encouraged."[266] The second writer, Henry Bamford Parkes,[267] who considered Huckleberry Finn Twain's only great book, believed with Brooks that Twain had been ". . . intimidated by the standards of gentility and decorum Eastern society imposed upon him, resenting them yet at the same time lacking sufficient self-assurance to reject them."[268] Parkes' other ideas about Twain serve to sum up briefly the feelings of many other critics, although his total evaluation of Twain differs from the Brooksian interpretation. For Parkes Twain is ". . . almost an embodiment of the American norm . . . a case study of how the agrarian American submitted to capitalism." He

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[265] Ibid., p. 50.

[266] Ibid., p. 43.

[267] Henry Bamford Parkes, The American Experience (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 229-61.

[268] Ibid., p. 260.

recognized that Twain ". . . despised pretense and sham, and hated injustice and exploitation." But he felt that Mark Twain was unequipped to be an effective satirist: ". . . he had no coherent social philosophy, . . no capacity for abstract thought. . . ." "Moreover, he was personally as eager as most other Americans to achieve material success. . . ." Consequently, "Unable to formulate any coherent attitude towards the transformation of American life, he relieved his feelings in books denouncing feudal Europe. . . ."[269]

After all these pros and cons, it seems only fair to let Van Wyck Brooks have the last word. Brooks, in a recent brief study, revised several of his earlier ideas.[270] Perhaps the best summation of the revised Brooksian argument was made in a book review by Robert E. Spiller:

> He has not changed his mind, but he has changed his values. The old schizophrenic split is still at the heart of this new interpretation, but the anxiety about it is gone. Mark Twain now appears as the greatest of

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[269] Loc. cit.

[270] Van Wyck Brooks, The Times of Melville and Whitman (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1947), pp. 283-300. Many years earlier Brooks had revised The Ordeal of Mark Twain (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1933), 325 pp. Although the book omitted a few derogatory references to Olivia Clemens, adopted a more conservative tone by changing some of the positive statements to relative ones, and added a few more details, the theory that Twain had a balked personality remained essentially the same as in the 1920 edition.

> our folk-artists, the most versatile of our local colorists, a Don Quixote in the rusty armor of Southern chivalry, and a sellout to Andrew Carnegie.[271]

Now realizing the importance and the enriching qualities of the frontier on Mark Twain's development as an artist,[272] Brooks also, and at long last, admitted that Twain was often downright funny![273] Although he still believed that Twain's early Calvinistic training and later genteel environment inhibited his presentations,[274] and that these works were always strongly censored, he did admit, however, that most of the censorship was voluntary.[275] Brooks, despite his condescensions, still could not wholly praise Twain because he had not helped give America a national literature. His supposed cultural independence, exemplified best in Innocents Abroad, was merely cultural ignorance. Brooks believed that Emerson and Hawthorne both helped develop a national literature, but that Twain actually made few contributions to it.[276]

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[271]Robert E. Spiller, "The Times of Melville and Whitman," American Literature, XX (January, 1949), 459-61.

[272]Brooks, The Times of Melville and Whitman, op. cit., p. 284.

[273]Ibid., p. 296.

[274]Ibid., p. 290.

[275]Ibid., p. 285.

[276]Ibid., pp. 295-96.

Thus we have seen the gradual development of Mark Twain criticism, as shown in this representative sampling of critical attitudes. Twain, once merely the "jolly-joker," and not considered a great literary figure, underwent a revival which placed him near the top of American letters. The inevitable reaction followed, and now it appears that Mark Twain has dropped a few notches into a more appropriate position in American literature. Critics, aligning themselves with either Van Wyck Brooks or Bernard DeVoto, have fought (at times acrimoniously) over Mark Twain until it has become difficult to separate the accurate critical judgments from the biased prejudices and *a priori* theories.

The second broad purpose of this thesis will be to look at the record, as Wagenknecht did in his penetrating study, and see how far Mark Twain really went in social criticism. This will also show which of the many critical ideas held toward Mark Twain seems most accurate today.

CHAPTER II

WARS

Since a moot question in criticism of Mark Twain is the extent to which his talent and interest turned toward social criticism, it is pertinent to examine the record, and ascertain how much social criticism Mark Twain expressed. One of the first and most interesting aspects to be considered is his attitude toward both war in general and wars in particular.

I. WAR IN GENERAL

In Mark Twain's lifetime the United States was a participant in three wars, and neutral during several others. Military conflicts in Twain's lifetime were often topics of national importance, and furnished much material for literary men. Twain's attitudes toward the various wars are more interesting, and often more puzzling, than those of many other American writers. On war, as on almost every other subject, Twain was annoyingly inconsistent. Sometimes the violence of his jingoistic tirades made it seem that Twain was ready to join the fight personally. At other times he was savage in his denunciation of war, while on still other occasions he blandly ignored wars, as if they simply did not exist.

Whether this silence was the result of an ivory tower or isolationist attitude, a desire not to become involved in highly partisan discussions for personal reasons, or merely a lack of interest on Twain's part, it is one of the most interesting questions in this investigation.

There were times when the brutality of war almost sickened Twain. Realizing that the course of all history had been one of perpetual strife, Twain had Satan say, in The Mysterious Stranger, "And always we had wars, and more wars, and still other wars--all over Europe, all over the world."[1] Satan then showed the future which contained ". . . slaughters more terrible in their destruction of life, more devastating in their engines of war, than any we had seen."[2] Progress was merely the invention of weapons more deadly than ever before known. War was inevitable, as long as the human race remained on earth.

Although the accuracy of the following passage about Twain's Civil War experiences has been disproved, the feeling and general attitude toward war can be considered his own:

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[1]Samuel L. Clemens, The Portable Mark Twain, Bernard DeVoto, editor (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 718.

[2]Loc. cit.

> In a little while the man was dead. He was killed in war, killed in fair and legitimate war. . . . The thought of him got to preying upon me every night; I could not drive it away, the taking of that unoffending life seemed such a wanton thing. And it seemed an epitome of war, that all war must be just that the killing of strangers against whom you feel no personal animosity. . . . My campaign was spoiled. It seemed to me that I was not rightly equipped for this awful business. . . . I resolved to retire from this avocation of sham soldiership while I could save some remnant of my self-respect.[3]

Huck Finn's feelings closely paralleled these, despite his rough and ready outdoor life, and they too can safely be interpreted as Twain's own. Wagenknecht remarked, concerning Huck's attitude toward the Shepherdson-Grangerford feud:

> His instinctive, personal reaction to war is one of intense aversion always. Huck Finn turns physically sick at the sight of the feud, disgusted by the slaughter and killing practiced by the damned human race.[4]

At times Twain had a keen sense of the preciousness of life, and nowhere was he more bitter in the denunciation of war than in his "War Prayer:

> O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle--be Thou near them! With them, in spirit, we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble

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[3]Clemens, "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed," The Portable Mark Twain, op. cit., pp. 138-39.

[4]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 257.

> homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, . . . broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it--for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet![5]

Wagenknecht summed up Twain's attitude toward war when he mentioned that Franklin D. Roosevelt took his "New Deal" phrase from Mark Twain:

> He [Twain] would be in favor of a "New Deal" and yet a newer "New Deal" among the sons of men, and if the day comes when we have a warless world, then, at last, the boy from Hannibal will take his place among the prophets.[6]

Yet this great humanitarian was more than ready to advance the cause of certain specific conflicts. In fact, there were times, especially at the outbreak of the Spanish American War, when he thought the American cause just, holy, and utterly noble. Despite his generalizations against war, he could seem, at times, almost bloodthirsty. If there was to be progress in the world, blood must be shed. Although Twain's favorite heroine, Joan of Arc, shrank from the sight of blood, and on one occasion wept while sitting among a

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[5]Clemens, "The War Prayer," The Portable Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 582.

[6]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 265.

pile of corpses because she could not help thinking about the bereaved mothers, yet Joan of Arc's battles were holy because progress was being made in the direction of freedom.[7] "The Boss," in the Connecticut Yankee once said on this topic:

> . . . All gentle cant and philosophizing to the contrary notwithstanding, no people in the world ever did achieve their freedom by goody-goody talk and moral suasion; it being immutable law that all revolutions that will succeed must begin in blood, whatever may answer afterward. If history teaches anything, it teaches that. What this folk needed, then, was a Reign of Terror and a guillotine. . . .[8]

The few references that Twain ever made to the French Revolution were of this type. War was evil, but on occasions it could be the lesser of two evils:

> There were two "Reigns of Terror," if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the "horrors" of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the ax compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heartbreak?[9]

Many of the English Romantics at first supported the French

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[7]Samuel L. Clemens, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1899), I, 239.

[8]Samuel L. Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, 1939), p. 741.

[9]Ibid., p. 708.

Revolution, but later repudiated the cause when cruelty and bloodshed went too far. Yet Twain always felt the Revolution did more good than harm, and even as late as 1889 said it was ". . . next to the 4th of July and its results. . . the noblest and holiest thing and the most precious thing that ever happened in this earth."[10] Perhaps Twain never looked closely at the French Revolution, or never thought deeply about it. One of his major defects was making snap judgments without deep thought. Possessor of a relatively undisciplined mind, Twain seldom thought things out or traced incidents back to their sources, and relied more upon sentiment and emotions than upon intellect.

One could be reasonably sure that when Twain did oppose a war, the conflict was far away, either in space or time, and usually did not concern him personally. If the United States was not involved, he could be smugly moral. If some downtrodden minority was being cruelly oppressed, Twain's protests were vehement. These facts will be shown in the more detailed discussion of several specific wars.

II. THE MEXICAN WAR

In Mark Twain's voluminous writings this is almost

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[10]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 260.

all he ever said about the Mexican War:

> Then came the Mexican War. . . . A company of infantry was raised in our town and Mr. Hickman, a tall, straight, handsome athlete of twenty-five, was made captain of it and had a sword by his side and a broad yellow stripe down the leg of his gray uniform pants. And when that company marched back and forth through the streets in its smart uniforms--which it did several times a day for drill--its evolutions were attended by all the boys whenever school hours permitted. I can see that marching company yet, and I can almost feel again the consuming desire that I had to join it. But they had no use for boys of twelve and thirteen, and before I had a chance in another war the desire to kill people to whom I had not been introduced had passed away.[11]

Albert Bigelow Paine stated that during the close of the Mexican War Twain ". . . was given charge of the extras with news from the front. . . ."[12] and that ". . . the burning importance of his mission, the bringing of news hot from the field of battle, spurred him to endeavors that won plaudits and success."[13] DeLancey Ferguson, however, checking details more closely, stated that ". . . Chapultapec, the last major battle of the war, was fought less than six months after John Clemens died. Hence Sam, instead of printing the extras,

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[11]Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, Albert Bigelow Paine, editor (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1924), II, 216.

[12]Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain, A Biography (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1912), I, 78.

[13]Loc. cit.

only delivered them. . . ."[14] because his apprenticeship to Joseph P. Ament had not yet begun.

Twain had little to say about this war, one of the most unjust campaigns ever carried on by the United States. President James K. Polk, his eyes fixed upon the Mexican land of California, probably sought war with Mexico, and ordered General ZacharyTaylor, in Texas, to cross the Nueces River into Mexico. Polk then declared war, theoretically because minister John Slidell had not been received by the Mexicans. General Taylor, however, had invaded Mexico before war was actually declared. The war was soon over, and as a result of the treaty of Guadelupe Hidalgo, February 2, 1848, Mexico ceded California, Texas, and the New Mexico Territory. This land now comprises roughly one quarter of the present area of the United States.

In addition to sheer imperialism, one of the motives behind the annexation was the prospective addition of more slave states to the Union. A controversial storm developed, and while Southern states thought the move a glorious chapter in the history of the country, Northerners, among them James Russell Lowell, bitterly castigated the action. The war was highly popular, however, in the Mississippi Valley,

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[14]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 33.

because the settlers there dreamed of vast new wealth to be had on a new frontier.[15]

It might seem strange to note that although the Mexican War was popular with the Mississippi Valley residents, Mark Twain remained almost completely silent. It should be noted, however, that Twain was only thirteen years old at the time. During the war Twain visualized nothing but the pomp, glory, and ceremony of the conflict. When he matured, the Civil War was rapidly approaching, and there were more important things than the Mexican War to talk about. Under no circumstances can Twain be censured simply because of the infrequency of references in his writings to the Mexican War.

One can, however, wonder why he remained so silent about it in later years when he openly criticized many wars of aggression, some of which were long since over. The tempting conclusion is a somewhat Brooksian idea that Twain had a guilty conscience, because he himself rambled about for years in that territory virtually stolen from Mexico. Had the United States not taken this land, he would never have had the opportunity to seek his fortune in Washoe. The land was as important to him as it was to all the other speculators who flocked there. Some weight is added to this

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[15]Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, The Growth of the American Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), I, 592.

theory when one considers that whereas he often spoke of minority groups or races in the West, he never mentioned the numerous Spanish or Mexicans.

Theorizing, however interesting, is not sound scholarship, and Twain cannot be chided for a lack of social consciousness on this point. Twain said next to nothing about the Mexican War, but under the circumstances said as much as he (or any other average man) might have been expected to say.

III. THE CIVIL WAR

Much more puzzling than Mark Twain's silence about the Mexican War was his reaction to the Civil War. Again there was a marked degree of reticence, but this time on a topic of prime importance. His one literary work dealing specifically with the Civil War was "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed," and that might never have been written had not the Keokuk Gate City subtly questioned Twain's war record after he had lectured there in 1885.[16] It is quite possible that Twain, with little delay, composed this burlesque sketch before any insidious rumors

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[16]Fred W. Lorch, "Mark Twain and the 'Campaign That Failed,'" American Literature, XII (January, 1941), 463.

could begin attacking his high reputation.

Many of the Mark Twain critics have passed over his Civil War experiences either summarily or almost contemptuously. Edgar Lee Masters said Twain went West in 1861 because he foresaw conscription and wanted to avoid it. All he was interested in was making money.[17] Van Wyck Brooks claimed, "Mark Twain's brief career as a soldier exhibited, as we see, just the characteristics of a 'throwback,' a reversion to a previous infantile frame of mind."[18] Floyd Stovall believed Twain went West because he found military life too unexciting;[19] Fred Lewis Pattee merely mentioned that Twain spent ". . . a few weeks in a self-recruited troop that fell to pieces before it could join the Confederate army. . . ."[20] Carl Van Doren spoke cursorily of Twain's ". . . brief period of comically bloodless service in the Confederate army,"[21] and added elsewhere, "He joined a volunteer company of young enthusiasts who were not quite sure which side they meant to choose and who broke

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[17]Masters, op. cit., p. 36.

[18]Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 53.

[19]Stovall, op. cit., p. 112.

[20]Pattee, History of American Literature Since 1870, op. cit., p. 49.

[21]Van Doren, The American Novel 1789-1939, op. cit., p. 140.

up as soon as the war took on professional aspects."[22] Even Albert Bigelow Paine tended to look lightly upon Twain's Civil War experiences, for he had said:

> A good many companies were forming in and about Hannibal, and sometimes purposes were conflicting and badly mixed. Some of the volunteers did not know for a time which invader they intended to drive from Missouri soil, and more than one company in the beginning was made up of young fellows whose chief ambition was to have a lark regardless as to which cause they might eventually espouse.[23]

Recent scholars have, as accurately as may ever be expected, outlined Twain's military activities before he left for the West. The short series of "Quintus Curtius Snodgrass" letters, now presumed to have been written by Twain, deal partly with Confederate military drills in and around New Orleans. Ernest E. Leisy said, ". . . It appears not unlikely that Clemens, though not formally enlisted in the Confederate service in Louisiana, may have drilled for

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[22]Van Doren, "Mark Twain," Dictionary of American Biography, op. cit., IV, 193.

[23]Paine, op. cit., I, 163. Cyril Clemens, who has been amazingly inaccurate as a Mark Twain critic, added some readable but utterly false information about Twain's Civil War days: "When the Civil War destroyed all river traffic, Sam joined a Confederate cavalry regiment, and after a while drifted into the river service of the Confederacy. In a few months he was captured by a Federal force and imprisoned in a tobacco warehouse at St. Louis. He managed to escape from prison and joined his elder brother, Orion, who edited a paper at Keokuk, Iowa." From Cyril Clemens, "Mark Twain: 1835-1910," Overland Monthly, LXXXVII (April, 1929), 103.

a short time with some informal military unit in New Orleans."[24] DeLancey Ferguson said basically the same thing, and added, "The satire upon the ways of drill sergeants and the fatigue of standing at parade rest has a specific quality which suggests firsthand knowledge."[25] Ferguson pointed out with assurance that Twain's dislike of the drills would have been obvious: "He was always physically indolent except when he was doing things he enjoyed, and taking orders would be particularly distasteful to a pilot who had been in the habit of giving them."[26]

The series of letters was short-lived, and Twain's military experiences around New Orleans could not have been more than haphazard. There was no sustained or profound social criticism in these letters, and the experiences seemed to have been more of a lark than anything else.[27]

Twain returned from New Orleans a few days after Lincoln issued his first call for troops.[28] At that time St.

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[24]Samuel L. Clemens, The Letters of Quintus Curtius Snodgrass, Ernest E. Leisy, editor (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1946), p. ix.

[25]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 60.

[26]Loc. cit.

[27]Perhaps Twain's lack of social consciousness on this point is not as strange as it seems. George H. Devol, in his autobiographical book, Forty Years a Gambler on the Mississippi (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1926), pp. 123-26, said he participated in the same drills, and took the same skylarking attitude toward them.

[28]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 61.

Louis was seething with divided sentiment, and there were several disturbances, all of which Twain undoubtedly knew of, as he was then receiving Masonic orders in St. Louis.[29] When Twain returned to Hannibal, he again found wavering sentiment. Strongly pro-Southern a few weeks before, the town had suddenly become ardently pro-Union.[30] Twain soon set out with a group, much like Tom Sawyer's "band," and, like many other Missouri "volunteers" at that time, prowled about in highly disorganized fashion for a while. Orion Clemens, in the meantime, had received his appointment as Secretary of the Washoe Territory, and before long Twain left his marauding band in order to go West with Orion.

Many critics have dealt harshly with Twain on this desertion of military duty. Even Wagenknecht, who tried not to criticize Twain on this point, had to admit:

> Absence of purpose stands out clearly. . . . Mark Twain has done no coherent or consecutive thinking either about war in general or about this war in particular. He was never very clear about the Civil War, not even as he considered it retrospectively in later years. . . . Sam Clemens was supremely uninterested in the great problems involved. . . .[31]

Fred Lorch was another critic who, although he vehemently

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[29] Loc. cit.

[30] Loc. cit.

[31] Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 252.

denied that Twain went West merely for gold, had to admit that Twain's war record was slightly tainted.[32] But perhaps there were extenuating circumstances. As has been pointed out, St. Louis, Hannibal, and all Missouri were seething with divided sentiment. In an area so unsettled about the great problems facing the country, is it any wonder that Twain, whose thoughts were always swayed strongly by his unstable emotions, was not able to reach any definite conclusions about the War? Then too, he had virtually no alternative but to head West. The river was closed except to military boats, and the pay there was markedly less than on the commercial boats.[33] Piloting for either army was extremely hazardous, and Twain had said frankly: "I'm not very anxious to get up in a glass perch and be shot at by either side. I'll go home and reflect on the matter."[34] While in the Army, Twain experienced several weeks of extreme discomfort from heavy rains, and found the nearby residents none too friendly.[35] Further army life would have been utterly unbearable for as irresponsible a man as Twain. In addition, he, more than

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[32]Lorch, "Mark Twain and the 'Campaign That Failed,'" op. cit., 470.

[33]Ibid., p. 464.

[34]Paine, op. cit., I, 161.

[35]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 62.

many human beings, would not have been able to kill in warfare. Always extremely sensitive, Twain hid under a gruff exterior an intense dislike of hurting anything or anyone. Despite his many verbal battles, Twain never resorted to physical violence. This becomes even more significant when one considers the years he spent in the lawless Washoe Territory. Consequently, it seems probable that Twain, whose ideas on the war were not yet formed, found good jobs scarce on the river, military life unbearable, and the thought of killing friends and neighbors unthinkable. When Orion headed for Washoe, he succeeded in getting Twain, after considerable coaxing and urging,[36] to accompany him into the West, where a life more satisfying than along the Mississippi might be possible.

Many critics have taken the attitude that when Twain accompanied Orion to Washoe, he left the Civil War far behind him, because in all Twain's voluminous writings there were no references to the Civil War in Washoe. A closer look, however, at life in Washoe shows that Civil War feeling ran extremely high, and that the Territory was not so divorced from the war as many people thought.

California, adjoining Washoe, remained a trouble spot until 1865, and "Secret Southern organizations flour-

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[36]Lorch, "Mark Twain and the 'Campaign That Failed,'" op. cit., 464.

ished in California cities and mining camps."[37] The Piute Indian War of 1860 had brought hundreds of pro-slavery men to Washoe; they arrived to fight the Indians, but they remained to help the Confederate cause.[38] For a time it looked as though Washoe would go Confederate, but thanks principally to lawyer Bill Stewart, who forced Confederate legal authorities to resign and thus promoted Union sentiment, Washoe was preserved for the Union, and eventually became the new state of Nevada.[39] Nevada soon became of vital importance to the Union, because of the fabulously rich ore found there. This wealth was important in financing the Civil War.[40]

The Civil War was not a forgotten topic in Washoe. When Governor James W. Nye arrived in Carson City, July 8, 1861, he said to the townspeople:

> Allow me to assure you that not one star shall be permitted to be removed from the old (34). Twenty-five million freemen will not permit it. And I have come here to this distant country with the hope of adding one more--a bright and glorious star--Nevada.[41]

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[37]Effie Mona Mack, Mark Twain in Nevada (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 112.

[38]Ibid., p. 116.

[39]Loc. cit.

[40]Jack Frank, "Sin or Scenery," Rocky Mountain Empire Magazine Supplement, The Denver Post, (November 7, 1948), 5.

[41]Mack, op. cit., p. 66.

On the west side of the Humboldt Mountains a town sprang up early in 1861. Named "Dixie" by the Confederate sympathizers there because of Southern military successes in 1861, the town soon became a center of violent controversy. Finally an election was held, and the name changed to "Unionville," and the largest American flag obtainable was flown from a gigantic flagpole in the center of the town.[42] When the transcontinental telegraph was completed in 1861, the Washoe Territorial Legislature sent the first telegram back East as a greeting to President Lincoln on October 23, 1861:

> Nevada for the Union, ever true and loyal! The last born of the nation will be the last to desert the flag! Our aid, to the extent of our ability, can be relied upon to crush the rebellion.[43]

One of the last outbursts of secession sympathy in Washoe occurred in Carson City, November 29, 1861. A group of guerrillas planned to assume control of all the mines. One of their outlaw leaders, Bill Mayfield, stabbed an officer in a saloon. In the ensuing turmoil, troops were called out to prevent an actual Secessionist rebellion.[44] Almost two years later, in the summer of 1863, Governor Nye unwittingly appointed several Secessionists to county

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[42] Ibid., p. 129.

[43] Ibid., p. 123.

[44] Ibid., pp. 117-19.

offices, and Orion Clemens was finally forced to remove them after their actions had become dangerous.[45]

Patriotic rallies were held in both Carson and Virginia Cities after Union victories back East, and war feeling ran high:

> Although Washoe was several thousand miles away from the thick of the fighting in the Civil War, the people were none the less patriotic in raising money, celebrating Union victories, and in keeping down secessionist sentiment. Every invention was used to raise money for the Sanitary Commission, the Civil War version of the Red Cross. Sanitary balls were given, Sanitary fairs were held, and rich ore was donated, run out into silver bars, and forwarded for this work.[46]

It was during this period that Mark Twain turned to journalism on the Virginia City Enterprise, but did he concern himself with the Civil War? He arrived in Unionville a short four months after the trouble there, but he never mentioned it. He also never mentioned Nevada's entrance into the Union, nor did he concern himself with Orion's dismissal of Secessionists from public office. Twain was in Carson City when Bill Mayfield led a Confederate uprising, but we never hear of that from Twain either. He gave pictures of almost all phases of life in Virginia City, but no scenes of war rallies in celebration of Union victories. He made thirteen trips to San Francisco while he was in

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[45] Ibid., p. 308.

[46] Ibid., p. 307.

Washoe,[47] ample opportunity to have heard about war scares in California, but we hear none of them. During his Washoe days Twain referred to the Civil War only four times, and none of the references are of great importance. Once, recalling a Union victory, Twain spoke (with considerable patriotism) of the American flag gleaming in the sun high atop a nearby mountain while stirring news was coming through on the telegraph.[48] On another occasion when the Carson City ladies decided to give a ball for the Sanitary Fund, he asked, in his Enterprise column, whether the funds were to go toward those suffering from the war, or to a Miscegenation Society in the East. Ferguson said of this remark: "It was the jest of a Missouri Copperhead; it could not have been worse timed or in worse taste."[49] A third reference was in a letter to his mother, from Carson City, January 30, 1862, which began with a little four-line poem:

> How sleep the brave who sink to rest
> Far, far from the battle-field's dreadful array,
> With cheerful ease and succulent repast
> Now ask the sun to lend his streaming ray.[50]

Fred Lorch questioned Twain's attitude here:

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[47] Ibid., p. 231.

[48] Samuel L. Clemens, Roughing It (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1913), II, 146.

[49] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 93.

[50] Fred W. Lorch, "Mark Twain's Trip to Humboldt in 1861," American Literature, X (November, 1938), 345. The original poem, by Campbell, implied that the most noble deed of all was to give one's life for one's country upon the battlefield.

> In view of the fact that Sam Clemens had very recently resigned his lieutenancy in the rebel militia of Missouri, after a brief and inglorious "campaign," and that even before he had left Missouri for the West a number of bloody battles of the Civil War had been fought, does not his poem betray a levity about a deeply serious national crisis that is not altogether commendable even in a humorist?[51]

Thus Twain's silence, or occasional joshing demeanor, seems, at first, rather difficult to explain. He, however, explained part of it himself in a letter to the San Francisco Call, from Carson City, November 14, 1863:

> It was finally determined that disloyal persons--persons convicted of treason, and persons of lawful age who have voluntarily borne arms, or held civil or military office under the Confederacy--should be deprived of the privileges of voting in the State of Nevada.[52]

From that and the Union sentiment in Washoe, it now becomes obvious that Twain was virtually forced to keep silent about the war, because he was in no position to do otherwise. Not only his own security, but Orion's was at stake, and had it been shouted about that Twain was a Confederate deserter, the Wild Humorist of the Pacific Slope might never have enjoyed his rousing literary start in the West on the Virginia City Enterprise.

Granting then that Twain was not in much of a position to speak about the Civil War until it had become a thing of

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[51] Ibid., pp. 344-45.

[52] Clemens, The Letters of Quintus Curtius Snodgrass, op. cit., p. 69.

the past, what was his later attitude toward the conflict? Howells would have us believe that Twain had no qualms over writing about it:

> Clemens was entirely satisfied with the result of the Civil War, and he was eager to have its facts and meanings brought out at once in history. He ridiculed the notion, held by many, that "it was not yet time" to philosophize the events of the great struggle; that we must "wait till its passions had cooled," and "the clouds of strife had cleared away." He maintained that the time would never come when we should see its motives and men and deeds more clearly, and that now, now, was the hour to ascertain them in lasting verity.[53]

Twain, "eager" to have the war written about by American writers, merely mentioned in Life on the Mississippi that Sir Walter Scott's romanticism helped bring on the Civil War, and described a few Civil War scenes along the river.[54] In A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court he alluded to the Civil War, but was criticizing humanity, not the war. He was speaking of how peasants often kill their fellow men merely on orders from their masters:

> It reminded me of a time thirteen centuries away, when the "poor whites" of our South who were always despised and frequently insulted by the slave-lords around them, and who owed their base condition simply to the presence of slavery in their midst, were yet pusillanimously ready to side with the slave-lords in all political moves for the upholding and perpetuating of slavery, and did finally shoulder their muskets and pour out their lives in

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[53]Howells, My Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 36.

[54]Samuel L. Clemens, Life on the Mississippi (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, 1939), pp. 160-63, 178, 200.

> an effort to prevent the destruction of that very institution which degraded them.[55]

Twain's "Private History of a Campaign That Failed," mentioned previously, treated the War as a joke. Later, in Following the Equator, Twain again mentioned the War, again comically:

> I have seen active service in the field, and it was in the actualities of war that I acquired my training and my right to speak. I served two weeks in the beginning of our Civil War, and during all that time commanded a battery of infantry composed of twelve men. General Grant knew the history of my campaign, for I told it him. I also told him the principle upon which I had conducted it; which was, to tire the enemy. I tired out and disqualified many battalions, yet never had a casualty myself nor lost a man. General Grant was not given to paying compliments, yet he said frankly that if I had conducted the whole war much bloodshed would have been spared, and that what the army might have lost through the inspiring results of collision in the field would have been amply made up by the liberalizing influences of travel.[56]

A final comment on the Civil War was made at a Lincoln's Birthday Celebration in Carnegie Hall, February 11, 1901. Twain said:

> Those were great days, splendid days. What an uprising it was! For the hearts of the whole nation, North and South, were in the war. We of the South were not ashamed; for, like the men of the North, we were fighting for flags we loved; and when men fight for these things, and under these convictions, with nothing sordid to tarnish their cause, that cause is holy, and the blood

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[55]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 807.

[56]Samuel L. Clemens, Following the Equator, A Journey Around the World (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1899), II, 350.

> spilt for it is sacred, the life that is laid down for it is consecrated. To-day we no longer regret the result, to-day we are glad it came out as it did, but we are not ashamed that we did our endeavor; we did our bravest best, against despairing odds, for the cause which was precious to us and which our consciences approved; and we are proud--and you are proud--the kindred blood in your veins answers when I say it--you are proud of the record we made in those mighty collisions in the fields.
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> What an uprising it was! We did not have to supplicate for soldiers on either side. "We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand strong!" That was the music North and South. The very choicest young blood and brawn and brain rose up from Maine to the Gulf and flocked to the standards--just as men always do when in their eyes their cause is great and fine and their hearts are in it. . . .[57]

Twain, in 1901, could then afford to sound almost militaristic. But how unlike Twain's contemporary references to the War, or even to Lincoln, who was depicted, in the "Quintus Curtius Snodgrass Letters," as a frontier oaf![58]

I have quoted Mark Twain's references to the Civil War in their entirety to show his marked silence and seeming lack of concern with the War.[59] Although considered by many people as the champion of liberty and defender of all oppressed groups, Twain, brought up in a slave-holding state, never favored Abolition or spoke about freeing the slaves

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[57]Paine, op. cit., III, 1123-24.

[58]Clemens, The Letters of Quintus Curtius Snodgrass, pp. 45-48.

[59]It is also of interest to note that Twain, a river pilot who undoubtedly heard all the latest news along the Mississippi, and must have heard many stories about the troubles in "Bleeding Kansas" before the Civil War, never once mentioned them in his literary works.

until many years after the War. As has been mentioned, he had a good reason for keeping quiet during the war, but his comparative silence after the War seems to show that if he was a social critic, the Civil War was not a topic with which he concerned himself.

IV. THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Mark Twain took a more outspoken attitude toward war when trouble developed with Spain. At first it seemed that the United States was helping a downtrodden minority gain freedom. For many years Cuba had been subjected to harsh and inefficient rule by Spanish military forces. The Cuban Ten Years' War of 1868 to 1878 was ultimately followed by the Cuban War of Independence in 1895. The latter insurrection had been brought about not only by Spanish atrocities (which were magnified by the sensational American press to increase war spirit in the United States), but also by our Wilson Tariff of 1895, which put a stifling duty upon Cuban sugar and caused widespread Cuban poverty. When the American battleship Maine was sunk in Havana, February 15, 1898, American war spirit was fanned to white heat, and President McKinley reluctantly agreed to war. The "war," which lasted ten weeks, was a complete and easy victory for the United States.

Mark Twain's early reaction to the Spanish-American

War was similar to that of the great majority of Americans, and, like the masses, he was temporarily fooled. Wagenknecht stated, "At the beginning, indeed, he was taken in by it. His chivalry, his sentimentalism, his hatred of monarchy betrayed him."[60] Wagenknecht also pointed out: "He could not be expected to understand the real importance of Cuban sugar in the American market, nor did he know how effectively a race for newspaper circulation may help to stir up a war."[61]

Twain, then, followed the extremely strong war sentiment. Masters criticized this attitude and said:

> America needed a satirist to scorch this swinish wallowing in the horrible desecration of the principles of the Republic. Twain was abroad. He was not interested. He was old and enjoying the adoration of Europe.[62]

It is easy to see, though, why Twain at first believed in the war. He was not bitterly antagonistic to Spain as a nation, or strongly imperialistic. He rejoiced because he thought America was securing liberty for a little nation powerless to obtain freedom unaided.

Living in Vienna at the outbreak of hostilities, Twain found Austria sympathetic with Spain, but his fears that America would act from imperialistic motives were

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[60]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 253.

[61]Loc. cit.

[62]Masters, op. cit., p. 165-66.

relieved when Charles and Jervis Langdon, who arrived in Vienna at this time, brought ". . . straight from America the comforting assurance that the war was not one of conquest or annexation, but a righteous defense of the weak."[63] When, shortly after Theodore Stanton invited Twain to the Decoration Day banquet to be held in Paris, he replied:

> I thank you very much for your invitation and I would accept it if I were foot-free. For I should value the privilege of helping you do honor to the men who rewelded our broken Union and consecrated their great work with their lives; and also I should like to be there to do homage to our soldiers and sailors of today who are enlisted for another most righteous war, and utter the hope that they may make short and decisive work of it and leave Cuba free and fed when they face for home again.[64]

Twain also wrote to Rev. Joseph Twichell, whose son had enlisted in the Army:

> I have never enjoyed a war--even in written history--as I am enjoying this one. For this is the worthiest one that was ever fought, so far as my knowledge goes. It is a worthy thing to fight for one's freedom; it is another sight finer to fight for another man's. And I think this is the first time it has been done.[65]

But as events moved rapidly after the war, his enthusiasm soon cooled. The Philippine Islands were ceded to the United States in the Peace of Paris, and it became ap-

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[63]Paine, op. cit., II, 1062.

[64]Ibid., II, 1063.

[65]Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, Albert Bigelow Paine, editor (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1917), II, 663.

parent that the Philippines were not to be freed. In fact, American troops slaughtered Filipinos who had been hopeful for freedom under Emilio Aguinaldo, and it was several years before the "rebellion" was finally quelled. One of the most unsavory aspects of American history, this drew a storm of protest. "Never in our history had any reform movement attracted a more distinguished group of supporters than that which rallied to the banner of anti-imperialism."[66] Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, Samuel Gompers, Andrew Carnegie, David Starr Jordan, William James, Jane Addams, William Vaughan Moody, Finley Peter Dunne, and Mark Twain were among the many men from all walks of life who opposed the American policy in the Philippines.[67]

Twain, who had at first ardently supported the war, now said, "We started out to set those poor Filipinos free, but why that righteous plan miscarried perhaps I shall never know."[68] He added:

> When the United States sent word to Spain that the Cuban atrocities must end she occupied the highest moral position ever taken by a nation since the Almighty made the earth. But when she snatched the Philippines she stained the flag.[69]

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[66]Morison and Commager, op. cit., II, 339.

[67]Loc. cit.

[68]Paine, op. cit., III, 1116.

[69]Ibid., II, 1064.

Twain refused to go to the polls in 1900. He accused Bryan of "financial heresy" and would not vote for McKinley because he had sent American boys to be shot down under a "polluted" flag in the Philippines.[70] Twain had previously written a characteristic letter to Twichell:

> Apparently we are not proposing to set the Filipinos free and give their islands to them; and apparently we are not proposing to hang the priests and confiscate their property. If these things are so, the war out there has no interest for me.[71]

Twain, however, showed no lack of interest in the Philippine situation and spoke out more frankly and vehemently than upon any other topic of national importance:

> We have bought some islands from a party who did not own them; with real smartness and a good counterfeit of disinterested friendliness we coaxed a confiding weak nation into a trap and closed it upon them; we went back on an honored guest of the Stars and Stripes when we had no further use for him and chased him to the mountains; we are as indisputably in possession of a wide-spreading archipelago as if it were our property; we have pacified some thousands of the islanders and buried them; destroyed their fields; burned their villages, and turned their widows and orphans out-of-doors; furnished heartbreak by exile to some dozens of disagreeable patriots; subjugated the remaining ten millions by Benevolent Assimilation, which is the pious new name of the musket; we have acquired property in the three hundred concubines and other slaves of our business partner, the Sultan of Sulu, and hoisted our protecting flag over that Swag.[72]

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[70]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 254.

[71]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 694.

[72]Paine, op. cit., III, 1164.

Twain remained irate for some time, and was especially bitter in his denunciation of General Funston, who had captured Aguinaldo, ". . . by methods which would disgrace the lowest blatherskite that is doing time in any penitentiary."[73] Wagenknecht said that when Twain published his "Defence of General Funston" in 1902,[74] he grew overnight from a jester to a major prophet.[75] "No sterner piece of excoriation ever came from the pen of an eighteenth-century satirist. For once his tendency to exaggeration did not betray him; not even his imagination could surpass the horrible truth."[76] Twain had attacked Funston by using his theory, expounded in What is Man?, that no individual is personally responsible for his actions. DeLancey Ferguson thought this a masterful satirical stroke:

> It is hard to imagine how the excoriation of Funston could have been made more scathing than by the irony of exculpating him on the ground that not he but his innate disposition was to blame. Mark Twain had not, as he fondly believed, formulated a complete philosophy, but he had forged a superb satiric tool. People who have accused him of moral cowardice must somehow have overlooked this essay, beside the earlier clash with the missionaries. To attack the character of a popular military hero in the hour of his triumph called for courage.[77]

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[73] Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 284.

[74] Samuel L. Clemens, "Defence of General Funston," North American Review, CLXXIV (May, 1902), 613-24.

[75] Wagenknecht, op. cit., pp. 253-54.

[76] Ibid., p. 254.

[77] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 290.

Howells once called Twain's attention to some military outrages in the Philippines, but when Twain tried to write about them, he could think of nothing within the bounds of print, and was forced to walk the floor and curse in his fury.[78] There were times, however, when Twain's protests were placed on paper, chiefly in his Autobiography. One particular outburst concerned the massacre of six hundred natives by General Leonard Wood's forces. The natives had taken refuge in the bottom of an extinct volcano crater, and ". . . apparently the contending parties were about equal as to number--six hundred men on our side, on the edge of the bowl; six hundred men, women, and children in the bottom of the bowl."[79] "The battle began--it is officially called by that name--our forces firing down into the crater with their artillery and their deadly small arms of precision; the savages furiously returning the fire, probably with brickbats. . . ."[80] The entire six hundred natives were killed, while the Americans suffered lighter casualties: "The official report . . . in the interest of future historians of the United States . . . mentioned that a private had one

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[78]Paine, op. cit., III, 1196.

[79]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 188.

[80]Loc. cit.

of his elbows scraped by a missile, and . . . another private had the end of his nose scraped by a missile."[81] Twain then criticized President Roosevelt for publicly lauding the victory, but Twain admitted that he too would do the same thing, for expediency's sake, if he were president.[82] Roosevelt's inquiry about Lieutenant Johnson, a wounded officer, caused Twain to say:

> The President has a warm spot in his heart for anybody who was present at that bloody collision of military solar systems, and so he lost no time in cabling to the wounded hero, "How are you?" And got a cable answer, "Fine, thanks." This is historical. This will go down to posterity.
>
> Johnson was wounded in the shoulder with a slug. The slug was in a shell--for the account says the damage was caused by an exploding shell which blew Johnson off the rim. The people down in the hole had no artillery; therefore it was our own artillery that blew Johnson off the rim. And so it is now a matter of historical record that the only officer of ours who acquired a wound of advertising dimensions got it at our hands, and not the enemies'. It seems more than probable that if we had placed our soldiers out of the way of our own weapons, we should have come out of the most extraordinary battle in all history without a scratch.[83]

It has been shown that he was outspoken, first in his approval of the Spanish-American War, and later in his denunciation of the results. Was he, though, as Ferguson has stated, really courageous? It should be recalled that

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[81] Ibid., I, 189.

[82] Ibid., I, 191.

[83] Ibid., I, 195-96.

Twain, for reasons of his own, sided with a tremendous wave of war sentiment during the early days of the conflict, and that when his attitudes changed and he excoriated General Funston, "the popular military hero in the hour of his triumph," he was voicing the opinions of a powerful minority of important people, all of whom opposed American policy in the Philippines. Twain, then, although expressing himself with a strong degree of social consciousness on this conflict, was not at any time without support from an influential minority. Once again his emotions had led him to sympathize with the downtrodden minority--this time the oppressed Filipinos--but he did not have to stand up alone in his opinions. Intentionally or not, he played safe.

V. OTHER WARS

Late in his life he commented on several other wars. Ferguson mentioned this aspect of Twain's literary career:

> No longer obliged to write for the market, he began to express himself on current affairs in writing. . . . He had plenty of material. The American war against the Filipinos was in full swing, and the briefly allied nations of Europe had just captured Peking and extorted indemnities from China for the lives and property lost in the Boxer rebellion. Kitchener was ending the Boer War by methods of calculated brutality and terrorism; the first reports of the work in the Belgian Congo's heart of darkness were beginning to reach the world.[84]

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[84]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 283.

Twain's divided attitude toward the Boer War in South Africa was characteristic of his uncertainty and instability in dealing with important national or world events. Here again, in his eyes, a little country was being "picked on" by a larger power. He naturally sympathized with the underdog, the country defending itself. He had written about the Boers in Following the Equator, and during the Boer War, he wrote to Twichell:

> I have just been examining chapter LXX of "Following the Equator," to see if the Boer's old military effectiveness is holding out. It reads curiously as if it had been written about the present war.
>
> I believe that in the next chapter my notion of the Boer was rightly conceived. He is popularly called uncivilized, I do not know why. Happiness, food, shelter, clothes, wholesale labor, modest and rational ambitions, honesty, kindliness, hospitality, love of freedom and limitless courage to fight for it, composure and fortitude in time of disaster, patience in time of hardship and privation, absence of noise and brag in time of victory, contentment with humble and peaceful life void of insane excitements--if there is a higher and better form of civilization than this, I am not aware of it and do not know where to look for it.[85]

When the war first broke out, he wrote:

> LONDON, 3.07 P.M., Wednesday, October 11, 1899. The time is up! Without doubt the first shot in the war is being fired to-day in South Africa at this moment. Some man had to be the first to fall; he has fallen. Whose heart is broken by this murder? For, be he Boer or be he Briton, it is murder, & England committed it by the hand of Chamberlain & the Cabinet, the lackeys of Cecil Rhodes & his Forty Thieves, the South Africa Company.[86]

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[85]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 694-95.

[86]Paine, op. cit., II, 1095.

Twain had little sympathy for Cecil Rhodes when he and his men oppressed the Boers. Earlier, in Following the Equator, Twain had said, "Rhodesia is a happy name for that land of piracy and pillage, and puts the right stain upon it."[87]

Although Twain's heart was with the Boers, he was very careful to avoid any public utterances on the subject. Brooks said discerningly about Twain and the Boer War:

> He rages in secret for the weaker; in public, an infallible monitor keeps him on the winning side. All that year, we note, "Clemens had been tossing on the London social tide;" he had to mind his P's and Q's in London drawing-rooms.[88]

Twain thus chose the side of expediency--the side he usually chose on any controversial question. Although he believed ardently in liberty, he also believed in security and power for his own society group, and nowhere is this better expressed than in his letter to Howells, from London, January 25, 1900:

> Privately speaking, this is a sordid and criminal war, and in every way shameful and excuseless. Every day I write (in my head) bitter magazine articles about it, but I have to stop with that. For England must not fall; it would mean an inundation of Russian and German political degradations which would envelop the globe and steep it in a sort of Middle-Age night and slavery which would last till Christ comes again. Even wrong--and she is wrong--England must be upheld. He is an enemy of the human race who shall speak against her now. . . . I talk the war with both sides, always waiting until the other

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[87] Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 361.

[88] Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 139.

> man introduces the topic. Then I say "My head is with the Briton, but my heart and such rags of morals as I have are with the Boer--now we will talk, unembarrassed and without prejudice." And so we discuss, and have no trouble.[89]

Ferguson mentioned that Twain never met Cecil Rhodes, and that it was just as well he did not, because Twain was often captivated by the ruthless tactics of "big" men.[90] If a man's predatory schemes were executed on a gigantic scale, Twain rarely could resist a partial feeling of admiration. In Following the Equator he had said about Rhodes, "I admire him, I frankly confess it; and when his time comes I shall buy a piece of the rope for a keepsake."[91] Ferguson discerningly concluded, "His opinion of Rhodes, as he recorded it in his book, was sound though scathing; the flattery of a personal meeting might have clouded that judgment."[92]

Twain was also concerned with another situation in Africa at this time--the plight of the oppressed natives in

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[89]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 693.

[90]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 268.

[91]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 378. Twain, in II, 184, had considered Warren Hastings in much the same light as he did Rhodes: "He was a capable kind of person was Warren Hastings. . . . Some of his acts have left stains upon his name which can never be washed away, but he saved to England the Indian Empire, and that was the best service that was ever done to the Indians themselves, those wretched heirs of a hundred centuries of pitiless oppression and abuse." Note that Twain, usually considered the spokesman for freedom, is here adopting the "White Man's Burden" attitude.

[92]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 268.

the Congo. Paine said:

> Various plans and movements were undertaken for Congo reform, and Clemens worked and wrote letters and gave his voice and his influence and exhausted his rage, at last, as one after another of the half-organized and altogether futile undertakings showed no results.[93]

King Leopold's Soliloquy was his one public utterance on this topic. Merle Johnson said of it:

> The book is another of the "underdog" manifestations written for and circulated by the Congo Reform Association. Some of the evidence as presented by Mark Twain has since been discredited but Mark's honesty in the matter is still unimpeachable in the light of his many campaigns against similar situations.[94]

While not great literature, the journalistic pamphlet has strength and emotional appeal. Twain tells of the many natives whose hands were amputated as punishment by the Belgian authorities,[95] the malicious ravishing and butchering of the native girls,[96] and the obscene mutilation of the men.[97] Paine stated that Twain's final comment on the subject was a proposed epitaph for King Leopold:

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[93]Paine, op. cit., III, 1231.

[94]Merle DeVore Johnson, A Bibliography of the Works of Mark Twain (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 83.

[95]Samuel L. Clemens, King Leopold's Soliloquy, A Defense of His Congo Rule (Boston: The P. R. Warren Company, 1905), p. 14.

[96]Ibid., p. 9.

[97]Ibid., p. 21.

> Here under this gilded tomb lies rotting the body of one the smell of whose name will still offend the nostrils of men ages upon ages after all the Caesars and Washingtons & Napoleons shall have ceased to be praised or blamed & been forgotten--Leopold of Belgium.[98]

It should be noted that again Twain was not alone in his sumpathies. John Wanamaker, Lyman Abbott, Henry Van Dyke, and David Starr Jordan were among the many prominent citizens interested in Congo reform.[99]

The Boxer Rebellion also roused Twain's interest, and although he spoke at the Berkeley Lyceum in the autumn of 1900 in support of the Boxers,[100] he didn't have too much hope for their cause. He said in a letter to Twichell around that time:

> It is all China, now, and my sympathies are with the Chinese. They have been villainously dealt with by the sceptred thieves of Europe, and I hope they will drive all the foreigners out and keep them out for good. I only wish it; of course I don't really expect it. [101]

In his lecture at the Lyceum Twain once again had backed up the oppressed people defending their homes:

> Why should not China be free from the foreigners, who are only making trouble on her soil? If they would only all go home what a pleasant place China would be for the Chinese! We do not allow Chinamen to come here, and I

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[98]Paine, op. cit., III, 1231.

[99]Clemens, King Leopold's Soliloquy, op. cit., p. 46.

[100]Paine, op. cit., III, 1120.

[101]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 699.

say, in all seriousness, that it would be a graceful thing to let China decide who shall go there.

China never wanted foreigners any more than foreigners wanted Chinamen, and on this question I am with the Boxers every time. The Boxer is a patriot. He loves his country better than he does the countries of other people. I wish him success. We drive the Chinamen out of our country; the Boxer believes in driving us out of his country. I am a Boxer, too, on these terms.[102]

Mark Twain was also concerned with events in Russia near the turn of the century, and nowhere showed more strikingly his dual feelings. Strongly in favor of a Russian Revolution against the Czar, Twain wrote to the revolutionist Tchaykoffsky:

My sympathies are with the Russian revolution, of course. It goes without saying. I hope it will succeed, and now that I have talked with you I take heart to believe it will. Government by falsified promises, by lies, by treachery, and by the butcher knife, for the aggrandizement of a single family of drones and its idle and vicious kin has been borne quite long enought in Russia, I should think. And it is to be hoped that the roused nation, now rising in its strength, will presently put an end to it and set up the republic in its place. Some of us, even the white-headed, may live to see the

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[102]Paine, op. cit., III, 1120. Although there were times when he adopted the "White Man's Burden" attitude, Twain, always inconsistent, also deplored the imperialistic wave sweeping the world. He had said in Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 4-5, "News comes that within this week Siam had acknowledged herself to be, in effect, a French province. It seems plain that all savage and semi-civilized countries are going to be grabbed."

> blessed day when czars and grand dukes will be as scarce there as I trust they are in heaven.[103]

When the Russo-Japanese War broke out, Twain supported the Japanese in the hope that the Czar would be overthrown. Peace came before this could occur, and Twain angrily replied to a newspaper reporter's query:

> Russia was on the highroad to emancipation from all insane and intolerable slavery. I was hoping there would be no peace until Russian liberty was safe. I think that this was a holy war, in the best and noblest sense of that abused term, and that no war was ever charged with a higher mission.
>
> I think there can be no doubt that that mission is now defeated and Russia's chain riveted; this time to stay. I think the Tsar will now withdraw the small humanities that have been forced from him, and resume his medieval barbarisms with a relieved spirit and an immeasurable joy. I think Russian liberty has had its last chance and has lost it.[104]

At this time Twain published his article, "The Tsar's Soliloquy," which claimed that the Emperor controlled Russia not by his own abilities, but merely by his regal clothing

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[103]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 795. Twain also had written an open letter to the Czar, at editorial request, but it was never published. It read in part, "Of course I know that the properest way to demolish the Russian throne would be by Revolution. But it is not possible to get up a revolution there; so the only thing left to do, apparently, is to keep the throne vacant by dynamite until a day when the candidates shall decline with thanks. Then organize the Republic." Ibid., II, 537.

[104]Paine, op. cit., III, 1242.

and titles which awed the common people.[105] He also spoke at the New York Casino, December 18, 1905, for the benefit of the Russian sufferers,[106] but he never became a true champion of the Russian people, who were virtually slaves of the Czar. This can be illustrated by his modification of a telegram sent to Colonel Harvey who, in 1905, invited Twain to dine with the Russian delegates to the Portsmouth Convention. The first two drafts were not mailed:

> TO COLONEL HARVEY.--I am still a cripple, otherwise I should be more than glad of this opportunity to meet those illustrious magicians who with the pen have annulled, obliterated and abolished every high achievement of the Japanese sword and turned the tragedy of a tremendous war into a gay and blithesome comedy. If I may, let me in all respect and honor salute them as my fellow-humorists, I taking third place, as becomes one who was not born to modesty, but by diligence and hard work in acquiring it.
>
> MARK
>
> DEAR COLONEL--No, this is a love-feast; when you call a lodge of sorrow send for me.
>
> MARK.[107]

The following draft, which he mailed, so pleased Harvey that he wanted the Czar to see it:

> TO COLONEL HARVEY.--I am still a cripple, otherwise I should be more than glad of this opportunity to meet the illustrious magicians who came here equipped with

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[105] Samuel L. Clemens, "The Tsar's Soliloquy," North American Review, CLXXX (March, 1905), 321-6.

[106] Paine, op. cit., III, 1254.

[107] Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 776.

> nothing but a pen, and with it have divided the honors of the war with the sword. It is fair to presume that in thirty centuries history will not get done admiring these men who attempted what the world regarded as impossible and achieved it.
>
> MARK TWAIN[108]

Thus Twain backed down from his position as defender of an oppressed nation. Wagenknecht said of Twain, "He can find nothing harsh enough to say, privately. . . ."[109] of those who hindered the Russians' chances for freedom. Ferguson said of Twain and the Russo-Japanese War, "But he withheld his most vitriolic comments, as he continued to withhold 'The War Prayer' and his many criticisms of the God of the Old Testament."[110] Twain had also shown his reluctance to oppose public opinion in his dealings with the Russian revolutionist, Maxim Gorky. At first strong in his support of him, Twain eventually turned a cold shoulder to him when he learned the Russian was living with a woman out of wedlock. New York papers played up the "scandal," and Twain was careful to keep his nose away from the entire Russian problem.

In this chapter it has been shown that Twain, often considered a champion of the "underdog," acted as such a

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[108] Loc. cit.

[109] Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 261. The italics are mine.

[110] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 302.

champion only when it was personally expedient for him to do so. Wagenknecht said:

> It is a fact that Mark Twain deliberately withheld from publication many articles of the tenor of the powerful "War Prayer," that he failed publicly to express his convictions on the Boer War, even going so far as to withdraw an article that he had intended for publication, that he deliberately deceived the public with regard to his opinions concerning the conflict between Russia and Japan.[111]

Twain's heart was always with the suffering, oppressed peoples, but he lived in an age of growing imperialism and was careful not to jeopardize his high position in the hearts of the reading public by outwardly opposing popular opinions. Twain saw the savage imperialistic land grabs all over the world,[112] raged at them in private, and ultimately despaired that the human race was worth saving.

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[111]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 239.

[112]Van Wyck Brooks, in The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 151, questioned Twain's ability to understand the currents of world events into which he was immersed: "In all the years of his traveling to and fro through Europe he divined hardly one of the social tendencies that had so spectacular a denouement within four years of his death."

CHAPTER III

WESTWARD EXPANSION AND IMPERIALISM

Mark Twain lived in an era of booming expansion. While he was a youth, his Mississippi Valley environment was America's western frontier. When the gold rush sent hordes of men pouring over the Rocky Mountains, Twain was not long in following the crowd into the Washoe Territory and California. The Hawaiian Islands, still known in the 1860's as the Sandwich Islands, were the object of many covetous and imperialistic eyes throughout the world. He visited these islands, and became extremely interested in the question of annexation. In later years he traveled over virtually the entire surface of the globe, and saw many small countries gobbled up by imperialistic powers. This chapter will look at several of the larger phases of territorial expansion in Mark Twain's time, and will attempt to determine how much he criticized this movement.

I. THE MISSISSIPPI WEST

Many critics have pointed out that Twain's best work was characterized by a nostalgic yearning for the "good old times" on the Mississippi River--the colorful era that has long since passed away. Russell Blankenship said, "With

deep sorrow he watched America turn its back upon the easy ways of frontier life. . . ."[1] In many ways Twain's attitude resembled Sherwood Anderson's in "Ohio: I'll say We've Done Well." In that sketch the big, black, booming industrialism is made to seem ugly when compared with the idyllic rural life of bygone days.[2] Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Life on the Mississippi are usually considered Twain's greatest portraits of the idyllic old times, and it is not the purpose of this thesis to deny either the enchantment of these books or that Twain did idealize the Old West. Twain was, however, always remarkably inconsistent, and often was swept away in the excitement of westward expansion. Ernest Leisy said, "In this thorough American the spirit of expansion that followed the war was incarnate."[3] The pictures presented in Life on the Mississippi support this statement. Although Twain was often critical of the methods

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[1]Blankenship, op. cit., p. 460.

[2]Sherwood Anderson, "Ohio: I'll Say We've Done Well," In Search of America, Lucy Lockwood Hazard, editor (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1930), pp. 201-8.

[3]Leisy, op. cit., p. 170.

of expansion,[4] he still rejoiced in the material progress shown by the American people. Despite Twain's disappointment in the passing of the once-great river boat trade, he was surprised and pleased to see so much progress along the "Upper River."[5] Throughout his entire career he was always

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[4]He has said in Life on the Mississippi, op. cit., p. 258, "How solemn and beautiful is the thought that the earliest pioneer of our civilization, the van-leader of civilization, is never the steamboat, never the railroad, never the newspaper, never the Sabbath-school, never the missionary--but always whisky! Such is the case. Look history over; you will see. The missionary comes after the whisky--I mean he arrives after the whisky has arrived; next comes the poor immigrant, with ax and hoe and rifle; next, the trader; next, the miscellaneous rush; next, the gambler, the desperado, the highwayman, and all their kindred in sin of both sexes; and next, the smart chap who has bought up an old grant that covers all the land; this brings the lawyer tribe; the vigilance committee brings the undertaker. All these interests bring the newspaper; the newspaper starts up politics and a railroad; all hands turn to and build a church and a jail--and behold! civilization is established forever in the land. But whisky, you see, was the van-leader in this beneficent work. It always is."

[5]Ibid., p. 247:"The big towns drop in, thick and fast, now; and between stretch processions of thrifty farms, not desolate solitude. Hour by hour, the boat plows deeper and deeper into the great and populous Northwest; and with each successive section of it which is revealed, one's surprise and respect gather emphasis and increase. Such a people, and such achievements as theirs, compel homage. This is an independent race who think for themselves, and who are competent to do it, because they are educated and enlightened; they read, they keep abreast of the best and newest thought; they fortify every weak place in their land with a school, a college, a library, and a newspaper; and they live under law. Solicitude for the future of a race like this is not in order."

impressed by progress as shown in statistics. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the following passage, wherein he figuratively smacks his lips in approval of industrialized expansion along the river:

> Helena is the second town in Arkansas, in point of population--which is placed at five thousand. The country about it is exceptionally productive. Helena has a good cotton trade; handles from forty to sixty thousand bales annually; she has a large lumber and grain commerce; has a foundry, oil-mills, machine shops, and wagon factories--in brief, has one million dollars invested in manufacturing industries. She has two railways, and is the commercial center of a broad and prosperous region. The gross receipts of money, annually, from all sources, are placed by the New Orleans Times-Democrat at four million dollars.[6]

Thus it was impossible for Mark Twain to act as an effective social critic of the Gilded Age as it developed along the Mississippi River, because even though his intellect warned him of the many evils and faults in this way of life, his emotions were carried away in enthusiastic approval of materialistic growth which could be measured in huge numbers.

The novel which has usually been considered Twain's best satire on expansion along the Mississippi River is The Gilded Age. Here, at his best, is that great visionary, Colonel Sellers, who was patterned after James Lampton, a cousin of Jane Clemens. Some of the satirical portions of

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[6]Ibid., p. 142.

the novel, however, caricature closer relatives than James Lampton. Twain's father, John Marshall Clemens, had once been head of a company which sought a Congressional appropiation to make the Salt River navigable. The villagers of tiny Florida, Missouri, which was located on this muddy creek, even went so far as to build a boatyard in their enthusiasm, but of course the visionary project soon fell through.[7]

Extensive reading in Mark Twain and in the biographical literature about him shows the extremely close relationship between the personalities of Colonel Sellers and his creator. When this becomes apparent, the effectiveness of much of the satire in The Gilded Age is lost. One cannot help feeling that Twain was almost carried away in his characterization of Colonel Sellers. It is true, of course, that other characters looked at the barren Mississippi land more realistically than Sellers did, for the following passage reveals how ludicrous were Sellers' dreams. This village, Stone's Landing, was to be, according to Sellers, the great metropolis of Napoleon:

> The fellows turned out of their tents, rubbing their eyes, and stared about them. They were camped on the second bench of the narrow bottom of a crooked, sluggish stream, that was some five rods wide in the present good stage of water. Before them were a dozen log cabins, with stick and mud chimneys, irregularly

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[7]Paine, op. cit., I, 20.

> disposed on either side of a not very well defined road, which did not seem to know its own mind exactly, and, after straggling through the town, wandered off over the rolling prairie in an uncertain way, as if it had started for nowhere and was quite likely to reach its destination. Just as it left the town, however, it was cheered and assisted by a guide-board, upon which was the legend "10 Miles to Hawkeye."[8]

But then Colonel Sellers arrived on the scene, and soon bolstered up morale:

> You haven't looked about any yet, gentlemen? It's in the rough yet, in the rough. Those buildings will all have to come down. That's the place for the public square, court-house, hotels, churches, jail--all that sort of thing. About where we stand, the deepo. How does that strike your engineering eye, Mr. Thompson? Down yonder the business streets, running to the wharves. The University up there, on rising ground, sightly place, see the river for miles. That's Columbus River, only forty-nine miles to the Missouri. You see what it is, placid, steady, no current to interfere with navigation, wants widening in places and dredging, dredge out the harbor and raise a levee in front of the town; made by nature on purpose for a mart. Look at all this country, not another building within ten miles, hemp, tobacco, corn, must come here. The railroad will do it, Napoleon won't know itself in a year.[9]

Twain was actually poking fun at the many speculators in western lands at this time, but Colonel Sellers is so like Twain himself in his enthusiasm for material progress that it is difficult to consider this satire as great as it could have been. Edgar Lee Masters thought the satire in The Gilded Age should have hit harder:

> Along comes Colonel Sellers at last about the town of Napoleon. And to think of Jay Gould and the pythons

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[8]Samuel Langhorne Clemens and Charles Dudley Warner, The Gilded Age, A Tale of Today (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1915), I, 168.

[9]Ibid., I, 170.

> of the seventies being passed off and dealt with in terms of a garrulous visionary like this country character from Missouri![10]

But Mark Twain was possessed with that part of the pioneer spirit known as "the vision of the possibility of things." For many years he placed his hope in the Tennessee land, bequeathed to the family by his father. After that it was timber claims, gold and silver mines, and then numerous and varied inventions. This man, ever eager to find wealth and exploit natural resources, could never have been a great critic of the speculation connected with materialistic expansion.

II. THE FAR WEST

When the great gold rush was in full progress in 1849, Mark Twain, from his mid-continent vantage point in Hannibal, saw the bustle of excitement as men flocked toward the Pacific Coast:

> Even with the Mexican War concluded, those were stirring days in Hannibal. Returned volunteers from the war told tales of their adventures, and the great overland trek to California or Oregon was on. In 1849 Sam enviously watched his schoolmate, John RoBards, ride off with his father on the way to California and the gold fields, and saw him return two years later covered with the ineffable glory of travel which had included a return voyage by way of Cape Horn. Sam wanted to travel, too, but his slender earnings were needed at home.[11]

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[10] Masters, op. cit., pp. 116-17.

[11] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 34.

Twain was always the champion of the underdog when a large country was moving in on a smaller one, but in this instance he was too young to think much about how most of the American West had been grabbed from Mexico. Although in Life on the Mississippi he excoriated La Salle and the French for stealing the Mississippi Valley from the Indians,[12] only once did Twain ever mention how the United States obtained its land from Mexico. Through the mouth of Tom Sawyer Twain said, "We've took California away from the Mexicans two or three years ago, so that part of the Pacific Coast is ours now. . . ."[13]

In 1861 Mark Twain went into this western land taken from Mexico, and once again was inflamed with the spirit of expansion. The silver rush began in 1859, and the Washoe

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[12]Clemens, Life on the Mississippi, op. cit., pp. 11-12: "The white man and the red man struck hands and entertained each other during the three days. Then, to the admiration of the savages, La Salle set up a cross with the arms of France on it, and took possession of the whole country for the king--the cool fashion of the time--while the priest piously consecrated the robbery with a hymn. The priest explained the mysteries of the faith "by signs," for the saving of the savages; thus compensating them with possible possessions in heaven for the certain ones on earth which they had just been robbed of. And also, by signs, La Salle drew from these simple children of the forest acknowledgments of fealty to Louis the Putrid, over the water. Nobody smiled at these colossal ironies."

[13]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer Detective, and Other Stories (New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company, 1917), p. 77.

Territory was about to become the state of Nevada. Theoretically the assistant (without pay) to his brother, Orion, the Secretary of the Washoe Territory, Mark Twain actually did little official work. He was far too human, and soon had caught the frenzied fever of speculation. His first act was to stake a large timber claim with John D. Kinney at Lake Bigler (later Lake Tahoe). Yet when he neglected his camp fire and accidentally set fire to this great mass of virgin forest, there was no sense of waste, or any regret at the loss. Note this account of the disaster written to his mother:

> The mighty roaring of the conflagration, together with our solitary and somewhat unsafe position (for there was no one within six miles of us,) rendered the scene very impressive. Occasionally, one of us would remove his pipe from his mouth and say,--'Superb! magnificent! Beautiful! . . .".[14]

But there was much more timber at hand, and soon Twain had schemes "with millions in them" for the whole family. In October, 1861, he wrote to his in-laws:

> I have already laid a timber claim on the borders of a lake [Bigler] which throws Como in the shade--and if we succeed in getting one Mr. Jones to move his saw-mill up there, Mr. Moffett can just consider that claim better than bank stock. . . . Orion and I have confidence enough in this country to think that if the war will let us alone we can make Mr. Moffett rich without its ever costing him a cent or particle of trouble.[15]

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[14]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., I, 56.

[15]Ibid., I, 59-60.

Gamaliel Bradford once said of Twain, "Even Nature did not touch great depths in him, because they were not there."[16] It is not the purpose of this thesis to defend Bradford's statement, but it does appear that when Nature affected Twain it was often in a financial way. He saw the vast expanses of timber as raw material for a million dollar industry, just as Colonel Sellers saw dilapidated Stone's Landing as a coming metropolis.

From timber claims Mark Twain turned to mining. His Sellers-like disposition soon discovered that working in a mine was less interesting than speculating in mining stock. Twain said of this in Roughing It, "We fell victims to the epidemic and strained every nerve to acquire more feet."[17] "We traded some of our 'feet' for 'feet' in other people's claims. In a little while we owned largely in . . . fifty other 'mines' that had never been molested by a shovel or scratched with a pick."[18] Twain concluded:

> We had not less than thirty thousand "feet" apiece in the "richest mines on earth" as the frenzied cant phrased it--and were in debt to the butcher. We were stark mad with excitement--drunk with happiness--smothered under mountains of prospective wealth--arrogantly compassionate toward the plodding millions who knew not our marvelous canyon--but our credit was not good at the grocer's.

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[16]Bradford, op. cit., p. 18.

[17]Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., I, 233.

[18]Loc. cit.

> It was the strangest phase of life one can imagine. It was a beggar's revel. There was nothing doing in the district--no mining--no milling--no productive effort--no income--and not enough money in the entire camp to buy a corner lot in an eastern village, hardly; and yet a stranger would have supposed he was walking among bloated millionaires.[19]

Many facts were exaggerated in Roughing It, but the above description was accurate. DeLancey Ferguson said, "The center of activity in the mining country had shifted from gambling with pick and shovel to gambling with stocks. It was Wall Street of the Coolidge era on a local scale.[20] William Wright, the Dan De Quille of Virginia City journalistic fame,[21] and J. Ross Browne, who traveled through the mining country,[22] both agreed that Washoe was in a speculative frenzy. Little actual mining was done, but theoretical millions changed hands daily in the trading of stock.

Twain actually thought he would make his fortune in mining stock, as many of his letters, written at that time indicated. He said assuredly to Orion:

> We have got to wait six weeks, anyhow, for a dividend, maybe longer--but that it will come there is no shadow of a doubt, I have got the thing sifted down to a dead moral certainty. I own one-eighth of the new "Monitor Ledge, Clemens Company," and money can't buy a foot of

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[19] Ibid., I, 233-34.

[20] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 70.

[21] William Wright, The Big Bonanza (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947), p. 64.

[22] J. Ross Browne, "A Peep at Washoe," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XXII (January, 1861), 156.

it; because I know it to contain our fortune.[23]

Twain later added, "When you and I came out here, we did not expect '63 or '64 to find us rich men--and if that proposition had been made, we would have accepted it gladly. Now, it is made."[24] Even if the mines did not succeed, Twain had an ace up his sleeve, as shown in this letter to his mother in 1862:

> Yesterday one of my old Esmeralda friends, Bob Howland, arrived here, and I have had a talk with him. He owns with me in the "Horatio and Derby" ledge. He says our tunnel is in 52 feet, and a small stream of water has been struck, which bids fair to become a "big thing" by the time the ledge is reached--sufficient to supply a mill. Now, if you know anything of the value of water, here, you would perceive at a glance that if the water should amount to 50 or 100 inches, we wouldn't care whether school kept or not. If the ledge should prove to be worthless, we'd sell the water for money enough to give us quite a lift.[25]

Even though Twain ultimately realized that mining probably would never make him wealthy, he was too much in this wild movement to become an effective satirist of it. In Roughing It he lamented the passing of the mining towns' heyday, and said it was pitiful that so many of the men were now dead, but he hastened to assure the readers that the mining population was a ". . . peerless and magnificent

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[23]Clemens, Mark Twain Letters, op. cit., I, 73.

[24]Ibid., I, 74.

[25]Ibid., I, 64.

manhood--the very pick and choice of the world's glorious ones."[26] He concluded:

> It was a splendid population--for all the slow, sleepy, sluggish-brained sloths staid at home--you never find that sort of people among pioneers--you cannot build pioneers out of that sort of material. It was a population that gave to California a name for getting up astounding enterprises and rushing them through with a magnificent dash and daring and recklessness of cost or consequences, which she bears unto this day--and when she projects a new surprise, the grave world smiles as usual, and says, "Well, that is California all over."[27]

This is not criticism of the abuses found in the westward movement which was brought about by the gold and silver rushes. It is idealization of a phenomenal period in American history.

During his stay in Virginia City, Nevada, Twain turned to journalism and became an important member of the Virginia City Enterprise, one of the leading newspapers west of the Mississippi. If we would believe some of the critics, it is here that Twain became a truly great social satirist. DeLancey Ferguson said, "His outspoken comments upon legislative proceedings, good and bad, had given him fame and influence in the capital of the territory. . . ."[28] Effie Mona Mack added:

> During the three years 1861-1864 he spent in the land of Washoe, he observed how men lived in frontier society,

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[26]Clemens, Roughing It., op. cit., II, 156.

[27]Ibid., II, 157.

[28]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 92.

> how they behaved in their frenzied quest for gold, how mightily they dreamed and how bitterly they were disillusioned in their fool's paradise. In shrewd and biting satire he laid bare the sham, the corruption, the artifices of bunko steerers. His grotesque parodies were written in defense of human justice.[29]

Ivan Benson was even more emphatic:

> Had Mark Twain been only a humorist during his stay in the Far West, his Western writings would merit less consideration. But from the beginning he was more than just a humorist. During his Western period he became an accomplished social satirist, and with a gradually broadening scope he wrote artistically, with a variety of effects, from the coarsest burlesque to fine descriptive and informational articles.[30]

Benson also said:

> . . . He becomes during this reporting period a really important figure in public affairs. Now, his writings, although mostly still in a humorous vein, carry weight with the readers. There is almost invariably to be found in them some element of political or social criticism. His satire and irony are now being directed toward problems of some real importance in the life of the community.[31]

Several of the critics, then, consider Twain a determined social critic in his Washoe days, and to a certain extent this is true. Here Twain uttered some of his first comments upon legislatures. In "Carson Footprints," which appeared in the Sacramento Daily Record-Union in 1885, Twain told of strange footprints found in Nevada years

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[29]Mack, op. cit., p. 3.

[30]Ivan Benson, Mark Twain's Western Years (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1938), p. VII.

[31]Ibid., p. 101.

before:

> These scientists are in an ill-concealed sweat because they cannot tell why there are so many tracks, and all going one way, all going north. It was a large legislature, dear sirs, and the saloon was north. This is history, not conjecture. For I was there--in person.[32]

On the question of corruption in the legislature Twain said, in Roughing It:

> The legislature sat sixty days, and passed private toll-road franchises all the time. When they adjourned it was estimated that every citizen owned about three franchises, and it was believed that unless Congress gave the Territory another degree of longitude there would not be room enough to accommodate the toll-roads. The ends of them were hanging over the boundary line everywhere like a fringe.[33]

There was much corruption in the mining industry, and Twain mentioned the illegal practices often carried on by the assayers:

> Assaying was a good business, and so some men engaged in it, occasionally, who were not strictly scientific and capable. One assayer got such rich results out of all specimens brought to him that in time he acquired almost a monopoly of the business. But like all men who achieve success, he became an object of envy and suspicion. The other assayers entered into a conspiracy against him, and let some prominent citizens into the secret in order to show that they meant fairly. Then they broke a little fragment off a carpenter's grindstone and got a stranger to take it to the popular scientist and get it assayed. In the course of an hour the result came--whereby it appeared that a ton of the rock would yield $1,284.40 in silver and $366.36 in gold!

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[32]Mack, op. cit., p. 110.

[33]Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., I, 208.

> Due publication of the whole matter was made in the paper, and the popular assayer left town "between two days."[34]

It should be noted that much of the social criticism just mentioned was written after the fact. His newspaper articles written in Virginia City have not survived, and it is not possible to evaluate properly Twain's social criticism in this period. From all reports it does seem, however, that Twain was forthright and vigorous in his protests against abuses and corruptions, although his protests were often in the form of wild burlesques. There is at least surviving proof that when he moved to San Francisco he did try on many occasions to criticize important abuses. Edward Wagenknecht said of this Pacific Coast period:

> In San Francisco he is shocked by political corruption, and since the Call will not print his articles he sends them back to Joe Goodman's Enterprise. It is not long before he is being called the "Moralist of the Main," and political corruptionists, no doubt, are calling him other names as well.[35]

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[34] Ibid., I, 283. Back in 1861 J. Ross Browne, in his "A Peep at Washoe," op. cit., p. 161., had said virtually the same thing: "A tent, a furnace, half a dozen crucibles, a bottle of acid, and a hammer, generally comprised the entire establishment; but it is worthy of remark that the assays were always satisfactory. Silver, or indications of silver, were sure to be found in every specimen. I am confident some of these learned gentlemen in the assay business could have detected the precious metals in an Irish potato or a round of cheese for a reasonable consideration."

[35] Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 234.

Later portions of this thesis will describe in more detail some of Twain's satirical thrusts written during his San Francisco period. Twain was not completely exasperated with conditions in California, though, and still had faith in its future. With a mind still unclouded by later pessimism, he thought the United States was in the midst of a glorious period of growth. California was the hub of this great expansion, and in his "Farewell" to San Francisco in 1866, Twain showed his confidence and wholehearted approval of this spectacular boom. To Twain growth meant business, and big business would have "millions in it" for the Californians. The Alta California reported part of Twain's last speech before he left San Francisco:

> I read the signs of the times, and I, that am no prophet, behold the things that are in store for you. Over slumbering California is stealing the dawn of a radiant future! The great China Mail Line is established, the Pacific Railroad is creeping across the continent, the commerce of the world is about to be revolutionized. California is Crown Princess of the new dispensation. She stands in the centre of the grand highway of the nations; she stands midway between the Old World and the New, and both shall pay her tribute. From the far East and from Europe, multitudes of stout hearts and willing hands are preparing to flock hither; to throng her hamlets and villages; to till her fruitful soil; to unveil the riches of her countless mines; to build up an empire on these distant shores that will shame the bravest dreams of her visionaries. From the opulent lands of the Orient, from India, from China, Japan, the Amoor; from tributary regions that stretch from the arctic circle to the equator, is about to pour in upon her the princely commerce of a teeming population of four hundred and fifty million souls. Half the world stands ready to lay its contributions at

her feet! Has any other State so brilliant a future? Has any other city a future like San Francisco?[36]

It has been shown that Twain, although conscious of graft and corruption, and sincere in his efforts to curb them, was not clear-headed enough to satirize the many abuses connected directly with the great movement of westward expansion in the United States. He was far too much a product of his age to ever be a successful protest against it. The opening west meant money for many people, and Twain was always tempted by the lures of Mammon. He had said in Roughing It:

> Vice flourished luxuriantly during the heyday of our "flush times." The saloons were overburdened with custom; so were the police courts, the gambling dens, the brothels, and the jails --unfailing signs of high prosperity in a mining region--in any region, for that matter. Is it not so? A crowded police court docket is the surest of all signs that trade is brisk and money plenty.[37]

It would seem that he would even accept the vice--because it automatically meant more money. Other portions of this thesis will continue to show that an almost direct relation existed between Twain's social protests and the amount of money he or his social class could possibly earn by refraining from social protest.

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[36]Benson, op. cit., p. 212.

[37]Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., II, 96.

III. EXPANSION ABROAD

Mark Twain was also strikingly inconsistent on the question of foreign expansion. Many critics have taken for granted the statement that he championed the cause of liberty and supported all minorities being oppressed by larger powers. It should be pointed out, however, that his sympathies were usually aroused only if the aggressor nation employed cruel methods. If the imperialistic power seemed to be helping the smaller nation in any way, or if business would be aided by annexing a country, he was in favor of the expansion.

One of the imperialistic movements both favored and opposed by him was the annexation of the Sandwich Islands. Walter Francis Frear said, "Mark Twain, during and after his visit in Hawaii, was an ardent advocate of annexation."[38] It is difficult, however, to accept this statement without qualifications when one considers what Twain had to say on the subject. In his notebook in 1867 he said the Sandwich Islanders were worse off then than ever before, and that the first white man who landed there was a curse to them.[39] In

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[38]Walter Francis Frear, Mark Twain and Hawaii (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1947), p. 215.

[39]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, Albert Bigelow Paine, editor (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 10.

Roughing It he said even though many native taboos had been discarded because of the white man, it took the degrading effects of whisky to secure these changes.[40] He also pointed out that the white man's arrival had caused a marked breakdown in native morals. "All this ameliorating cultivation has at last built up in the native women a profound respect for chastity--in other people."[41] Perhaps his most outspoken public comments against annexation were two letters to the New York Daily Tribune early in 1873. The first, published on January 6, read in part as follows:

> The natives of the islands number only about 50,000, and the whites about 3,000, chiefly Americans. According to Capt. Cook, the natives numbered 400,000 less than a hundred years ago. But the traders brought labor and diseases--in other words, long, deliberate, infallible destruction; and the missionaries brought the means of grace and got them ready. So the two forces are working along harmoniously, and anybody who knows anything about figures can tell you exactly when the last Kanaka will be in Abraham's bosom and his islands in the hands of the whites.[42]

The second is one of Twain's best passages of timely social criticism written for the public. Published in the Tribune on January 9, it appears here in full:

WHY SHOULD WE ANNEX

> Now, let us annex the islands. Think how we could build up that whaling trade! (Though under our courts and judges it might boon be as impossible for whaleships

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[40]Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., II, 283.

[41]Ibid., II, 233.

[42]Frear, op. cit., p. 490.

to rendezvous there without being fleeced and "pulled" by sailors and pettifoggers as it is now in San Francisco--a place the skippers shun as they would rocks and shoals. Let us annex. We could make sugar enough there to supply all America, perhaps, and the prices would be very easy with the duties removed. And then we would have such a fine half-way house for our Pacific-plying ships; and such a convenient supply depot and such a commanding sentry-box for an armed squadron; and we could raise cotton and coffee there and make it pay pretty well, with the duties off and capital easier to get at. And then we would own the mightiest volcano on earth--Kilauea! Barnum could run it--he understands fires now. Let us annex, by all means. We could pacify Prince Bill and other nobles easily enough--put them on a reservation. Nothing pleases a savage like a reservation--a reservation where he has his annual hoes, and Bibles and blankets to trade for powder and whisky--a sweet Arcadian retreat fenced in with soldiers. By annexing, we would get all those 50,000 natives cheap as dirt, with their morals and other diseases thrown in. No expense for education--they are already educated; no need to convert them--they are already converted; no expense to clothe them--for obvious reasons.

We must annex those people. We can afflict them with our wise and beneficent governments. We can introduce the novelty of thieves, all the way up from street-car pickpockets to municipal robbers and Government defaulters, and show them how amusing it is to arrest them and try them and then turn them loose--some for cash and some for "political influence." We can make them ashamed of their simple and primitive justice. We can do away with their occasional hangings for murder, and let them have Judge Pratt to teach them how to save imperiled Avery-assassins to society. We can give them some Barnards to keep their money corporations out of difficulties. We can give them juries composed entirely of the most simple and charming leatherheads. We can give them railway corporations who will buy their Legislature like old clothes, and run over their best citizens and complain of the corpses for smearing their unpleasant juices on the track. In place of harmless and vaporing Harris, we can give them Tweed. We can let them have Connolly; we can loan them Sweeney; we can furnish them some Jay Goulds who will do away with their old-time notion that stealing is not respectable. We can confer Woodhull and Claflin on them. And George Francis Train. We can give them lecturers! I will go myself.

> We can make that little bunch of sleepy islands the hottest corner on earth, and array it in the moral splendor of our high and holy civilization. Annexation is what the poor islanders need. "Shall we to men benighted, the lamp of life deny?"[43]

Despite these effective comments in opposition to annexation, Twain had several reasons in favor of the move. Frear believed one of these reasons was a feeling of patriotic imperialism. Annexation of the Sandwich Islands by some world power seemed imminent, but England, and especially France, seemed more likely to succeed than the United States. Twain's desire for his own country to annex the islands came then from a feeling of patriotic pride.[44]

In almost direct opposition to some of his previous arguments against annexation, Twain pointed out several times that the white man's civilization had been a blessing to the natives. In Roughing It Twain reminded the reader of the savagery in the old pagan times, and then stated how the missionaries in the Sandwich Islands have clothed, fed, and educated the natives; given them freedom, and delivered them from tyranny.[45] On February 8, 1873, the Brooklyn Eagle quoted from a lecture by Twain in which he seriously repeated

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[43] Ibid., pp. 499-500.

[44] Ibid., p. 35.

[45] Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., II, 218.

many of the above statements, and seemingly adopted a "white-man's burden" attitude. Twain had said:

> But by and by the American missionaries came and they struck off the shackles from the whole race, breaking the power of the Kings and Chiefs. They set the common man free, elevated his wife to a position of equality, and gave a spot of land to each to hold forever. They set up schools and churches and imbued them with the spirit of the Christian Religion. If they had had the power to augment the capacities of the people they could have made them perfect, and they would have done it, no doubt.
>
> The missionaries taught the whole nation to read and write with facility, in the native tongue. I don't suppose there is today a single uneducated person above eight years of age in the Sandwich Islands. It is the best educated country in the world, I believe, not excepting some portions of the United States. That has been all done by the American missionaries.[46]

Probably the real reason why he desired American annexation of the Sandwich Islands was financial. Ferguson said, "California was keenly interested in Hawaii--still called the Sandwich Islands--because of its commercial possibilities, especially sugar."[47] Twain was also interested in the commercial possibilities, although he had no money of his own at stake. In his first letter to the New York Daily Tribune in 1873, he had mentioned the heavy duty Hawaiian planters were forced to pay in trade with the United States. He declared that, ". . . if we were to annex the islands and do away with that crushing duty . . . some of those heavy

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[46]Frear, op. cit., p. 433.

[47]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 106.

planters who can hardly keep their heads above water now, would clear $75,000 a year and upward."[48] He might have been somewhat ironical at this spot, but in light of his Sellers-like disposition, it seems credible that he would favor the increased business. When in Hawaii in 1866 he said in his third letter to the Sacramento Union that the importance of the islands to the United States was the trade which paid well. Said Twain, "There can be no better reason than that."[49] In his first lecture in San Francisco, October 2, 1866, he probably made his most candid admission of why he favored annexation. He had been speaking of the sugar industry, and then concluded:

> I have dwelt upon this subject to show you that these islands have a genuine importance to America--an importance which is not generally appreciated by our citizens. They pay revenues into the United States Treasury now amounting to over a half a million a year.
>
> I do not know what the sugar yield of the world is now, but ten years ago, according to the Patent Office reports, it was 800,000 hogsheads. The Sandwich Islands, properly cultivated by go-ahead Americans, are capable of providing one-third as much themselves. With the Pacific Railroad built, the great China Mail Line of steamers touching at Honolulu--we could stock the islands with Americans and supply a third of the civilized world with sugar--and with the silkiest, longest-stapled cotton this side of the South Seas, and the very best quality of rice. . . . The property has got to fall to some heir, and why not the United States?[50]

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[48]Frear, op. cit., p. 493.

[49]Ibid., p. 271.

[50]Paine, op. cit., III, 1601.

Thus both sides of the question have been presented, and reasons pro and con have been given by Mark Twain himself. What conclusions can be drawn? It seems safe to presume that had the United States and other major powers not debased certain aspects of Hawaiian culture, and had they not spread disease, corruption, and other evils among the Islanders, that Twain, the big businessman, would have favored wholeheartedly American annexation of the Sandwich Islands.

Twain's attitudes toward other expansionist and imperialistic moves were less divided. As we have seen in a preceding chapter, he violently opposed American annexation of the Philippines, and American intervention in China. His article, "To The Person Sitting in Darkness," first published in the North American Review, February, 1901, attacked American imperialistic policy. Ferguson has said of this article:

> With one exception . . . the article was Mark's finest piece of invective. The abuses satirized in the Yankee had, after all, been far off and foreign; an American could afford to be smug about them. But here they lay on his own doorstep, and were given the blessings of the Christian churches of the country.[51]

The article, which created a storm of protest from religious groups and an equally powerful approval from other people, criticized the cruelty of American missionaries in China, related once again the treachery of American policy in the

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[51]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 284.

Philippines, and damned the world powers who insisted upon overrunning the weaker nations. Twain inquired:

> . . . Shall we go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest? Shall we bang right ahead in our old-time, loud, pious way, and commit the new century to the game; or shall we sober up and sit down and think it over first? Would it not be prudent to get our Civilization tools together and see how much stock is left on hand in the way of Glass Beads and Theology, and Maxim Guns and Hymn Books, and Trade Gin and Torches of Progress and Enlightenment (patent adjustable ones, good to fire villages with, upon occasion), and balance the books and arrive at the profit and loss, so that we may intelligently decide whether to continue the business or sell out the property and start a new Civilization Scheme on the proceeds?[52]

Twain added that the "People Sitting in Darkness" have begun to notice that Christendom is playing for ". . . every stake that appeared on the green cloth," and that they ". . . have become suspicious of the Blessings of Civilization."[53] The "People in Darkness" have also begun to examine these "Blessings," and found them only palatable ". . . in a dim light."[54] Still talking about the"Blessings of Civilization," Twain continued:

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[52]Clemens, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," The Portable Mark Twain, op. cit., pp. 598-99.

[53]Ibid., p. 599.

[54]Loc. cit.

> Privately and confidentially, it is merely an outside cover, gay and pretty and attractive, displaying the special patterns of our Civilization which we reserve for Home Consumption, while inside the bale is the Actual Thing that the Customer Sitting in Darkness buys with his blood and tears and land and liberty.[55]

In bitter, mocking irony Twain exposed the evils of imperialism and concluded that the United States needed a flag to fly proudly over the newly-acquired domains. He suggested, ". . . we can have just our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and crossbones."[56] In few other pieces of writing did Twain show such disgust for the brutal world-wide practice of taking control of defenseless countries.

Twain's trip around the world, which was later described in Following the Equator, gave him many opportunities to see many weak countries dominated by major powers. Twain's ideas, however, were not entirely anti-imperialistic. He wrote to Twichell in 1896, saying, "All over India the English--well, you will never know how good and fine they are till you see them."[57] Carl Van Doren said, ". . . the antiquity of Asia appalled him,"[58] and it certainly seemed as if Twain was

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[55] Ibid., p. 600.

[56] Ibid., p. 613.

[57] Clemens, Letters, op. cit., II, 633.

[58] Van Doren, The American Novel, 1789-1939, op. cit., p. 155.

adopting a White Man's Burden attitude in this passage from Following the Equator:

> All the savage lands in the world are going to be brought under subjection to the Christian governments of Europe. I am not sorry, but glad. This coming fate might have been a calamity to those savage people two hundred years ago; but now it will in some cases be a benefaction. The sooner the seizure is consummated, the better for the savages. The dreary and dragging ages of bloodshed and disorder and oppression will give place to peace and order and the reign of law. When one considers what India was under her Hindu and Mohammedan rulers, and what she is now; when he remembers the miseries of her millions then and the protections and humanities which they enjoy now, he must concede that the most fortunate thing that has ever befallen that empire was the establishment of British supremacy there.[59]

Twain had also pleaded in Following the Equator for a great merchant marine which would make it possible for the United States ". . . to assert and maintain her rightful place as one of the Great Maritime Powers of the Planet."[60]

Despite these statements, Twain was, for the most part, opposed to imperialism. Wagenknecht said Twain knew ". . . that the white man's burden is composed principally of loot,"[61] and Ferguson added that Twain's trip around the world ". . . had shown Mark among many other things the seamy side of empire-building: he had had few illusions about white civilization before he started; he had none when he ended."[62]

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[59]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 300-301.

[60]Ibid., I, 73.

[61]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 258.

[62]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 274.

Twain himself told the New York Herald a slightly different story in 1900:

> I left these shores at Vancouver, a red-hot imperialist. I wanted the American eagle to go screaming into the Pacific.
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> . . . . . .
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> But I have thought some more, since then, and I have read carefully the treaty of Paris, and I have seen that we do not intend to free but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem.[63]

On several occasions in Following the Equator Twain attacked imperialism. In one passage he admitted the ignorance of Australian natives, and wondered at their relatively small population. But then he spoke of the white man's arrival, and added, "The white man knows ways of reducing a native population, eighty per cent in twenty years. The native had never seen anything as fine as that before."[64] A few pages later Twain spoke of cruelty by the whites toward the natives:

> In more than one country we have hunted the savage and his little children and their mother with dogs and guns through the woods and swamps for an afternoon's sport, and filled the region with happy laughter over their sprawling and stumbling flight, and their wild supplications for mercy; but this method we do not mind, because custom has inured us to it; yet a quick death by poison is loving-kindness to it.[65]

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[63]William M. Gibson, "Mark Twain and Howells: Anti Imperialists," The New England Quarterly, XX (December, 1947), 445.

[64]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., I, 185.

[65]Ibid., I, 190.

This was the practice that caused Twain to criticize sharply the world-wide imperialism in the latter portion of the nineteenth century. If the natives were being persecuted, he then became their champion, provided that expediency did not cause him to remain silent on the matter. There were times when he was almost fooled by reports that imperialistic countries actually intended to help the ignorant natives. Twain, however, saw through these statements, and realized that money, power, and prestige were the real reasons for the imperialistic moves.[66] Wagenknecht believed that when Twain vehemently arraigned the missionaries, the denouncement was not caused by any basic disapproval of missionaries

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66 Ibid., I, 248. Twain had said of this subterfuge: "The whites always mean well when they take human fish out of the ocean and try to make them dry and warm and happy and comfortable in a chicken-coop; but the kindest-hearted white man can always be depended on to prove himself inadequate when he deals with savages. He cannot turn the situation around and imagine how he would like it to have a well-meaning savage transfer him from his house and his church and his clothes and his books and his choice food to a hideous wilderness of sand and rocks and snow, and ice and sleet and storm and blistering sun, with no shelter, no bed, no covering for his and his family's naked bodies, and nothing to eat but snakes and grubs and offal. This would be a hell to him; and if he had any wisdom he would know that his own civilization is a hell to the savage--but he hasn't any, and has never had any; and for lack of it he shut up those poor natives in the unimaginable perdition of his civilization, committing his crime with the very best intentions, and saw those poor creatures waste away under his tortures; and gazed at it, vaguely troubled and sorrowful, and wondered what could be the matter with them. One is almost betrayed into respecting those criminals, they were so sincerely kind, and tender, and humane, and well-meaning."

themselves, but because the missionaries were often the agents of imperialism.[67] Thus Twain usually seems to have been an opponent of expansionist movements outside the United States, and uttered many public comments on the matter. Perhaps his best stricture against imperialism is a tiny passage from Tom Sawyer Abroad, first published in 1894. In talking to Tom about international disputes Huck said: ". . . and I asked Tom if countries always apologized when they had done wrong, and he says: 'Yes, the little ones does.'"[68]

William M. Gibson believed that Twain's anti-imperialist attitude was strengthened by frequent association in 1900 with William Dean Howells. Howells had been writing in protest against the world-wide imperialism, and Gibson felt that from Howells Twain ". . . added to his knowledge of imperialist issues, clarified his thinking, and strengthened his anti-imperialist tendencies."[69] It is to be noted, however, that Gibson had earlier said, "American writers gave strong support to the anti-imperialist cause."[70] Twain, therefore, was once again siding with an influential minority, and despite the popular wave of imperialist sentiment sweeping over the

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[68]Clemens, Tom Sawyer Abroad, op. cit., p. 110.

[69]Gibson, op. cit., p. 443.

[70]Ibid., p. 435.

United States around 1900, he was not out on a limb and acting as sole knight-in-armor for the oppressed little people of the world. Twain's anti-imperialistic stand did not require the highest order of moral courage, and he was not risking his own security. Other writers saw the issues more clearly, and took less inconsistent viewpoints, but Twain's occasional outbursts of angry prose are, nevertheless, notable. An excellent concluding example is his greeting from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, first published in the New York Herald on December 31, 1900:

> I bring you the stately matron named Christendom, returning bedraggled, besmirched, and dishonored from pirate-raids in Kiao-Chou, Manchuria, South Africa, and the Philippines, with her soul full of meanness, her pocket full of boodle and her mouth full of pious hypocrisies. Give her soap and a towel, but hide the looking-glass.[71]

Thus it has been shown that Twain was not at all times a critic of westward expansion or imperialism, and when he did act as a critic, he was supported by at least a strong minority. His occasional tirades against imperialism are, however, brilliantly phrased and, albeit often inconsistent, came from the heart.

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[71] Ibid., p. 451. This greeting was later printed on cards distributed by the New England Anti-Imperialist League.

CHAPTER IV

MONARCHY AND PROGRESS

Two statements which many critics long have taken for granted are that Twain bitterly opposed all types of monarchies, and in his later years developed such a black pessimism that he denied all progress in the world. A brief look at these topics should be of interest in order to determine his actual opinions.

I. MONARCHY

At times Mark Twain did criticize many of the world's monarchical governments, but often his personal associations with royalty served to temper his opinions. He had met, at various times, the King of the Sandwich Islands, the Emperor of Russia, the Kaiser, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward), the Emperor of Austria, the Austrian Princess, and Queen Elizabeth of Rumania. On friendly terms with so many royal families, Twain would have found it as difficult to attack them as it would have been to criticize Howells, Aldrich, Warner, and his other literary friends.

He also delighted in the adulation of the people and loved to be lionized. "The Wild Humorist of the Pacific Slope," "The Belle of New York," and a center of attraction in both Vienna and London, Twain gloried in as much pomp as

any nineteenth-century ruler. Even his dress was conspicuous. The nattiest of river pilots, he eventually became the roughest of roughs in Washoe. His startling white clothing, donned at the age of seventy, eventually seemed almost drab in comparison with his gaudy Oxford robe.

At one time he said he had more power than any king, and he gloried in the feeling. When a Mississippi pilot, he wrote to Will Bowen:

> You know, yourself, Bill--or you ought to know it--that all men--kings & serfs alike--are slaves to other men & to circumstances--save, alone, the pilot--who comes at no man's beck or call, obeys no man's orders & scorns all men's suggestions.[1]

Later he showed his delight in pomp and prestige in a sketch about international diplomacy. Highly chagrined and embarrassed because American diplomats looked nondescript in comparison with foreign ambassadors, Twain urged that American diplomats be given huge salary increases and the gaudiest uniforms ever seen on earth.[2] This is the Mark Twain said by some critics to have opposed all shams!

Two other points illustrate Twain's penchant for

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[1]Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters to Will Bowen, Theodore Hornberger, editor (Austin; University of Texas Press, 1941), pp. 13-14.

[2]Samuel L. Clemens, "Diplomatic Pay and Clothes," The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, and Other Essays and Stories (New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company, 1917), pp. 226-240.

power and royalty. In A Connecticut Yankee the "Boss" opposed the backward monarchical form of government in medieval England. He forthwith proposed to establish an Arthurian democracy, but actually developed a dictatorship, with himself as dictator.[3] In addition to a natural desire to rule, Twain sympathized with royalty. He realized they had to sit high on their thrones, and could not mix with the people. In his semi-allegorical sketch, "The Bee," Twain told how everyone renders lip service to the Queen Bee, but how actually she is a victim of extreme loneliness.[4] Tom Canty echoes this same feeling in The Prince and the Pauper when he says, "In what way have I offended, that the good God should take me away from the fields and the free air and the sunshine, to shut me up here and make me a king and afflict me so?"[5]

Despite the caustic strictures against English monarchy attributed to Twain when he was in the throes of writing A Connecticut Yankee, his public utterances indicated that of all monarchies he favored the English most. His sketch,

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[3]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 245.

[4]Samuel L. Clemens, "The Bee," What Is Man? And Other Essays (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1917), p. 282.

[5]Samuel L. Clemens, The Prince and the Pauper (New York: P. F. Collier and Son), pp. 104-5.

"The Great Revolution on Pitcairn," satirizes monarchies, dictators, and shams of various sorts, but concludes that the English form of monarchy was preferable to any other kind.[6] Twain also had said that the British flag flying over a spot meant ". . . efficient government and good order," and that England's monarchy was superior to all others.[7] A final compliment to English monarchy was delivered by Twain in 1908 as an address to the British Schools and Universities Club in New York at a meeting honoring Queen Victoria's birthday:

> As a woman the Queen was all that the most exacting standards could require. As a far-reaching and effective beneficent moral force she had no peer in her time among either monarchs or commoners. As a monarch she was without reproach in her great office. We may not venture, perhaps, to say so sweeping a thing as this in cold blood about any monarch that preceded her upon either her own throne or upon any other. It is a colossal eulogy, but it is justified.[8]

One of the reasons why Mark Twain did not attack monarchies as strongly as he might have was his growing pessimism. Inhis later years he became increasingly disillusioned with the human race, and thought it futile to force democracy on people who did not care or who did not merit

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[6]Clemens, "The Great Revolution in Pitcairn," Tom Sawyer Abroad, op. cit., pp. 343-359.

[7]Clemens, "Some Rambling Notes of An Idle Excursion," Ibid., p. 286.

[8]Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, Albert Bigelow Paine, editor (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1923), pp. 387-88.

consideration. In The American Claimant Twain sent an English earl's son incognito into the American working-classes and confronted the young nobleman with boundless examples of sham, inequality, and un-democratic feeling.[9] If the common people in a democracy were constantly going to adopt feudal ranks, what could Twain gain by ranting and raving against monarchy? There were times when he actually believed the United States was already a monarchy, despite the republican form of government.[10] Years later at Stormfield he admitted that monarchy had not yet come to the United States,[11] but

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[9]Samuel L. Clemens, The American Claimant, and Other Stories and Sketches (New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company, 1899), p. 105.

[10]Paine, op. cit., I, 530.

[11]Ibid., III, 1467. Twain said of monarchy in the United States: "I'm not expecting it in my time nor in my children's time, though it may be sooner than we think. There are two special reasons for it and one condition. The first reason is, that it is in the nature of man to want a definite something to love, honor, reverently look up to and obey; a God and a King, for example. The second reason is, that while little republics have lasted long, protected by their poverty and insignificance, great ones have not. And the condition is, vast power and wealth, which breed commercial and political corruptions, and incite public favorites to dangerous ambitions." In connection with the forms of government, it is extremely interesting today to look at Twain's comment on Communism. He once said, "Communism is idiocy. They want to divide up the property. Suppose they did it. It requires brains to keep money as well as to make it. In a precious little while the money would be back in the former owner's hands and the communists would be poor again. The division would have to be remade every three years or it would do the communists no good." Ibid., II, 644.

would eventually replace the present democracy. If Twain had not been so disgusted with the human race, he might have championed democracy to a considerably greater extent than he ever actually did.

It now becomes apparent that Twain was not so great a critic of monarchy as many people have believed. A brief look at his anti-monarchical strictures will support this statement. It might seem difficult to prove when one considers that Twain once said, "The institution of Royalty in any form is an insult to the human race,"[12] and added, "We Americans worship the almighty dollar! Well, it is a worthier god than the Heredity Privilege."[13] Twain in stating that monarchy was out of date, said: "It belongs to the state of culture that admires a ring in your nose, a head full of feathers and your belly painted blue."[14] At this time he also said:

> The kingly office is entitled to no respect. It was originally procured by the highwayman's methods; it remains a perpetuated crime, can never be anything but the symbol of a crime. . . . A monarch when good is entitled to the consideration which we accord to a pirate who keeps Sunday School between crimes; when bad he is entitled to none at all. But if you cross a king with a prostitute the resulting mongrel perfectly satisfies

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[12]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 202.

[13]Ibid., p. 209.

[14]Ibid., p. 210.

> the English idea of nobility. The ducal houses of Great Britain of today are mainly derived from this gaudy combination.[15]

These scathing statements undoubtedly represented Twain's sincere feelings at the time (1888), but it should be noted that they were written in his notebook, and were not for publication. In a private memorandum he wrote, "There was never a throne which did not represent a crime,"[16] but when he wrote for other people's eyes he subdued his hatred of monarchy by commenting on less important things such as the dethronement of the Emperor of Brazil.[17] Of course, not all Twain's criticism of monarchy were repressed. The Prince and the Pauper has a strong lesson that kings should be morally obligated to their people, and A Connecticut Yankee arraigns traditional and narrow-minded monarchy. Twain also attacked monarchs in his sketch, "The Shrine of St. Wagner," when he stated:

> The valuable princes, the desirable princes, are the czars and their sort. By their mere dumb presence in the world they cover with derision every argument that can be invented in favor of royalty by the most ingenious casuist.[18]

Twain, then, did hate monarchical forms of government,

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[15]Ibid., p. 196.

[16]Paine, op. cit., II, 874.

[17]Ibid., II, 890.

[18]Clemens, "The Shrine of St. Wagner," What is Man? And Other Essays, op. cit., p. 218.

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[15] Ibid., p. 196.

[16] Paine, op. cit., II, 897.

[17] Ibid., II, 899.

[18] Clemens, "The Burial of St. Wagner," What is Man? And Other Essays, op. cit., p. 216.

although there were occasions when close association with royalty influenced his opinion. His actual criticisms made public, however, are not so numerous as one might believe. Once again he practiced restraint, and did not oppose the time-honored institution if there was any possibility that such opposition might make him personally uncomfortable. In private he raged vehemently against the English monarchy, but England was a source of considerable income for Twain, and in public he voiced the opinion that English monarchy was worthy and good. In this instance, as in so many others, Twain's social criticism was tempered by practical and personal expediency.

II. PROGRESS

Mark Twain was again inconsistent in his attitudes toward progress. If he was a complete pessimist, then we would not expect him to place much faith in progress. This attitude is borne out by several of Twain's statements. In "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" Twain showed that many of the heavenly counterparts of erstwhile human beings were still boobs.[19] In a speech to the American Society in London, 1907, he lamented the so-called progress in America which has succeeded only in killing and crippling more people

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[19]Samuel L. Clemens, "Extract From Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," Harpers' Monthly Magazine, CXVI (December, 1907 and January, 1908), 276.

every year on the Fourth of July.[20] Years earlier, in a letter to Will Bowen, Twain had spoken despondently of the passage of time:

> As to the past, there is but one good thing about it, & that is, that it is the past--we don't have to see it again. There is nothing in it worth pickling for present or future use. Each day that is added to the past is but an old boot added to a pile of rubbish. . . .[21]

This letter, written when Twain was in his prime, was meant to discourage Bowen who insisted on trying to re-live the "good old days," but it still does not intimate that the present time is more worth while than the past. Twain's most outstanding invective against the myth of progress was prepared as a speech for an 1872 Fourth of July gathering of Americans in London. Like many of his sincere and biting social criticisms, however, it never was delivered:

> This is an age of progress, and ours is a progressive land. A great and glorious land, too--a land which has developed a Washington, a Franklin, a William M. Tweed, a Longfellow, a Motley, a Jay Gould, a Samuel C. Pomeroy, a recent Congress which has never had its equal (in some respects), and a United States Army which conquered sixty Indians in eight months by tiring them out--which is much better than uncivilized slaughter, God knows. We have a criminal jury system which is superior to any in the world; and its efficiency is only marred by the difficulty of finding twelve men every day who don't know

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[20] Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., pp. 346-47.

[21] Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters to Will Bowen, op. cit., p. 23.

> anything and can't read. And I may observe that we have an insanity plea that would have saved Cain. I think I can say, and say with pride, that we have some legislatures that bring higher prices than any in the world.
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> I refer with effusion to our railway system, which consents to let us live, though it might do the opposite, being our owners. It only destroyed three thousand and seventy lives last year by collisions, and twenty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty by running over heedless and unnecessary people at crossings.[22]

Although from the above evidence it does not appear that Twain believed in progress, he made many statements which contradict this belief. In Innocents Abroad Twain expounded the doctrine of progress. Old European culture could not compare with the booming American way of life. In one lengthy passage Twain gave the imaginary monologue of a backward Italian, relating the mechanical wonders of America to his unbelieving friends.[23] Elsewhere he compared Napoleon III with Abdul Aziz, the Ottoman Emperor, and despite his usually scornful attitude toward Europe, said here that a comparison between Napoleon and Abdul was like that between the nineteenth and first centuries.[24] Twain had contempt for the Arabs because, "The plows these people use are simply a sharpened stick such as Abraham plowed with, and

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[22]Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., p. 35.

[23]Samuel L. Clemens, Innocents Abroad (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1872), pp. 267-71.

[24]Ibid., pp. 126-27.

they still winnow their wheat as he did. . . . They never invent anything, never learn anything."[25] Two things in the Near East pleased Twain. One was his caravan's sumptuous dining tent and equipment which enabled the travelers to feast luxuriously with the aid of modern conveniences. The second was his first sight of Odessa, Russia, with its hustle, bustle, and businesslike appearance:

> I have not felt so much at home for a long time as I did when I "raised the hill" and stood in Odessa for the first time. It looked just like an American city; fine, broad streets, and straight as well . . . a stirring, business-look about the streets and stores; fast walkers; a familiar new look about the houses and everything; yea, and a driving and smothering cloud of dust that was so like a message from our own dear native land. . . .[26]

The Connecticut Yankee and Following the Equator were, in several respects, doctrines of progress. The Connecticut Yankee actually was more an indictment of narrow Catholicism than of English monarchy, but it also preached the gospel of nineteenth century American progress. There is, of course, some satire on American customs, but for the most part it propagates a philosophy of business, industry, and modern improvements. After a season or two at Camelot, the "Boss" declared:

I was pretty well satisfied with what I had already

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[25] Ibid., pp. 445-46.

[26] Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., p. 35.

> accomplished. In various quiet nooks and corners, I had the beginnings of all sorts of industries under way--nuclei of future vast factories, the iron and steel missionaries of my future civilization.[27]

Following the Equator, despite its much more disillusioned air than the early travel book, Innocents Abroad, also contained some belief in progress. Twain saw a beautiful and graceful mosque in India, with two slender white minarets rising, fairy-like, to the sky. To make it utterly beautiful in his eyes, it needed only one thing: modern electric lights atop the two towers.[28] Twain also wrote about Adelaide, Australia, in much the same vein as he had described booming towns along the upper river in Life on the Mississippi:

> Adelaide was indeed almost empty; its population had fallen to three thousand. During two years or more the death-trance continued. Prospect of revival there was none; hope of it had ceased. Then, as suddenly as the paralysis had come, came the resurrection from it. Those astonishingly rich copper-mines were discovered, and the corpse got up and danced.
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> The wool production began to grow; grain-raising followed--followed so vigorously, too, that four or five years after the copper discovery, this little colony, which had had to import its breadstuffs, formerly, and pay hard prices for them--once fifty dollars a barrel for flour--had become an exporter of grain. The prosperities continued.[29]

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[27]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 693.

[28]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 181.

[29]Ibid., I, 162.

Twain showed his belief in progress on several other occasions. He stated that ". . . the valuable part . . . of what we call civilization had no existence. . . ." before the days of Queen Victoria,[30] and he uttered a somewhat similar opinion in a speech delivered in 1889:

> How old is real civilization? The answer is easy and unassailable. A century ago it had not appeared anywhere in the world during a single instant since the world was made. If you grant these terms . . . there is today but one real civilization in the world, and it is not yet thirty years old. We made the trip and hoisted its flag when we disposed of our slavery.[31]

This passage is of extreme interest because it is Twain's only statement of the belief in progress in which the advances of civilization are not thoroughly materialistic. What conclusions, then can be drawn about Mark Twain and progress? First, he believed wholeheartedly in materialistic progress, especially in the United States. On this point Van Wyck Brooks says, ". . . Mark Twain found himself the spokesman of the Philistine majority, the headlong enthusiast for what he called 'the plainest and sturdiest and infinitely greatest and worthiest of all the centuries the world has seen.'"[32] Second, Twain's belief in progress was

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[30]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 208.

[31]Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

[32]Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., pp. 137-38.

shaken when he considered the human element in the world. Machines improved, but man did not, and Twain ultimately decided that man never would improve. Thus progress, in Twain's eyes, was measured only in terms of technological advancement. He took a Sellers-like delight in material improvements, and lived in accord with a statement which he, as a river pilot, once made to Orion: ". . . if I were a heathen, I would rear a statue to Energy, and fall down and worship it!"[33]

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[33]Paine, op. cit., I, 146.

CHAPTER V

BIG BUSINESS, MONOPOLY, AND SPECULATION

During and after the post-Civil War period, which Twain so aptly labeled the Gilded Age, the entire economic structure of the United States underwent marked changes. Once predominantly rural, the country rapidly became industrialized, and small individuals aligned themselves against the huge capitalists. The financiers gained fabulous wealth and power, and were responsible for much of the graft and corruption that swept the nation after the Civil War:

> It was these buccaneers who were responsible for the gold corner in 1867, the Credit Mobilier scandal, the various financial panics, the stockwatering of the railroads and industrial corporations, the organization of trusts and holding companies, and the vast and unscrupulous stock manipulations. . . .[1]

The big financial barons were not the only Americans interested in business, for the spirit of speculation had swept through the country, and even some of the "little people" risked life savings in the hope of becoming rich. A great part of the nation was affected:

> The spirit of the frontier was to flare up in a huge buccaneering orgy. Having swept across the continent to the Pacific coast like a visitation of locusts, the frontier spirit turned back upon its course to conquer

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[1]Charles A. Madison, Critics and Crusaders, A Century of American Protest (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), p. 245.

> the East, infecting the new industrialism with a crude individualism, fouling the halls of Congress, despoiling the public domain, and indulging in a huge national barbecue.[2]

The Gilded Age ". . . threw itself into the business of money-getting," and "allowed itself to get drunk" with greed.[3] The people were coarsely materialistic and wanted only the most abundant comforts out of life. Parrington said of the age, "Freedom and opportunity, to acquire, to possess, to enjoy--for that it would sell its soul."[4] Parrington also pointed out that since ". . . money was to be made out of unearned increment . . . the creation of booms was a profitable industry. The times were stirring and it was a shiftless fellow who did not make his pile."[5] The philosophy of "big business" became so popular that it was taught in schools, publicized by respectable writers, and adopted by the educated classes.[6] Now called "robber barons," the great financiers were then known as "captains of industry."[7]

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[2]Parrington, op. cit., III, 4.

[3]Ibid., III, 17.

[4]Ibid., III, 11.

[5]Ibid., III, 9.

[6]Parkes, op. cit., p. 231.

[7]Ibid., p. 237.

Fred Lewis Pattee, feeling that this age needed an intelligent moral dictator to bring the frenzied people back to normal, commented:

> But no dictator arose, only a satirist. Mark Twain did lay about him lustily. Satire he wrote in the hotness of wrath, satire touching every sore spot in the national life. A Don Quixote figure, he rode furiously in every direction tilting at the windmills of religious fanaticism, political chicanery, social inanity, judicial injustice, sentimental romance![8]

The purpose of this chapter will be to study Mark Twain's criticisms of big business, monopolies, and the craze of speculation in the United States.

I. TWAIN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SPECULATION AND FINANCIAL ABUSES

"There are two times in a man's life when he should not speculate: when he can't afford it, and when he can."[9] This was by no means Twain's only comment on big business, monopoly, and speculation, although it is one of his best known statements on the topic. Twain recognized some of the evils in the financial system as early as his Washoe years. His "Empire City Massacre," an exaggerated fictional burlesque of several hideous murders, was actually inspired by his annoyance at the process of "cooking" dividends by large

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[8]Samuel L. Clemens, Representative Selections, op. cit., pp. xli-xlii.

[9]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 215.

California corporations, at the expense of the stockholders. In this period Twain also discerned the foolishness of speculation, for in December, 1866, he wrote about Virginia City in the San Francisco Bulletin:

> Virginia bore quite a business-like aspect, and it was said that she was enjoying a very fair degree of prosperity. Business there now is on a good, firm, healthy basis, and she is steadily recovering from the collapse brought upon her by reckless speculation.[10]

Tom Sawyer has usually been considered an idyllic juvenile adventure story, but at least one critic, Edward Wagenknecht, claims to see more than mere narrative in it:

> There is some penetrating social criticism in the last chapter of Tom Sawyer, where Huck finds his money and his new position in life an appalling burden and only wishes he could throw it all off and go back to the days of comfortable poverty when he had nothing to do except to be himself.[11]

There are many other passages scattered through Twain's writings which criticize the evils in the financial system. In the "Esquimau Maiden's Romance" Twain shows the debasing effect of sudden riches upon the plodding, hard-working Eskimo.[12] A short sketch unpublished until recently, Twain's "Letter from the Recording Angel," implied that most great

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[10]Benson, op. cit., p. 206.

[11]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 112.

[12]Clemens, "The Esquimau Maiden's Romance," The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg, and Other Essays and Stories, op. cit., p. 149.

fortunes amassed in business are acquired and maintained by avaricious selfishness.[13] Twain had said almost the same thing in his "A Humane Word from Satan," where he advised charities not to be squeamish about accepting "tainted" money, because all large donations are usually "conscience money." In this piece Satan said, ". . . There isn't a rich man in your vast city who doesn't perjure himself every year before the tax board."[14] Twain also criticized his father for bequeathing the huge tract of Tennessee land to the Clemens family. The family was always tempted to speculate, and the land caused many anxious moments in the family.[15] In a relatively mild reproof Twain had also spoken of Joseph Twichell's church in Hartford as the "Church of the Holy Speculators," because of the wealthy Republican tycoons who left their financial affairs long enough on Sunday to attend services.[16] Thomas Alva Edison reported a comment by Twain against the practices of big business. Twain and George Iles had been visiting Edison; when they prepared to leave, it was raining. Iles suggested "appropriating" an empty

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[13]Samuel L. Clemens, "Letter from the Recording Angel," Harper's Magazine, CXCII (February, 1946), 106-9.

[14]Samuel L. Clemens, "A Humane Word From Satan," The $30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories (New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company, 1917), pp. 299-300.

[15]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 3.

[16]Paine, op. cit., I, 370.

coach standing outside the door, and Twain immediately replied, "Business man's idea! business man's idea!"[17] Twain, in his Connecticut Yankee, once more pointed out the dangers of speculation:

> Knight-errantry is a most chuckle-headed trade, and it is tedious hard work, too, but I begin to see that there is money in it, after all, if you have luck. Not that I would ever engage in it as a business; for I wouldn't. No sound and legitimate business can be established on a basis of speculation.[18]

Usually considered Twain's greatest indictment of speculation is The Gilded Age. The inimitable Colonel Sellers, along with his cohorts and the Washington politicians, is a satire on corrupt and impractical financial schemes.[19] Lucy Lockwood Hazard has said the book was written, not in admiration of the ingeniousness and zeal ". . . displayed by these shrewd manipulators of public funds, but in passionate disgust at the fraud and chicanery by which the successful

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[17]Thomas Alva Edison, "Excerpt from a Letter by Thomas Alva Edison to Cyril Clemens," Overland Monthly, LXXXVII (April, 1929), 102.

[18]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 738.

[19]Critics have noted the resemblance between Sellers and Jesse Leathers, one of Twain's distant relatives. John W. Chapman, in "The Germ of a Book," Atlantic Monthly, CL (December, 1932), 720-21, has quoted a passage from one of Twain's letters as a reason why Twain always kept Sellers from succeeding in his wild schemes. Twain had written, "It is only as a failure that such a person is harmless; it would be clearly a crime against society to make him a 'success' in life, since this would be to add another Jay Gould to the world's burdens."

arrive at their success."[20] DeLancey Ferguson has, however, questioned the effectiveness of the satire in The Gilded Age. He agreed that in the satire the ". . . underlying idea had a certain grandeur: to show how the speculative fever united the destinies and warped the lives of all sorts and conditions of men."[21] Twain, however, in his part of the novel did not stop at criticizing speculation, but tried to attack all sorts of existing national abuses.[22] Ferguson concluded, "In short, what might have been a high-powered bullet, piercing to the heart of a corrupt political system, became a charge of birdshot which peppered everything in sight but left no permanent scars."[23] It is true, though, that Colonel Sellers is at his best in this novel, and Twain has in this man characterized for all time in American literature the speculative fever of the post-Civil War period. Few readers will forget Sellers entertaining Washington Hawkins and glibly explaining the candle in place of a fire in the stove, and the water and raw turnip meal--both results of his speculative impracticality.[24] If Twain had a fault in this characterization, it was making Colonel Sellers so likable and so

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[20]Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature, op. cit., p. 228.

[21]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 168.

[22]Ibid., p. 170.

[23]Ibid., p. 171.

[24]Clemens and Warner, The Gilded Age, op. cit., I, 71-72, 105-8.

great a comic character that the reader often tends to lose sight of the intended satire.

Twain wrote two other effective satires on the debasing effect of money upon human beings. "The $30,000 Bequest" shows the moral disintegration which pride in wealth brought to a couple. Their dreams of wealth which never did materialize, eventually ruined their lives. At the end of his life the disappointed husband said:

> Vast wealth, acquired by sudden and unwholesome means, is a snare. It did us no good, transient were its feverish pleasures; yet for its sake we threw away our sweet and simple and happy life--let others take warning by us.[25]

Carl Van Doren said of this story, "What Mark Twain had once thought hugely comic in Colonel Sellers he had now come, after his own hot hopes and disappointments, to regard as one of the first of follies, if not of offenses."[26] The second story, one of Twain's greatest achievements, was "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg." This is a supreme example of the evil effect of money upon humanity. Twain, in brutally biting satire, lays bare the inmost thoughts of the greedy citizens. Here, however, as in almost all of his

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[25]Clemens, The $30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories, op. cit., p. 46.

[26]Van Doren, The American Novel 1789-1939, op. cit., p. 157.

greatest social criticism, he is attacking not a specific institution, custom, or abuse, but is voicing his disgust at man's own inherent faults and weaknesses.

Mark Twain did not always attack the evils brought on by money, big business, and speculation. There were several occasions when he either took a noncommittal attitude or else showed more admiration than reproof of a person or condition. Twain always liked business to be big; small commercial ventures drew his disgust. In Innocents Abroad he scornfully referred to the size of African stores. "The general size of a store in Tangier is about that of an ordinary shower-bath in a civilized land."[27] Despite his nostalgic love of the old-time Hannibal neighborhood, Twain did not lament the passing of all the old landmarks; "Tom Sawyer's cave" had become a lucrative source of Portland Cement, and Twain spoke with satisfaction that the plant cost two million dollars and produced five thousand barrels of cement daily.[28] Twain supported a low tariff in A Connecticut Yankee, but in Following the Equator he criticized any sudden drops in the tariff, because lucrative businesses would then suffer from increased competition. Said Twain,

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[27]Clemens, Innocents Abroad, op. cit., p. 80.

[28]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., II, 215.

"A man invests years of work and a vast sum of money in a worthy enterprise, upon the faith of existing laws; then the law is changed, and the man is robbed by his own government."[29] This is the laissez-faire pro-monopolistic philosophy which Twain so often held. In addition to this attitude, Twain was always on the lookout for a "good thing" in business. On many occasions he showed an interest in how other people could make large sums of money. A notebook reference to the Sandwich Islands is a good example:

> Sea Island cotton picked every day in the year--stalks cut off every Jan.--no frost--sure crop, worth $1 a pound in Liverpool or Havre--worth any price--adulterate silk goods with it. 1000 acres this land in bend of head of this island worth $2 to $20 an acre. Raised 30,000 lbs. last year--will raise 50,000 this. All that is needed is labor--industry--natives won't pick it every day--lazy and shiftless.[30]

Another example is the comment by "The Boss" in the Connecticut Yankee the day before the predicted eclipse:

> I was even impatient for to-morrow to come, I so wanted to gather in that great triumph and be the center of all the nation's wonder and reverence. Besides, in a business way it would be the making of me; I knew that.[31]

Evidence in the latter portion of this chapter will show that Twain, like "The Boss," was keenly interested in financial success. Any scheme with a promise of large financial re-

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[29]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., I, 209.

[30]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

[31]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee, op. cit., p. 677.

muneration had a fatal attraction for Twain.

The two best examples of his failure to criticize big business were his attitudes toward Standard Oil and Christian Science. He could have become allied with the muckraking movement when George Warner, of the Hartford Warner family, offered Twain's publishing company a book arraigning the Standard Oil trust. Warner told Twain:

> There is a splendid chance open to you. I know a man--a prominent man--who has written a book that will go like wildfire; a book that arraigns the Standard Oil fiends, and gives them unmitigated hell, individual by individual. It is the very book for you to publish; there is a fortune in it, and I can put you in communication with the author.[32]

Twain, however, had been assisted during his bankruptcy and period of heavy financial indebtedness by Henry H. Rogers of the Standard Oil Company. Twain simply turned down the offer, but later wrote privately:

> I wanted to say . . . the only man I <u>care</u> for in the world; the only man I would give a damn for; the only man who is lavishing his sweat and blood to save me and mine from starvation and shame, is a Standard Oil fiend. If you know me, you know whether I want the book or not.[33]

Twain again failed to criticize the methods of big business when he wrote about the Christian Science movement. His book, <u>Christian Science</u>, criticizes aspects of the new faith,

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[32]Clemens, <u>Mark Twain's Letters</u>, <u>op. cit.</u>, II, 612-13.

[33]<u>Loc. cit.</u>

and more especially its leader, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. There were times, however, when the tremendous business possibilities of the new religion, with its air-tight monopoly, caused Twain in his writings to approach admiration of the religion's business aspects. Twain said Mrs. Eddy was characterized by great business acumen, ambition, selfishness, and intelligent daring--all the qualities needed for financial success.[34] He poked fun at her because she copyrighted everything upon which she laid her hands,[35] but it should be observed that Twain himself followed this practice, and even registered his pseudonym as a trademark. The most remarkable feature of Christian Science, according to Twain, was its organization:

> The Christian Scientist has taken a force which has been lying idle in every member of the human race since time began, and has organized it, and backed the business with capital, and concentrated it at Boston headquarters in the hands of a small and very competent Trust, and there are results.[36]

One of Twain's other comments is characteristic because it not only lists some of the evils which the Christian Science monopoly could cause, but also shows a feeling of awe at the stupendous material power possible in the new religion:

> It is a reasonably safe guess that in America in 1920

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[34]Samuel L. Clemens, Christian Science (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1907), p. 201.

[35]Ibid., p. 113.

[36]Ibid., p. 63.

> there will be ten million Christian Scientists, and three millions in Great Britain; that these figures will be trebled in 1930; that in America in 1920 the Christian Scientists will be a politicalforce, in 1930 politically formidable, and in 1940 the governing power in the Republic--to remain that, permanently. And I think it a reasonable guess that the Trust (which is already in our day pretty brusque in its ways) will then be the most insolent and unscrupulous and tyrannical politico-religious master that has dominated a people since the palmy days of the Inquisition. And a stronger master than the strongest of bygone times, because this one will have a financial strength not dreamed of by any predecessor; as effective a concentration of irresponsible power as any predecessor has had; in the railway, the telegraph, and the subsidized newspaper, better facilities for watching and managing his empire than any predecessor has had; and, after a generation or two, he will probably divide Christendom with the Catholic Church.[37]

Mark Twain always had a respect for the "big outlaw," and he placed Mrs. Eddy in this group. Had she been less ambitious, Twain probably would have brutally excoriated her, but her aims seemed to Twain so astounding that he could not help tempering his criticism with admiration for her financial power:

> It is curious and interesting to note with what an unerring instinct the Pastor Emeritus has thought out and forecast all possible encroachments upon her planned autocracy, and barred the way against them, in the By-laws which she framed and copyrighted--under the guidance of the Supreme Being.[38]

Twain concluded that Mrs. Eddy was establishing a rule exactly like the Spanish Inquisition:

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[37] Ibid., p. 53-54.

[38] Ibid., p. 120.

None but accepted and well-established gods can venture an affront like that and do it with confidence. But the human race will take anything from that class. Mrs. Eddy knows the human race; knows it better than any mere human being has known it in a thousand centuries. My confidence in her human-beingship is getting shaken, my confidence in her god-ship is stiffening.39

II. TWAIN'S CONNECTION WITH THE GREAT BARBECUE

In many different ways Twain was either actively connected with the financiers of the Gilded Age or else in his own activities resembled the big tycoons. Having grown up in a family which had known financial privations, it was only natural that he should covet money, and when he did amass a fortune he lived luxuriously. When traveling in Europe, he always reserved an entire railroad car for his small family so that other passengers would not bother them.[40] The Clemens family also reserved private dining rooms in the European hotels, and their servant Katy Leary said the family lived "Always just like royalty."[41] Since the family took twenty-five steamer trunks with them on European visits,[42] her statement seems justified. Dorothy Waples has also described Twain's luxurious mode of living:

He became so prosperous that in the year 1881 he spent

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[39] Ibid., p. 184.

[40] Mary Lawton, A Lifetime with Mark Twain, The Memories of Katy Leary, for Thirty Years his Faithful and Devoted Servant (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925), pp. 120-21.

[41] Ibid., p. 122.

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[41]Ibid., p. 122.

> over $100,000. In 1906, when his wife had died and most of the time he lived alone, his expenses were more than $50 a day. Between 1875 and the end of the century, he was always looking for something with "millions in it."[43]

Even Twain's financial setbacks did not cause him to live like a pauper. After his business failure, he still ordered private railroad cars for the New York to Elmira trip,[44] and when he moved to Europe in order to economize, was highly pleased because he could live in Austria for only six hundred dollars a month![45]

Mark Twain knew Andrew Carnegie, liked him, and upon at least one occasion tried to interest him in a business venture, the "Library of American Literature."[46] Twain sounded like one of the money-mad tycoons when he published General Grant's memoirs. He realized he had a "good thing," and intended to give the Grant family the largest profits

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[43]Waples, op. cit., p. 52.

[44]Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain, Business Man, Samuel Charles Webster, editor (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1946), p. 259.

[45]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 670.

[46]Ibid., II, 578.

ever derived from a book.[47] He wrote in his notebook after publication of the Grant memoirs, "If I pay the General in silver coin (at $12 per pound) it will weigh 17 tons."[48] Twain's close friends, the financial tycoons of Hartford, were mentioned by "Dan De Quille" in the introduction to his book on Washoe. De Quille had finished the book at Twain's house, and he wrote to his Western friends:

> I think I have about conquered my awe of these New Englanders and the grand old city of Hartford. . . . They are very religious here--they worship God and greenbacks. Greenbacks six days in the week, and God all the spare time they can find on the remaining day. . . .[49]

Perhaps the best example of Twain's reaction to money was his attitude toward his own literary career. He once said, "There is no satisfaction in the world's praise anyhow, and it has no worth to me save in the way of business."[50]

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[47]It should be noted that Twain, always eager to make a fortune, was also willing to help certain other people in financial matters. In addition to the liberal royalties which he, as a publisher, gave to his friends, he for many years virtually supported his brother Orion, and his family. He also gave money to other relatives, and upon many occasions lectured for charity after turning down lucrative financial offers to speak in the same town.

[48]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 180.

[49]Wright, op. cit., p. xxii.

[50]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 66.

Lucy Lockwood Hazard has commented:

> Throughout his life we find him involved in one speculative scheme after another. He was always quite as much the speculator as the author--often an author only that he might finance the latest pet speculation or retrieve the breach it had made in his fortune.[51]

This idea is borne out completely by Twain's own admissions. When he was a secretary in Washington he continued to write newspaper letters because ". . . they pay best and that is what I work for. . . ."[52] Before writing Innocents Abroad he wrote to his mother, "But I had my mind made up to one thing--I wasn't going to touch a book unless there was money in it, and a good deal of it."[53] Twain later said, "The 'Innocents Abroad' paid me 12 to $1500 a month--the next book will pay considerably more."[54] For years Twain tried to purchase the copyrights to his books in order to obtain a higher percentage of profits, and all through his literary career he fought actively for international copyright protection. He even made several trips to Washington, and called on President Cleveland personally in his efforts to secure adequate legislation. If there was a possibility

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[51]Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature, op. cit., p. 222.

[52]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters to Will Bowen, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

[53]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., I, 145.

[54]Clemens, Mark Twain, Business Man, op. cit., p. 117.

of earning more money from his books, he was only too eager to campaign. Even in his last years he thought of literature primarily as a money-making device. In 1904 he wrote in his notebook, "Lay abed nearly all day, but wrote 3,000 words, earning $900."[55] He always rated his literary output by the quantity or the money it would pay him, not its quality. In light of this evidence, Brooks' decision about Twain and money is justified:

> It is only with all this in mind that we can grasp Mark Twain's instinctive conception of the literary career. He never thought of literature as an art, as the study and occupation of a lifetime: it was merely the line of activity which he followed more consistently than any other. Primarily, he was the business man, exploiting his imagination for commercial profit, his objects being precisely those of any other business man--to provide for his family, to gain prestige, to make money because other people made money and to make more money than other people made.[56]

A further look at Twain's own life will show why he never became a great satirist of wild speculation. On a few occasions he did point out the dangers of speculation, but more often he was too busy engaging in speculation himself or attempting to obtain monopolies in different fields.

The list of his business ventures and speculations is so tremendous that it is surprising he ever produced any

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[55]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 385.

[56]Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 144.

literature. This is possibly the first time Twain's speculative ventures have been collected in a reasonably complete list. When still a Mississippi Pilot he advised Orion to speculate in Keokuk land.[57] After he went to Washoe, he once held stock in fifty different mines.[58] Twain thought himself supremely qualified for financial dealings in Washoe, and wrote to his mother:

> . . . I am at the helm, now. I have convinced Orion that he hasn't business talent enough to carry on a peanut stand, and he has solemnly promised me that he will meddle no more with mining, or other matters not connected with the Secretary's office.[59]

Needless to say, he never made his fortune either in mining or in mining stock speculation. Mining stock continued to intrigue him during his San Francisco period, and one of the reasons for his financial embarrassment after leaving the San Francisco Call was a failure in Hale and Norcross stock, in which Twain owned many shares.[60]

Twain's Hartford period, before his business crash, was filled with an unbelievable number of schemes and speculations. He invested $5,000 in the American Publishing

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[57]Clemens, Mark Twain, Business Man, op. cit., p. 32.

[58]Mack, op. cit., p. 132.

[59]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., I, 67.

[60]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 100.

Company, one of his few wise moves.[61] He also invested an undetermined amount in a Fredonia, New York, watch company, but received no returns.[62] Another investment upon which he received a few dividends was five hundred dollars' worth of Booklover's Library shares, two hundred shares in all.[63] Through his connection with the Grant family, he became interested in a company intending to build a railroad from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf. Nothing developed from this scheme.[64] He lost a large sum on a steam generator, lost $32,000 on a steam pulley, dropped $25,000 on a new method of marine telegraphy, lost between $40,000 and $50,000 on Kaolatype, a new engraving process, and received nothing from substantial investments in a new cash register and spiral hat pin.[65] Undaunted by these losses, Twain became interested in the Bierstadt Artotype business in 1881,[66] was briefly enthusiastic about investing in some California vineyards,[67] invented and tried to patent a new calendar,[68]

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[61] Paine, op. cit., II, 725.

[62] Loc. cit.

[63] Ibid., III, 1151.

[64] Ibid., II, 829.

[65] Ibid., II, 725.

[66] Clemens, Mark Twain, Business Man, op. cit., p. 186.

[67] Ibid., p. 217.

[68] Ibid., p. 267.

and did the same with a bed clamp supposed to keep babies under the covers.[69] He also wanted to buy stock in a hand grenade type fire extinguisher,[70] did buy some Western Union stock,[71] and lost an indefinite amount by speculation on a typewriter company.[72] Twain had still other business ventures in this period. Two successful ones were the recording of his pen name as a registered trademark,[73] and the Mark Twain Scrapbook, which he invented and patented. Put on the market, it brought in large returns for several years.[74] His other ideas were failures. He was going to make millions by publishing the life of Pope Leo VIII, but since many of the world's Catholics were illiterate, the venture did not pay well.[75] One of his most absurd ideas was to costume people as Bunyan's characters, take them around the world, photograph them in suitable locales, and make a stereoptical panorama of Pilgrim's Progress which would earn millions in a series

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[69] Ibid., p. 279.

[70] Ibid., p. 280.

[71] Ibid., p. 296.

[72] Ibid., p. 310.

[73] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 212.

[74] Ibid., p. 160.

[75] Ibid., p. 233.

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[69] Ibid., p. 279.

[70] Ibid., p. 280.

[71] Ibid., p. 296.

[72] Ibid., p. 310.

[73] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 212.

[74] Ibid., p. 160.

[75] Ibid., p. 233.

of world-wide showings. This idea also came to naught.[76] He lost several thousand dollars on a new method of stamping book covers,[77] and unsuccessfully invested in mining stock when the Big Bonanza was discovered in Virginia City.[78] He advised "Dan De Quille" how to publish his mining book, and the book failed completely.[79] When sculptor Karl Gerhardt modeled a bust of General Grant, Twain had the bust made up in large numbers, but they did not sell and he lost a considerable amount of money.[80] He also invented a history game in 1883, and thought only of the money that might be earned if the game were marketed.[81]

The climax of Twain's business career came when both his Webster Publishing Company and the Paige Typesetter failed. When the Charles L. Webster Company went bankrupt in 1894, it left Twain nearly $100,000 in debt.[82] He had also poured over $300,000 into James W. Paige's invention,[83]

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[76]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 192.

[77]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 484.

[78]Mack, op. cit., p. 356.

[79]Wright, op. cit., p. xix.

[80]Howells, My Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 73.

[81]Clemens, Mark Twain, Business Man, op. cit., p. 218.

[82]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 14.

[83]Howells, My Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 80.

and his calculations of its financial possibilities approached the billion mark.[84] He had written exultingly to his old friend Joe Goodman, "We own the whole field--every inch of it--and nothing can dislodge us."[85] His servant Katy Leary said:

> He was expecting such wonderful things from it. Why, he thought he could buy all New York. He was asking how much it would take to buy all the railroads in New York, and all the newspapers, too--buy everything in New York on account of that typesetting machine. He thought he'd make millions and own the world, because he had such faith in it.[86]

Twain gloated over the machine, and burning with pride, said to Goodman, "I shall be in supreme command. . . ."[87] But it was a queer kind of prosperity while it lasted, for he later wrote to Goodman:

> Now here is a queer fact: I am one of the wealthiest grandees in America--one of the Vanderbilt gang, in fact--and yet if you asked me to lend you a couple of dollars I should have to ask you to take my note instead.[88]

One of the most unfortunate aspects of this fabulous speculation was Twain's refusal to accept the merger of the Paige machine with the Mergenthaler Linotype. Offered a half

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[84]Paine, op. cit., II, 906.

[85]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 517.

[86]Lawton, op. cit., pp. 104-5.

[87]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 521.

[88]Ibid., II, 534.

interest, Twain unwittingly turned down his opportunity to make all those millions about which he had ever dreamed.[89]

One might think that Twain learned his lesson when he went bankrupt and was forced to lecture all over the world, but to the end of his days he was always ready to speculate anew. Fortunately for him, Henry Rogers prevented many of these wild schemes. Among other things he wanted to invest in Sczezepanik's carpet pattern loom:

> Within one month after the happy conclusion of those agonizing years of struggle to redress his bankruptcy, he was negotiating with an Austrian inventor for a machine that was to be used to control the carpet-weaving industries of the world, planning a company to be capitalized at fifteen hundred million dollars.[90]

Twain would have taken a $1,500,000 option on this potential monopoly had not Rogers prevented him.[91] He also planned to start a magazine, but nothing ever came of the idea.[92] Late in his life he regretted that the Clemens family had gradually sold all of the Tennessee land. He said oil was discovered there in 1895, and in his Autobiography he commented, "I wish I owned a couple of acres of the land now, in which case I would not be writing autobiographies for a living."[93] When

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[89]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 234.

[90]Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 133.

[91]Paine, op. cit., II, 1056.

[92]Clemens, Mark Twain, Business Man, op. cit., p. 353.

[93]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 89.

Twain died, 375 shares of Plasmon Milk Products stock were found in his effects. Purchased late in his life for 5,000 pounds, the shares were worth about one hundred dollars.[94]

Thus his business ventures proved remarkably unsuccessful. One of his most perceptive statements about himself pertained to this topic. He said, "My axiom is, to succeed in business: avoid my example."[95] In light of these activities carried on by Twain, The Gilded Age becomes a weak arraignment, indeed, of big business, monopoly, and speculation. The conclusions which may be drawn from this chapter are threefold. First, Mark Twain did criticize certain financial practices of the Gilded Age, but this criticism was not of the highest order. Second, he wanted to make money himself, and did not desire to jeopardize his position by attacking business practices or institutions which were accepted throughout the nation. Third, he was closely associated with the moneyed class in America. After becoming a successful writer, he lived in sumptuous luxury, and constantly speculated in the hope of obtaining a monopoly or amassing a gigantic fortune. Instead of becoming the supreme critic of the Great Barbecue, Mark Twain was one of the many men who helped gild the age.

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[94]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 161, and Paine, op. cit., II, 1058.

[95]Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., p. 238.

CHAPTER VI

MINORITY GROUPS

Mark Twain, the champion of the "little people," often had much to say about the various minority groups in the United States. If a group was the subject of abuse and persecution, he usually came to the rescue. There were occasions, however, when he strangely ignored minorities. It is the purpose of this chapter to determine Twain's cognizance of minority problems in the United States, and the extent of his concern for these racial groups.

I. SPANISH-AMERICANS

The Spanish and Mexican people in the American West have been completely ignored by Twain. He mentioned the Chinese in Washoe, but said nothing of the many Mexican miners there. Dan De Quille had said:

> The business of working silver-mines was then new to our people, and at first they depended much on what was told them by the Mexican silver-miners who flocked to the country. Mexicans were in great demand.[1]

De Quille also mentioned several of the Spanish expressions used in Washoe, and said many Spanish words were used by miners in their rough anecdotes.[2] In all his writings Twain

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[1]Wright, op. cit., p. 84.

[2]Loc. cit.

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never referred to the use of Spanish expressions by the Washoe miners.

A similar situation existed in California. Unlike his friend Bret Harte, Twain never realized that before the Gold Rush California had once possessed a Spanish culture all its own. Large numbers of Spanish lived there, and considerable antagonism had once existed between them and the many American settlers. There was still much Spanish culture in California during Twain's western years, and Harte wished to capitalize on it. Pattee has said of Harte, "His first dream was to do for the lands of the Spanish missions what Irving had done for the highlands of the Hudson."[3] But Mark Twain evidently was not interested in the Spanish minority in the West. Why he was silent about the Spanish race remains one of the many unsolved problems for Twain critics.

II. INDIANS

Once again Twain's attitude was inconsistent, for he both defended and criticized the American Indian. His criticisms were principally in the earlier part of his life when the memories of living in Indian country were still vivid. There was good reason for Twain not to show any love for the Indian, because Washoe was not completely safe from marauding

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[3]Pattee, "The Short Story," Cambridge History of American Literature, op. cit., II, 377.

Redmen in the 1860's. A force of 756 white men left Virginia City on May 24, 1860, to defeat the Piute Indians.[4] This was not long before Twain's arrival in Washoe. Another uprising took place in the spring of 1862 near Owens Lake. Twain saw the burned stage stations while on his way to the Esmeralda mines. Orion, then acting governor of the territory, was highly agitated about the trouble, but Twain was far too interested in making a quick fortune frommining to take more than passing notice of the affair.[5]

At that stage of his career, Twain was not aroused by cruelties to minority groups. Congress had appropriated $75,000 to build a sawmill for the Indians in Washoe, but while this legislation was suffering many delays, hundreds of Indians froze to death because of inadequate housing.[6] Twain did not mention this until years later, and he never referred to the plight of the Indians living in Virginia City:

> These poor vagabonds once lords of the soil, who had been the proud possessors of all the mountain--were now forced to live on the refuse of the human strata above

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[4]Wright, op. cit., p. 81.

[5]Mack, op. cit., p. 157.

[6]Ibid., p. 143. Twain used this incident to further his satire on Congressional ways in The Gilded Age, op. cit., II, 45. It was also a strong defense of the Indians.

them, or to wander among the back alleys in search of rotten food thrown out by the markets.[7]

Twain criticized Indians on several occasions. In Innocents Abroad he spoke disparagingly of the Digger Indians:

> . . . Those degraded savages who roast their dead relatives, then mix the human grease and ashes of bones with tar, and "gaum" it thick all over their heads and foreheads and ears, and go caterwauling about the hills and call it mourning.[8]

He then added:

> It isn't worth while, in these practical times, for people to talk about Indian poetry--there never was any in them--except in the Fennimore [sic] Cooper Indians. But they are an extinct tribe that never existed. I know the Noble Red Man. I have camped with the Indians; I have been on the warpath with them, taken part in the chase with them--for grasshoppers; helped them steal cattle; I have roamed with them, scalped them, had them for breakfast. I would gladly eat the whole race if I had a chance.[9]

Some of the Arabs in Palestine reminded him of the American Indians he had seen:

> They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous and uncomfortable and savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe.
>
> These people about us had other peculiarities, which I have noticed in the noble red man, too: they were

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[7]Mack, op. cit., p. 184.

[8]Clemens, Innocents Abroad, op. cit., p. 205.

[9]Loc. cit.

> infested with vermin, and the dirt had caked on them till it amounted to bark.[10]

In the Connecticut Yankee Twain made a passing remark about the dull animal nature of the Indian race,[11] but his most outstanding criticism of the Indian was in Roughing It, in which the Goshoot Tribe bore the brunt of his attack. While telling of his trip through the West, Twain said, "It was along in this wild country somewhere . . . that we came across the wretchedest type of mankind I have ever seen, up to this writing. I refer to the Goshoot Indians."[12] In describing them Twain spoke of ". . . their faces and hands bearing dirt which they had been hoarding and accumulating for months, years, and even generations, according to the age of the proprietor. . . ."[13] Twain called them ". . . a silent, sneaking, treacherous-looking race," who were indolent, prideless beggars.[14] Always hungry, they ate food which even hogs spurned, and had ". . . no higher ambition than to kill and eat jackass rabbits, crickets, and grasshoppers, and embezzle carrion from the buzzards and coyotes. . . ."[15]

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[10] Ibid., p. 473.

[11] Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 666.

[12] Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., I, 154.

[13] Ibid., I, 155.

[14] Loc. cit.

[15] Loc. cit.

Twain said they produced absolutely nothing and concluded his tirade:

> . . . I say that the nausea which the Goshoots gave me, an Indian worshiper, set me to examining authorities, to see if perchance I had been over-estimating the Red Man while viewing him through the mellow moonshine of romance. The revelations that came were disenchanting. It was curious to see how quickly the paint and tinsel fell away from him and left him treacherous, filthy, and repulsive--and how quickly the evidences accumulated that wherever one finds an Indian tribe he has only found Goshoots more or less modified by circumstances and surroundings--but Goshoots, after all. They deserve pity, poor creatures! and they can have mine--at this distance.[16]

Then, however, Twain recalled that the name Goshoots had been used insultingly by white men, and this recollection of white injustice finally brought him to a partial defense of the tribe:

> . . . However innocent the motive may have been, the necessary effect was to injure the reputation of a class who have a hard enough time of it in the pitiless deserts of the Rocky Mountains, Heaven knows! If we cannot find it in our hearts to give those poor naked creatures our Christian sympathy and compassion, in God's name let us at least not throw mud at them.[17]

Had no one else tried to criticize the Goshoots, Twain probably never would have uttered one good word about this

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[16] Ibid., I, 157-58.

[17] Ibid., I, 158.

particular tribe of Indians.[18]

In his later years he sympathized more with the oppressed American Indians. This changed attitude was probably caused by reports of how the Indian tribes were gradually being wiped out. In "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," Twain depicted the white man as a freakishly small American minority group; the Indian controlled the "American" part of heaven.[19] Van Wyck Brooks added:

> . . . Mark Twain was too tender-hearted to maintain for long a grudge against any variety of under-dog. It was a Piute Indian he had known in Tulare County who received Captain Stormfield when he visited heaven.[20]

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[18]Twain was usually humanitarian in his attitude toward less civilized racial groups, but if his pride was insulted, he had nothing but vituperation for the people. An excellent example is Twain's comment in Innocents Abroad, op. cit., p. 463: "It is soothing to the heart to abuse England and France for interposing to save the Ottoman Empire from the destruction it has so richly deserved for a thousand years. It hurts my vanity to see these pagans refuse to eat of food that has been cooked for us; or to eat from a dish we have eaten from; or to drink from a goatskin which we have polluted with our Christian lips, except by filtering the water through a rag which they put over the mouth of it or through a sponge! I never disliked a Chinaman as I do these degraded Turks and Arabs, and when Russia is ready to war with them again, I hope England and France will not find it good breeding or good judgment to interfere."

[19]Clemens, "Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," op. cit., p. 273.

[20]Brooks, The Times of Melville and Whitman, op. cit., p. 292.

Twain also showed his changed feeling for the Indian, when he wrote in his notebook a brief imaginary conversation between the United States government and a stranger:

"We have killed 200 Indians."

"What did it cost?"

"$2,000,000."

"You could have given them a college education for that."[21]

In his Autobiography Twain criticized the cruel extermination of American Indians, and went on to attack all the national evils:

> . . . Thanksgiving Day, a function which originated in New England two or three centuries ago when those people recognized that they really had something to be thankful for--annually, not oftener--if they had succeeded in exterminating their neighbors, the Indians, during the previous twelve months instead of getting exterminated by their neighbors, the Indians. Thanksgiving Day became a habit, for the reason that in the course of time, as the years drifted on, it was perceived that the exterminating had ceased to be mutual and was all on the white man's side, consequently on the Lord's side; hence it was proper to thank the Lord for it and extend the usual annual compliments. The original reason for a Thanksgiving Day has long ago ceased to exist--the Indians have long ago been comprehensively and satisfactorily exterminated and the account closed with the Lord, with the thanks due. But, from old habit, Thanksgiving day has remained with us, and every year the President of the United States and the Governors of all the several states and territories set themselves the task, every November, to hunt up something to be thankful for, and then they put those thanks into a few crisp

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[21]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 166.

> and reverent phrases, in the form of a proclamation, and this is read from all the pulpits of the land, the national conscience is wiped clean with one swipe, and sin is resumed at the old stand.[22]

III. THE CHINESE

On only two occasions did Twain exhibit any prejudice against the Chinese. When he and Steve Gillis were living in San Francisco, they annoyed the nearby Chinese residents. Paine has told us of their escapades:

> They moved a great many times in San Francisco. Their most satisfactory residence was on a bluff on California Street. Their windows looked down on a lot of Chinese houses--"tin can houses," they were called--small wooden shanties covered with beaten-out cans. Steve and Mark would look down on these houses, waiting until all the Chinamen were inside; then one of them would grab an empty beer-bottle, throw it down on those tin-can roofs, and dodge behind the blinds. The Chinamen would swarm out and look up at the row of houses on the edge of the bluff, shake their fists, and pour out Chinese vituperation.

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[22]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 291. Another American minority group which Twain defended were the Mormons. In Roughing It, op. cit., II, 346, Twain said ". . . let it be remembered that for forty years these creatures have been driven, driven, driven, relentlessly! and mobbed, beaten, and shot down; cursed, despised, expatriated; banished to a remote desert, whither they journeyed gaunt with famine and disease, disturbing the ancient solitudes with their lamentations and marking the long way with graves of their dead--and all because they were simply trying to live and worship God in the way which they believed with all their hearts and souls to be the true one. Let all these things be borne in mind, and then it will not be hard to account for the deathless hatred which the Mormons bear our people and our government."

> By and by, when they had retired and everything was quiet again, their tormentors would throw another bottle. This was their Sunday amusement.[23]

Twain's second show of racial superiority was in his twenty-third letter to the Sacramento Union, from Honolulu in 1866. He related the advantages of coolie labor:

> You will have Coolie labor in California some day. It is already forcing its superior claims upon the attention of your great mining, manufacturing and public improvement corporations. You will not always go on paying $80 and $100 a month for labor which you can hire for $5. The sooner California adopted Coolie labor the better it will be for her. It cheapens no labor of men's hands save the hardest and most exhausting drudgery--drudgery which neither intelligence nor education are required to fit a man for--drudgery which all white men abhor and are glad to escape from.[24]

Despite these two instances of racial prejudice, Twain's lifetime attitude toward the Chinese in America was admirable. Some of his best social criticism came in his San Francisco period when he tried to prevent cruel abuse of the Chinese. Wagenknecht has said, "I know nothing in Mark Twain's career that is more disinterested or more creditable to him than his expose of the wanton cruelties to which Orientals were subjected in California."[25] Twain's sketch, "Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy," tells the story of his efforts to help the Chinese. Twain, in describing

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[23]Paine, op. cit., I, 255.

[24]Frear, op. cit., p. 406.

[25]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 234.

the abuse suffered by Chinese in San Francisco, said:

> . . . In many districts of the vast Pacific coast, so strong is the wild, free love of justice in the hearts of the people, that whenever any secret and mysterious crime is committed, they say, 'Let justice be done, though the heavens fall,' and go straightway and swing a Chinaman.[26]

The one incident which sent Twain into a fury was described in the following sketch:

> I have many such memories in my mind, but am thinking just at present of one particular one, where the Brannan Street butchers set their dogs on a Chinaman who was quietly passing with a basket of clothes on his head; and while the dogs mutilated his flesh, a butcher increased the hilarity of the occasion by knocking some of the Chinaman's teeth down his throat with half a brick. This incident sticks in my memory with a more malevolent tenacity, perhaps, on account of the fact that I was in the employ of a San Francisco journal at the time, and was not allowed to publish it because it might offend some of the peculiar element that subscribed for the paper.[27]

The "peculiar element" referred to were the many Irish subscribers to the San Francisco papers. The sketch was, in part, criticism of the corrupt police (largely Irish immigrants) who only brought to justice children and those poorer people who had no political influence.[28]

In Roughing It Mark Twain also defended the Chinese. There were many Chinese laborers in Virginia City. From his

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[26]Samuel L. Clemens, "Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy," Sketches New and Old (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1903), p. 114.

[27]Ibid., p. 147. Twain has never said whether or not he tried to stop the cruel mutilation.

[28]Ibid., p. 143-48.

observations Twain was led to declare:

> A disorderly Chinaman is rare, and a lazy one does not exist. So long as a Chinaman has strength to use his hands he needs no support from anybody; white men often complain of want of work, but a Chinaman offers no such complaint; he always manages to find something to do. He is a great convenience to everybody--even to the worst class of white men, for he bears the most of their sins, suffering fines for their petty thefts, imprisonment for their robberies, and death for their murder. Any white man can swear a Chinaman's life away in the courts, but no Chinaman can testify against a white man. Ours is the "land of the free. . . ."[29]

He also mentioned the poor Chinese, trying to eke out livings in old abandoned California mines, who were forced to pay a "foreign mining tax" every month by the corrupt state officials.[30] He then hastened to assure his readers that upper class Californians did not persecute the Chinese:

> Only the scum of the population do it--they and their children; they, and naturally and consistently, the policemen and politicians, likewise, for these are the dust-licking pimps and slaves of the scum, there as well as elsewhere in America.[31]

On still other occasions Twain defended the Chinese. He and Twichell supported the Chinese Educational Mission in Hartford, and he also interceded with General Grant in behalf of the Chinese Minister's industrial program. The minister, Yung Wing, was trying to secure financial aid for

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[29]Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., II, 128.

[30]Ibid., II, 130.

[31]Ibid., II, 135.

the construction of military railroads in China, and Twain asked Grant to exert some influence. He also asked Grant to help pull strings in order to let some Chinese college students continue their studies in America.[32] When Winston Churchill spoke in New York City in 1900, Twain's introduction of the speaker was a defense of the Chinese:

> Behold America, the refuge of the oppressed from everywhere (who can pay $10 admission)--everyone except a Chinaman--standing up for human rights everywhere, even helping to make China let people in free when she wants to collect $50 from them. . . . And how piously America has wrought for that open door in all cases where it was not her own.[33]

Twain's most complete denunciation of American treatment of Chinese immigrants was his series of fictional letters entitled "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again," which were originally printed in The Galaxy during 1870. Ah Song, the emigrating Chinaman, wrote of his adventures to Ching-Foo. Ah Song began, "It is all settled, and I am to leave my oppressed and overburdened native land and cross the sea to that noble realm where all are free and all are equal, and none reviled or abused--America!"[34] He told how America admitted all nationalities, and added:

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[32]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 20-22.

[33]Gibson, op. cit., p. 449.

[34]Clemens, "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again," Representative Selections, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

> . . . We know that the foreign sufferers she has rescued from oppression and starvation are the most eager of her children to welcome us, because, having suffered themselves, they know what suffering is, and having been generously succored, they long to be generous to other unfortunates and thus show that magnanimity is not wasted upon them.[35]

Ah Song then rejoiced over his promised American wages, twelve dollars a month, and related how kind his employer was to advance money for his passage. "For a mere form, I have turned over my wife, my boy, and my two daughters to my employer's partner as security for the payment of the ship fare."[36] Somewhat disillusioned, Ah Song told of a two dollar fee paid to the American Consul in China. It was extortion, but he understood that Congress was going to legalize it in some future session.[37] Ah Song's eyes were really opened aboard ship. He wrote to his friend:

> Yesterday our people got to quarrelling among themselves, and the captain turned a volume of hot steam upon a mass of them and scalded eighty or ninety of them more or less severely. Flakes and ribbons of skin came off some of them. There was wild shrieking and struggling while the vapor enveloped the great throng, and so some who were not scalded got trampled upon and hurt. We do not complain, for my employer says this is the usual way of quieting disturbances on board the ship, and that it is done in the cabins among the Americans every day or two.[38]

When the voyage ended, Ah Song stepped jubilantly down the

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[35] Ibid., p. 99.

[36] Loc. cit.

[37] Ibid., p. 100.

[38] Loc. cit.

gangplank, but was kicked by a uniformed man, and told to "look out." He was then struck with a club and again told to "look out."[39] A required vaccination was next, and despite the two dollar fee charged to all other people, the Chinese were forced to pay ten dollars. AhSong wrote, "And presently the doctor came and did his work and took my last penny--my ten dollars which were the hard savings of nearly a year and a half of labor and privation."[40] But Ah Song did not despair. "I reflected that I had one prodigious advantage over paupers in other lands--I was in America. I was in the heaven provided refuge of the oppressed and forsaken!"[41] But Ah Song continued:

> Just as that comforting thought passed through my mind, some young men set a fierce dog on me. I tried to defend myself, but could do nothing. I retreated to the recess of a closed doorway, and there the dog had me at his mercy, flying at my throat and face or any part of my body that presented itself. I shrieked for help, but the young men only jeered and laughed. Two men in gray uniforms (policemen is their official title) looked on for a minute and then walked leisurely away. But a man stopped them and brought them back and told them it was a shame to leave me in such distress. Then the two policemen beat off the dog with small clubs, and a comfort it was to be rid of him, though I was just rags and blood from head to foot. The man who brought the policemen asked the young men why they abused me in that way, and they said they didn't want any of his meddling. And

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[39] Loc. cit.

[40] Ibid., p. 101.

[41] Ibid., p. 102.

they said to him:

> "This Ching divil comes till Ameriky to take the bread out o' dacent intilligent white men's mouths, and whin they try to defind their rights there's a dale o' fuss made about it."[42]

Ah Song was then arrested for "disturbing the peace," and as he was savagely thrown into a cell, was told, "Rot there, ye furrin spawn, till ye lairn that there's no room in America for the likes of ye or your nation."[43] In few other instances has Twain so strongly attacked racial prejudice.

IV. HEBREWS

Twain's attitude toward the Jewish people has been one of consistent admiration, and has never been prejudiced. He said of the Jewish race, "They are peculiarly and conspicuously the world's intellectual aristocracy."[44] In 1893 when antagonism was rife between Christians and Jews in Austria, Twain wrote to Twichell:

> It is Christian and Jew by the horns--the advantage with the superior man, as usual--the superior man being the Jew every time and in all countries. Land, Joe, what chance would the Christian have in a country where there were 3 Jews to 10 Christians! Oh, not the shade of a shadow of a chance. The difference between the brain of the average Christian and that of the average Jew--certainly in Europe--is about the difference between a tadpole's and an Archbishop's. It's a marvelous race--by

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[42] Ibid., pp. 102-3.

[43] Ibid., p. 104.

[44] Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 151.

long odds the most marvelous that the world has produced, I suppose.[45]

Twain's most important praise of the Hebrews, "Concerning the Jews," was a surprisingly frank discussion of the problems which beset Jewish people in modern Christian countries. Twain first listed the good Jewish traits: the Jews are peaceful industrious, quiet, and not quarrelsome. Their dwellings are truly homes in the finest sense, and they possess a benevolent disposition.[46] Then Twain put forth the discreditable side of the Jewish people. They have a reputation for petty cheating and the practice of oppressive usury. They will also violate the spirit of a law, although technically they will not break it. While they are faithful civil servants, the Jewish people are often unpatriotic in defense of a flag.[47] Twain then concluded, "The merits and demerits being fairly weighed and measured on both sides, the Christian can claim no superiority over the Jews in the matter of good citizenship."[48] Pointing out the superiority of the Hebrews in all fields, Twain said:

> If he entered upon a mechanical trade, the Christian had to retire from it. If he set up as a doctor, he was the best one, and he took the business. If he exploited

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[45]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 647.

[46]Samuel L. Clemens, "Concerning the Jews," Literary Essays (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1918), p. 266.

[47]Ibid., p. 269.

[48]Ibid., p. 270.

> agriculture, the other farmers had to get at something else. Since there was no way to successfully compete with him in any vocation, the law had to step in and save the Christian from the poorhouse.[49]

Despite almost universal antagonism, the Jews still found ways to get rich. "Ages of restriction to the one tool which the law was not able to take from him--his brain--have made that tool singularly competent. . . ."[50] This led Twain to believe that hostility toward the Jew has developed because of the Christian's inability to compete successfully with the Jew in any form of business.[51] Despite this financial success, the Jewish people have never been politically important in any country. Twain thought this situation could be improved if the Jews banded together. He advised the Jewish people to form their own regiments in time of war, and to combine politically in order to control the deciding vote. In these ways they would gradually become more powerful and therefore less oppressed.[52] Twain then considered the question of whether persecution of the Jews would ever cease, and he affirmed that religious persecution had already ended,but business persecution would

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[49] Ibid., p. 273.

[50] Ibid., pp. 273-74.

[51] Ibid., pp. 275-76.

[52] Ibid., pp. 278-82.

probably continue for some time.[53] Near the end of his sketch he hinted why he had spoken so favorably of the Jew: "He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him."[54] Once again it was an instance where Twain supported the oppressed underdog, and since this underdog was courageously fighting for itself, Twain was even more strongly impressed.

V. NEGROES

One of the minority groups which Twain consistently defended was the Negroes. Upon no occasion was his attitude toward the Negro race anything but exemplary. His personal relations with Negroes were always pleasant. Brought up in a slave-holding locality, Twain naturally adopted many of the attitudes of his environment, but never did feel cockily superior to the Negro. Twain tells of his youthful summers on Uncle John Quarles' farm:

> All the negroes were friends of ours, and with those of our own age we were in effect comrades. I say in effect, using the phrase as a modification. We were comrades, and yet not comrades; color and condition interposed a subtle line which both parties were conscious of and which rendered complete fusion impossible. . . . It was on the farm that I got my strong liking for his race and my appreciation of certain of its fine qualities.

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[53] Ibid., p. 284.

[54] Ibid., p. 286.

> This feeling and this estimate have stood the test of sixty years and more, and have suffered no impairment. The black face is as welcome to me now as it was then.[55]

When Twain first traveled east as a young boy, he was homesick for several things, including the sight of ". . . a good old-fashioned negro."[56] Twain had several Negro servants in his later years, and always treated them well. Howells has reported that Twain never used a commanding tone to George, for many years the family butler.[57] Many times after refusing to speak elsewhere, Twain would accept an invitation to speak at a Negro church,[58] and he financed the college educations of two Negroes. One was in a southern divinity school; the other was in the Yale Law School.[59] When Garfield was elected, Twain requested that he retain Fred Douglass as Marshall of the District of Columbia. He believed Douglass was a good man, and should not be made the victim of politics.[60] Twain also spoke in praise of Booker T. Washing-

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[55]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 100.

[56]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., I, 29.

[57]Howells, My Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 34.

[58]Paine, op. cit., II, 700.

[59]Ibid., II, 701.

[60]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., I, 393-94.

ton, and ardently supported Washington's Negro welfare work.[61] Twain had a habit of losing his temper over many poorly-written letters, but never did so if he knew the letter was from a Negro. This habit of Twain's resulted in Olivia's admonition that he consider every man colored until he was proved white.[62]

William Lyon Phelps has said, "Mark Twain is the most truthful and the most reliable of all novelists who have dealt with American slavery."[63] In his boyhood years, Twain was taught to believe that slavery was necessary and not morally wrong--at least not the type of slavery seen in Missouri. Abolitionists were something to be despised or perhaps stoned out of town.[64] From his earliest years, however, Twain hated to see slaves treated cruelly:

> When I was ten years old I saw a man fling a lump of iron-ore at a slave-man in anger, for merely doing something awkwardly--as if that were a crime. It bounded from the man's skull, and the man fell and never spoke again. He was dead in an hour. I know the man had a right to kill his slave if he wanted to, and yet it seemed a pitiful thing and somehow wrong, though why wrong I was not deep enough to explain if I had been asked to do it. Nobody in the village approved of that murder, but of course no one said much about it.[65]

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[61]Paine, op. cit., III, 1272.

[62]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 170.

[63]Phelps, Some Makers of American Literature, op. cit., p. 181.

[64]Paine, op. cit., I, 42.

[65]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., II, 18-19.

Twain also hated the sight of chained Negroes awaiting shipment "down the river" to southern plantations.[66]

The power of Twain's environment was probably still too strong in the years immediately before the Civil War for him to take an anti-slavery stand. In his later years, after slavery in the United States had been abolished, he often condemned slavery. He once said, "It would not be possible for a humane and intelligent person to invent a rational excuse for slavery. . . ."[67] William Cairns believed that Twain's opposition to slavery was not only because of his humanitarianism, but also because slavery hindered the booming industrial progress that Twain so ardently liked.[68] Twain may well have believed slavery hampered industrial progress, but that feeling did not lessen his defence of the Negroes on moral grounds. He spoke out sharply against the practice of lynching, and also criticized the planters' attitudes toward the free Negroes. If Negroes were to be lynched for supposed crimes, Twain believed they would soon become mentally upset and actually begin committing these crimes.[69] In Life on the Mississippi he told how the planters

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[66]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 124.

[67]Clemens, "My First Lie, and How I Got Out of It," The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, and Other Essays and Stories, op. cit., p. 161.

[68]Cairns, op. cit., p. 446.

[69]Clemens, "The United States of Lyncherdom," The Portable Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 586.

refused to associate with the free Negroes. Strange Jewish merchants moved in, talked the Negroes into obtaining excessive credit, and soon had the Negroes pauperized. Twain did not attack the Jewish merchants, but did censure the planters who allowed these conditions to occur under their own noses.[70]

In many of his other books Twain either defended the Negro or opposed slavery. In A Connecticut Yankee he commented on the degrading effects of slavery upon the human race,[71] and in Tom Sawyer Abroad he defended the Negro. Huck said of the Negro Jim, "He was only nigger outside; inside he was as white as you be."[72] The Gilded Age also had several passages in defense of the Negro. Twain, in his description of the steamboat race, showed that many people considered Negroes less than human. When one of the steamboats had attained a terrific head of steam, the following conversation ensued:

> "How is she now?"
>
> "A hundred and ninety-six and still a-swelling!--water below the middle gauge-cocks!--carrying every pound she can stand!--nigger roosting on the safety valve!"[73]

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[70]Clemens, Life on the Mississippi, op. cit., p. 157.

[71]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 750.

[72]Clemens, Tom Sawyer, Abroad, op. cit., p. 102.

[73]Clemens and Warner, The Gilded Age, op. cit., I, 34.

On another occasion Ruth Bolton and her girl friend sneaked into the dissecting room of the medical school one night and discovered a dead Negro on a table. Twain's comment was highly effective:

> Perhaps it was the wavering light of the candles, perhaps it was only the agony from a death of pain, but the repulsive black face seemed to wear a scowl that said, "Haven't you yet done with the outcast, persecuted black man, but you must now haul him from his grave, and send even your women to dismember his body?"[74]

Twain's best literary treatments of the Negro came in Pudd'nhead Wilson and Huckleberry Finn. Ferguson said of Pudd'nhead Wilson:

> The truly original element in the story Mark Twain seemingly overlooked. It had come naturally to him, as part of his inheritance from slavery days in Missouri, and he presented it simply, without heat or underscoring. The moral overhead of slavery, by which slave women became their masters' concubines and bore them slave children, was a dangerously realistic theme to handle in the still prudish closing years of the Victorian age. But simply because he handled it without heat, as a fact of nature, Mark Twain got away with it.[75]

Twain alluded to the cruel custom which caused a person with a tiny fraction of Negro blood to be considered colored, and forced that person to remain a slave.[76] He also pointed out that although many Negroes were often punished severely for stealing chickens, no Negroes could ever protest against the

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[74] Ibid., I, 153.

[75] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 253.

[76] Samuel L. Clemens, Pudd'nhead Wilson, and Those Extraordinary Twins (New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company, 1922), p. 12.

whiteswho stole their liberty.[77] The most tragic point presented by Twain, however, was the description of the tremendous power which racial intolerance could exert over a person's character. Tom Driscoll's prejudices against Negroes were so strong that when he discovered he was actually colored, his entire attitude changed from haughtiness to utter abjectness.[78] To complete the illustration, Twain showed the effect on Chambers, the supposed Negro who discovered himself to be white. He had been a slave for so many years that it was almost impossible for him to have anything but a hang-dog demeanor in the presence of other whites.[79]

One of the important aspects of Huckleberry Finn is its handling of the Negro question. Set in pre-war slave country, the book presents a great many of the attitudes toward the Negro held by the people of the Mississippi Valley. Although these attitudes existed in slave-holding times, they still are of importance because of the many similar prejudices held by Americans throughout the country today. Huck's father took a common attitude, still seen in modified

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[77] Ibid., p. 16.

[78] Ibid., pp. 76-79.

[79] Ibid., p. 202.

form today, when he refused to vote ever again because in some states Negroes were allowed to vote.[80] Huck and Mrs. Phelps showed a typical attitude when she asked about the supposed steamboat wreck:

> "Good Gracious! anybody hurt?"
>
> "No'm. Killed a nigger."
>
> "Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt."[81]

Another example of a typical attitude toward the Negro was Huck's horror when Tom Sawyer offered to help rescue Jim. Huck had not thought Tom would ever stoop to "nigger-stealing."[82] When Jim was captured, Mr. Phelps would pray for him, but would not help him.[83] This attitude has also existed in various forms through the years. The greed of the white man was shown later when the planters were prevented from hanging the captured Jim only because of his monetary value.[84] On several other occasions the cruel practices used on slaves were shown in all their barbarousness.

Theodore Dreiser has said that Twain's greatest deed

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[80]Samuel L. Clemens, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1931), pp. 37-38.

[81]Ibid., pp. 306-7.

[82]Ibid., pp. 313-14.

[83]Ibid., p. 344.

[84]Ibid., pp. 393-94.

for the Negro was to oppose Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrait of the colored race with his own picture of Jim.[85] Twain did manage to exhibit many Negro characteristics as he had known them. Jim's nobility was shown when he willingly gave himself up in order that Tom Sawyer might be given proper medical attention.[86] Huck first began to appreciate the human qualities in Jim when he realized how hurt the colored man had been at his thoughtless pranks.[87] Huck showed the typical prejudice of his time when he almost froze in horror at Jim's claim that if necessary he would one day steal his children from their master.[88] White prejudice was contrasted, a bit later, with Jim's inner feelings when Huck said:

> When I waked up just atdaybreak he was sitting there with his head down betwixt his knees, moaning and mourning to himself. I didn't take notice nor let on. I knowed what it was about. He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick; because he hadn't ever been away from home before in his life; and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n.[89]

Huck probably showed more moral courage than Twain ever did, because his plan to help Jim escape was in direct opposition to sentiment along the Mississippi River. Critics

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[85]Dreiser, op. cit., p. 622.

[86]Clemens, Huckleberry Finn, op. cit., p. 381.

[87]Ibid., pp. 119-20.

[88]Ibid., p. 123.

[89]Ibid., p. 215.

have cast aspersions upon Twain because his defense of the Negro was "after-the-fact"; slavery was a thing of the past when he showed the cruelties of the system. This accusation is true, but it should be recalled that prejudices were not swept away by the Emancipation Proclamation, and in his works Twain has described many of the problems which have beset the Negro because of racial prejudice.

VI. LABORERS AND THE POOR

Although the laborers and the poor in America far outnumbered the wealthy people during Twain's lifetime, this group can be listed under "minorities." Despite the numerical advantage of the laborers, power was in the hands of the big businessmen, and for many years public opinion was distrustful of labor's attempts to organize. Mark Twain stated that he favored the workingman's attempts to alleviate his estate, but a look at the record finds him silent more often than not.

On at least two occasions Twain was unfavorable to labor. In The American Claimant he sent the Earl's son to find a job in America. Taken to a labor union, the young man was rudely told to get out. The once humble laborers had become haughtily resentful of any non-union man, and refused to admit "anybody" to their organization.[90] Twain

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[90]Clemens, The American Claimant, op. cit., p. 111.

also told Howells he was doubtful of the justice of the workingmen's cause in the great Pennsylvania coal strike.[91]

On other occasions Twain took an almost flippant attitude toward the plight of laborers and the poor. When Twain visited Bermuda ". . . the question came up,Where do the poor live? No answer was arrived at. Therefore, we agreed to leave this conundrum for future statesmen to wrangle over."[92] On another occasion when Twain was at a party in Europe, he spoke jocosely of his agreement with a lady's opinions: ". . . She is a democrat and so am I; she is women's rights and so am I; she is laborers' rights and approves trades unions and strikes, and that is me. And so on."[93]

There were times, however, when Twain did seriously side with laborers and the poor. He once wrote in his notebook, "I wish the Lord would disguise Himself in citizen's clothing and make a personal examination of the sufferings of the poor in London. He would be moved, and would do something for them Himself."[94] Many parts of the Connecticut

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[91]Howells, My Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 81.

[92]Clemens, "Some Rambling Notes of an Idle Excursion," Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer Detective, and Other Stories, op. cit., p. 276.

[93]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 680.

[94]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., p. 324.

Yankee also describe the sufferings of the poor. Twain was always willing to atone for any hasty action on his own part if a poor man were affected. He sued a cab driver who overcharged his servant Katy Leary, but when he discovered graft in the company and learned that the driver was a mere pawn, he quietly had the man's license restored. On another occasion he intended to report a surly railroad brakeman but stopped when he remembered the man earned only twenty dollars a month.[95] When the Knights of Labor were organizing, Twain wrote a paper approving of their efforts.[96] Howells thought it excellent, but it never seems to have been published. The essay closed:

> He (the unionized workman) is here and he will remain. He is the greatest birth of the greatest age the nations of the world have known. You cannot sneer at him--that time has gone by. He has before him the most righteous work that was ever given into the hand of man to do; and he will do it. Yes, he is here; and the question is not --as it has been heretofore during a thousand ages-- What shall we do with him? For the first time in history we are relieved of the necessity of managing his affairs for him. He is not a broken dam this time--he is the Flood![97]

Twain also championed the workingman when he told, with considerable satisfaction, how the laborer was sovereign in Australia. He said the parliament existed for the working

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[95]Howells, My Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 43.

[96]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 238.

[97]Paine, op. cit., II, 849.

man, and the country was a veritable paradise for the laborer. Twain concluded his statement about the workingman, "He has had a hard time in this world, and has earned a paradise. I am glad he has found it."[98]

A final pro-labor attitude of Twain's was not hard to explain. In Life on the Mississippi he devoted a chapter to the Pilot's Benevolent Association, an organization which increased wages and provided unemployment benefits, pensions, funeral expenses, and insurance for the Mississippi riverboat pilots. The Association remained all-powerful until the Civil War and the development of the railroad made steamboating a thing of the past. It should be noted that this organization was not for common laborers, but was created to make the already proud profession of piloting even more monopolistic than before. Twain championed it not because it helped the condition of the poor man, but because it made a perfect monopoly in his old profession.

But even more often than he championed labor, Twain remained silent about labor problems. For many years after the Civil War, large corporations controlled the country, and there was much agitation by the "little" people:

> When state legislatures and the Congress, besieged by burdened workers and farmers, agreed to rectify the egregiously bad practices of the corporations, the

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[98]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., I, 171.

> courts refused to budge from the letter of the law. They declared unconstitutional acts to shorten the hours of labor or to protect workmen against obvious hazards--insisting that these laws deprived individuals of their inalienable right to work where and when they pleased. By the same reasoning they granted injunctions to employers in labor disputes and sanctioned the use of thugs to break up strikes.[99]

Mark Twain, however, never said anything about troubles like these, nor did he say anything about the great Haymarket Riot in Chicago, May 4, 1886:

> The vent shook the entire nation, and with a vehemence that tore at its social roots. The arbitrary procedure of the police and the hysterical incitement of press and pulpit stung the conscience of those Americans who believed in democracy and feared capitalistic monopoly. William Dean Howells, Henry Demarest Lloyd, and scores of other liberals spoke out repeatedly, and with exemplary courage, for the acquittal of the condemned anarchists.[100]

The contrast between the opulent rich and the oppressed poor was brought out by Twain in the Connecticut Yankee:

> Presently there was a distant blare of military music; it came nearer, still nearer, and soon a noble cavalcade wound into view, glorious with plumed helmets and flashing mail and flaunting banners and rich doublets and horse-cloths and gilded spearheads; and through the muck and swine, and naked brats, and joyous dogs, and shabby huts, it took its gallant way. . . .[101]

But Twain never wrote about that difference in standards of living, almost as great, between the modern robber barons and

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[99]Madison, op. cit., pp. 534-35.

[100]Ibid., p. 169.

[101]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 662.

the immigrant laborers. Lewis Mumford pointed out:

> Mark Twain had an eye for the wretchedness of the peasant's hovel: but apparently he had never walked half a mile eastward from his Fifth Avenue residence to contemplate the black squalor of the new immigrant workers.[102]

Twain had criticized the poor working conditions of the Negro slave, but he never wrote about the thousands of sweatshop employees. Wagenknecht came close to the root of the matter when he remarked, "He hated the sufferings, the injustices, the inequalities that capitalism produces, but he never went so far as to doubt the capitalistic view of society as such."[103] In addition labor disputes were unpopular during the nineteenth century, and Twain would have been jeopardizing his financial position by championing labor. These are the principal reasons why Twain's attitude toward labor was often one of conscious aloofness. Whenever he sympathized with the poor, he did so usually because a case of individual suffering came to his attention. He despised the human race at large, but hated to see individuals suffer.

Thus we have seen that Twain took different attitudes toward different minority groups, but for the most part

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[102]Mumford, The Golden Day, op. cit., p. 172.

[103]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 259.

championed the little groups of oppressed people. Those groups which he ignored or did not favor had either drawn Twain's dislike or else were too unpopular to risk defending. Twain actually had almost no race prejudice:

> I am quite sure that (for one) I have no race prejudices, and I think I have no color prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. Indeed, I know it. I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being--that is enough for me; he can't be any worse.[104]

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[104]Clemens, "Concerning the Jews," Literary Essays, op. cit., p. 264. The one exception to Twain's statement was the French, whom he always despised.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICS AND CORRUPTION

During much of Twain's lifetime the political scene in America was characterized by inefficiency and corruption. The Grant administration was one of unusual mismanagement. Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, in trying to retain a corner on gold, created the panic known as the "Black Friday" episode; the Republican party leader, James G. Blaine, was involved in several corrupt schemes; and many of the country's legislators participated in the "salary grab" of 1873. Grant's own associates were connected with scandalous events. Vice President Schuyler Colfax was allied with the Credit Mobilier graft; his private secretary with the St. Louis Whisky Ring; his brother-in-law with Fisk and Gould; and several of his cabinet members with other nefarious schemes. The Tweed Ring cost New York City close to one hundred million dollars; the Philadelphia Gas Ring was almost as brazen; and the reconstructed state governments in the South, the railroads, banks, custom houses, and numerous private corporations were riddled with corruption. Votes were openly bought and sold, and politicians saw eye to eye with the great financiers. Tariffs were raised to protect the great monopolies; cheap immigrant labor was encouraged, and natural resources were wasted.

In the years after Grant's administration, the political scene remained intellectually arid. The era of Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland, and Harrison produced campaigns in which real political issues were avoided and personal abuse was carried to extremes. "National politics became little more than a contest for power between rival parties waged on no higher plane than a struggle for traffic between rival railroads."[1] In later years the Populist and Progressive parties arose, as did the muckraking movements. McKinley and Roosevelt fostered imperialism, and the United States became an important world political power.

Truly there was much material upon which Twain could comment. In discussing the Connecticut Constitution in his Connecticut Yankee, he advocated active interest in government:

> Under that gospel, the citizen who thinks he sees that the commonwealth's political clothes are worn out, and yet holds his peace and does not agitate for a new suit, is disloyal; he is a traitor. That he may be the only one who thinks he sees this decay, does not excuse him; it is his duty to agitate anyway, and it is the duty of the others to vote him down if they do not see the matter as he does.[2]

Any avoidance of one's moral duties Twain called the "Silent

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[1]Morison and Commager, op. cit., II, 214.

[2]Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, op. cit., p. 709.

Assertion Lie." This was one of man's most common faults, according to Twain, and was keeping the world from progressing as it should. It will be the intent of this chapter to examine Twain's interests in politics, graft, and corruption in order to see whether or not he followed his own advice.

I. ELECTIONS AND EXECUTIVES

Some of the first comments Twain ever made about a specific president of the United States dealt with Andrew Johnson. While serving briefly as a secretary in Washington in 1868, Twain contributed to the Chicago Republican, and in several letters mentioned the impeachment proceedings against Johnson. Twain, who regretted the undignified dispute, said the citizens would welcome a fair stand-up fight, but nobody desired either Johnson or Congress to ". . . descend to scratching and hair pulling. These parties stand for the United States," which ". . . is not a nation that fights in that way."[3] Although much of his comment on the vitally important news was sheer burlesque, and at no time did he offer opinions or comments either for or against the impeachment, he did exhibit a characteristic display of personal sympathy for the oppressed president:

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[3]Samuel L. Clemens, "Curious Legislation and Vinnie Ream," The Mark Twain Quarterly, V (Summer, 1942), 10.

> I stood at a little distance and watched him receive and dismiss his visitors. He looked so like a plain, simple, goodnatured old farmer, that it was hard to conceive that this was the imperious "tyrant" whose deeds had been stirring the sluggish blood of thirty millions of people.[4]

Twain added, ". . . When he shook hands with a guest he looked wistfully into the person's face, as if he sought a friendly interest there, and yet hardly hoped to find it. . . ."[5] Twain concluded, "I never saw a man who seemed as friendless and forsaken, and I never felt for any man so much."[6]

One of the instances when Mark Twain failed as a social critic was during the Grant administration. He opposed the movement to draft Grant as a third term candidate, but previously had always supported him. Twain's personal liking for Grant evidently blinded him to Grant's unfitness for the presidency. Parrington has remarked:

> To millions of Americans Grant was an authentic hero, to Mark Twain he was a very great man, and to Jay Cooke he was a pawn to be used in the noble strategy of fortune-seeking. What a comedy it all seems now--yet one that leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth.[7]

Parrington also described Grant and his administration:

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[4]Samuel L. Clemens, "The Hunted Chief in His Castle," The Mark Twain Quarterly, V (Summer, 1942), 14.

[5]Loc. cit.

[6]Loc. cit.

[7]Parrington, op. cit., III, 31.

> His eight years in the White House marked the lowest depths--in domestic affairs at least--to which any American administration has fallen. They were little better than a national disgrace.[8]

It is true that in The Gilded Age Twain attacked political conditions of this era, but he never seems to have realized that Grant's utter ineffectiveness as an executive helped the corruption reach unbelievable proportions.

Twain's lack of vision can be illustrated by the fact that in 1872 he supported Grant, and opposed Horace Greeley. Many important citizens, disgusted at the bungling and graft under Grant, formed the Liberal Republican party in 1872. Led by Carl Schurz, Charles Francis Adams, Salmon P. Chase, and Greeley, they campaigned for honesty and efficiency in the federal government. The peaceful revolt failed, and Grant, with his military prestige still high, continued in office. The Liberal Republicans, however, had helped uncover the Credit Mobilier scandal, the Salary Grab, the Whisky Ring, and other grafts. But Twain continued to support Grant, and after the election wrote to cartoonist Thomas Nast, who had also opposed Greeley, "Nast, you more than any other man have won a prodigious victory for Grant--I mean, rather for civilization and progress."[9] This has

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[8] Ibid., III, 30.

[9] Paine, op. cit., I, 472.

caused Edgar Lee Masters to comment:

> Is any additional proof needed beyond this attitude of Twain in this matter that Twain neither in mind nor in moral character measured up to the business of being the satirist of the Gilded Age?[10]

Twain continued in his old-line Republican attitude when in 1876 he supported Rutherford B. Hayes. On one occasion he said, "If Tilden is elected I think the entire country will go pretty straight to -- Mrs. Howell's bad place."[11] Howells had urged Twain to enter the campaign for Hayes, but Twain replied with some wisdom:

> My Dear Howells,- I am glad you think I could do Hayes any good, for I have been wanting to write a letter or make a speech to that end. I'll be careful not to do either, however, until the opportunity comes in a natural, justifiable and unlugged way; and shall not then do anything unless I've got it all digested and worded just right. I which case I might do some good-- in any other I should do harm. When a humorist ventures upon the grave concerns of life he must do his job better than another man or he works harm to his cause.[12]

The proper occasion did arise, and Twain spoke in Hartford. Howells claimed it put Civil Service reform in a nutshell.[13] Four years later Twain made several speeches for the Republican James A. Garfield. Despite this strict adherence

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[10]Masters, op. cit., p. 93.

[11]Paine, op. cit., II, 582.

[12]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., I, 283-84.

[13]Ibid., I,287.

to the Republican party, Twain had written, "But in truth I care little about any party's politics--the man behind it is the important thing."[14]

Twain finally put this theory into effect in 1884, when James G. Blaine opposed Grover Cleveland. To the horrified consternation of his friends, Twain bolted from the Republican party and supported Cleveland. He made several speeches against Blaine, and wrote to his close friends in exhortation that they too oppose Blaine. Twain wrote to Howells:

> My Dear Howells,- Somehow I can't seem to rest quiet under the idea of your voting for Blaine. I believe you said something about the country and the party. Certainly allegiance to these is well; but as certainly a man's first duty is to his own conscience and honor--the party or the country to come second after that, and never first. I don't ask you to vote at all--I only urge you not to soil yourself by voting for Blaine.[15]

After the election Twain spoke at the Hartford Monday Evening Club in defense of his political stand:

> This is a funny business, all round. The same men who enthusiastically preach loyal consistency to church and party are always ready and willing and anxious to persuade a Chinaman or an Indian or a Kanaka to desert his Church, or a fellow-American to desert his party. The man who deserts to them is all that is high and pure and beautiful--apparently; the man who deserts from

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[14] Ibid., I, 286.

[15] Ibid., II, 445.

> them is all that is foul and despicable. This is Consistency with a capital C.[16]

Twain now bitterly opposed loyalty to petrified opinions, and insisted upon the right of every American to support the better candidate, no matter what his party. Twain came to believe a man's first duty was to his country.

The controversies over Cleveland and Blaine led him to devise a plan for a "Casting-Vote" party. Highly enthusiastic over this idealistic scheme, Twain thought it would put American politics on the highest of planes. A party was to be organized which would not put forth a candidate of its own, but which would support the best candidate nominated by all the other parties. Twain's party would control the elections and force the parties to nominate good men. Needless to say, nothing ever developed from this Utopian plan.[17]

One critic, Walter Blair, has seen support of Grover Cleveland's administration in Twain's Connecticut Yankee. Except for The Gilded Age little of Twain's fiction contains commentaries upon specific administrations, but Blair claims the Connecticut Yankee exhibits several of Cleveland's policies:

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[16]Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., pp. 129-30.

[17]Paine, op. cit., III, 1147.

> Clemens, who had been a vigorous supporter of Cleveland's candidacy, made his book speak in favor of the President. Along with the low comedy and the snaps at England in the Yankee were passages which one way and another backed up Cleveland's most important policies--the policies repudiated by the electorate in 1888 when Cleveland, running for a second term, was defeated.[18]

Cleveland had tried to reform the civil service, to reduce graft, and to lower the tariff. Twain's passage in the Connecticut Yankee about the prejudiced military appointments reflected upon the American methods of spoils-system Army appointments. Blair stated, "For readers engaged in the red-hot arguments of the day, this passage attacked not only the unqualified men who got offices because of their birth but also those who got offices because of their party politics."[19] According to Blair, another passage about appropriations for the "King's evil" criticized "pork-barrel" laws which gave grafting business men huge profits.[20] Twain devoted an entire chapter to the tariff, one of the hottest issues in the election of 1888. Cleveland had called for a tariff reduction, and Twain let Hank argue with the blacksmith about tariffs. The wise Yankee stood for free trade, and protectionism was made to seem foolish. Blair concluded,

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[18]Walter Blair, Horse Sense in American Humor (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 206-7.

[19]Ibid., p. 207.

[20]Loc. cit.

"A book that sold by the hundred thousands amused people with buffoonery and clowning while at the same time it slipped in little sermons like this on the most disputed issues of the day."[21]

In the years after Cleveland's administration, Twain became more and more disillusioned over American politics, and uttered little comment on political issues other than exasperated expressions of futility. He said nothing about Benjamin Harrison, spoke of McKinley only to attack his Philippine policy, and simply expressed disgust at the human race when he learned of McKinley's assassination.

Twain, however, did show more interest in Theodore Roosevelt. Captivated by Roosevelt's personality, he aptly described him in his Autobiography:

> Mr. Roosevelt is one of the most likable men that I am acquainted with. I have known him, and have occasionally met him, dined in his company, lunched in his company for certainly twenty years. I always enjoy his society, he is so hearty, so straightforward, outspoken, and, for the moment, so absolutely sincere. These qualities endear him to me when he is acting in his capacity of private citizen, they endear him to all his friends. But when he is acting under their impulse as President, they make of him a sufficiently queer president. He flies from one thing to another with incredible dispatch--throws a somersault and is straightway back again where he was last week. He will then throw some more somersaults and nobody can foretell where he is finally going to land after the series. Each act of his, and each

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[21] Ibid., p. 209. Twain also criticized a high protective tariff in Tom Sawyer Abroad, op. cit., pp. 97-100, where Huck, Tom, and Jim discussed the problem. Jim's argument claimed that a tariff is an artificial regulation, and is not morally necessary.

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21 Ibid., p. 209. Twain also criticized a high protective tariff in Tom Sawyer Abroad, op. cit., pp. 97-100, where Huck, Tom, and Jim discussed the problem. Jim's argument claimed that a tariff is an artificial regulation, and is not morally necessary.

> opinion expressed, is likely to abolish or controvert some previous act or expressed opinion. . . . But every opinion that he expresses is certainly his sincere opinion at that moment, and it is as certainly not the opinion which he was carrying around in his system three or four weeks earlier, and which was just as sincere and honest as the latest one. . . . He is the most popular human being that has ever existed in the United States, and that popularity springs from just these enthusiasms of his--these joyous ebullitions of excited sincerity. . . . He can't stick to one of them long enough to find out what kind of a chick it would hatch if it had a chance, but everybody recognizes the generosity of the intention and admires it and loves him for it.[22]

However strongly attracted to Roosevelt, Twain did not approve of his politics, and wrote to Joseph Twichell:

> Dear Joe,- I knew I had in me somewhere a definite feeling about the President if I could only find the words to define it with. Here they are, to a hair--from Leonard Jerome: "For twenty years I have loved Roosevelt the man and hated Roosevelt the statesman and politician."[23]

When the election of 1904 approached, Twain was again disgusted at the campaigning and wrote once more to Twichell:

> Oh, dear! get out of that sewer--party politics--dear Joe. . . . In a few days you will be out of it, and then you can fumigate yourself and take up your legitimate work again and resume your clean and wholesome private character once more and be happy--and useful.[24]

In the same letter Twain was vexed to catch himself criticizing Roosevelt when he knew the president was ". . . merely a helpless and irresponsible coffee-mill ground by the hand

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[22]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 289-91.

[23]Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters, op. cit., II, 766.

[24]Ibid., II, 761-63.

of God."[25] His What Is Man? philosophy fully developed, Twain thought it futile to take part in political affairs, and wrote or said little on the subject thereafter, although Bernard DeVoto has edited an unpublished manuscript which is possibly a criticism of Roosevelt's excessive granting of military pensions in a presidential year.[26]

There have been no records of any interest by Twain in the election of 1908. By that time his disillusionment had become almost complete. Two years earlier he had said:

> Senator Tillman of South Carolina has been making a speech--day before yesterday--of frank and intimate criticism of the President--the President of the United States, as he calls him; whereas, so far as my knowledge goes, there has been no such functionary as President of the United States for forty years, perhaps, if we except Cleveland. I do not call to mind any other President of the United States--there may have been one or two--perhaps one or two, who were not always and persistently president of the Republican party, but were now and then for a brief interval really Presidents of the United States.[27]

After many years of strict adherence to party, Twain had eventually showed enough insight to perceive the mediocrity of the American presidents in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but on few occasions did he talk or write about the important national issues. His interests were

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[25] Ibid., II, 764.

[26] Samuel L. Clemens, "Passage from Outline of History," Bernard DeVoto, editor, The Saturday Review of Literature, XIX (December 10, 1938), 4.

[27] Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 345.

about as keen as the "average American citizen's," but were never profound.

Despite this dearth of opinion on particular political issues, Mark Twain commented frequently on elections in general. He once said, "If we would learn what the human race really is at bottom, we need only observe it in election time."[28] On numerous occasions he attacked the buying of votes, and described the scandals associated with elections. In one sketch where Twain fancied himself running for governor of New York, he discovered a shocking array of lies about him spread through the newspapers. In vicious articles his character was dragged through the mud.[29] In a second sketch he described Julius Caesar's death as it might have been reported in the newspapers. The murder, a brutal political killing, was followed by election riots. The analogy to American practices is unmistakable.[30]

Twain also criticized American complacency and the sheep-like adherence to party lines. In The Gilded Age, when Senator Dilworthy[31] was exposed as a vote-buyer, Twain commented:

> Perhaps it did not occur to the nation of good and worthy people that while they continued to sit comfortably at

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[28] Ibid., II, 11.

[29] Clemens, "Running for Governor," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 410-16.

[30] Clemens, "The Killing of Julius Caesar Localized," Ibid., pp. 384-88.

[31] Twain was caricaturing the corrupt vote-buying Senator Pomeroy of Kansas.

> home and leave the true source of our political power (the "primaries") in the hands of saloon-keepers, dog-fanciers, and hod-carriers, they could go on expecting "another" case of this kind, and even dozens and hundreds of them, and never be disappointed. However, they may have thought that to sit at home and grumble would some day right the evil.[32]

Twain had made a similar complaint a few pages earlier when he criticized the corrupt campaign and public apathy which enabled Mr. O'Riley to reach Congress:

> The publicans and their retainers rule the ward meetings (for everybody else hates the worry of politics and stays at home); the delegates from the ward meetings organize as a nominating convention and make up a list of candidates - one convention offering a Democratic and another a Republican list of - incorruptibles; and then the great meek public come forward at the proper time and make unhampered choice and bless Heaven that they live in a free land where no form of despotism can ever intrude.[33]

The docile acceptance of party policies was attacked by Twain in his speech celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Tuskeegee Institute. Twain described two types of Christian morals, one private and the other public. For three hundred and sixty-three days the citizen, true to his private morals, keeps himself clean:

> . . . then in the other two days of the year he leaves his Christian private morals at home and carries his Christian public morals to the tax office and the polls, and does the best he can to damage and undo his whole

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[32]Clemens and Warner, The Gilded Age, op. cit., II, 276.

[33]Ibid., II, 17.

> year's faithful and righteous work. Without a blush he will vote for an unclean boss if that boss is his party's Moses, without compunction he will vote against the best man in the whole land if he is on the other ticket.[34]

Twain had several opinions on voting requirements. In 1901 he spoke strongly in favor of women's suffrage,[35] but in earlier years had on at least two occasions opposed universal suffrage. In his twelfth letter from the Sandwich Islands in 1866, Twain spoke of the late King Kamehameha IV:

> He took back a good deal of power which his predecessors had surrendered to the people, abolished the universal suffrage clause and denied the privilege of voting to all save such as were possessed of a hundred dollars worth of real estate or had an income of seventy-five dollars a year. And, if my opinion were asked, I would say he did a wise thing in this last named matter.[36]

Twain developed this idea in his sketch, "The Curious Republic of Gondour," which he published anonymously in 1875. In this Utopia each man started with one vote, but money and learning entitled men to more votes. Education would give more votes than money; thus the educated men would possess the balance of power, and they would be ". . . the vigilant and efficient protectors of the great lower rank of society."[37] There were, however, some veiled satirical implications that

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[34]Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., pp. 276-77.

[35]Ibid., pp. 222-24.

[36]Frear, op. cit., pp. 318-19.

[37]Samuel L. Clemens, "The Curious Republic of Gondour," Atlantic Monthly, XXXVI (October, 1875), 461.

money would still be important in acquiring votes. In this sketch Twain, usually considered a great democrat, advanced a form of paternalism. Written during his years of strict adherence to the Republican party, the sketch called for no moral courage on Twain's part, because he had printed the article anonymously.

Politics were important to Twain, but like so many other things in his life, were often sacrificed to expediency. Blair has said, "In the years when he was winning fame . . . Clemens usually avoided political controversy."[38] In his later years he advocated expediency if certain conditions warranted the action. He spoke of Twichell:

> His persistency in voting right has been an exasperation to me these many years and has been the cause and inspiration of more than one vicious letter from me to him. But the viciousness was all a pretense. I have never found any real fault with him for voting his infernal Republican ticket, for the reason that, situated as he was, with a large family to support, his first duty was not to his political conscience, but to his family conscience. A sacrifice had to be made; a duty had to be performed. His very first duty was to his family, not to his political conscience. He sacrificed his political independence, and saved his family by it. In the circumstances, this was the highest loyalty, and the best.[39]

In other words, the inconsistent Mark Twain was now advocating personal expediency rather than a stand for the good of

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[38]Blair, op. cit., p. 197.

[39]Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., II, 24.

the nation. Twain had many fine social theories, but more often than not he did not put them into practice.

II. LEGISLATURES

The legislative branch of any government almost invariably could throw Twain into violent exasperation. There was no other man-made institution which he so strongly and consistently attacked. A list of his criticisms of legislatures would be longer than the account of his speculations. A few of the more characteristic remarks are worth quoting in order to show his attitude. He once wrote, "Reader, suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself."[40] He also said, "It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress,"[41] and later, when describing a chameleon, commented, ". . . he whirls one eye rearward and the other forward--which gives him a most Congressional expression (one eye on the constituency and one on the swag) . . . ."[42] All legislatures he ever knew were composed of ". . . the smallest minds and the selfishest souls and the cowardliest hearts that God

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[40]Paine, op. cit., II, 724.

[41]Clemens, Following the Equator, op. cit., I, 80.

[42]Ibid., II, 319.

makes."[43]

Although Mark Twain may have been somewhat slow in perceiving certain aspects of nineteenth century life, he did see the tremendous inefficiency and corruption of many legislative bodies in the period. Parrington described the situation in Washington:

> Congress had rich gifts to bestow--in lands, tariffs, subsidies, favors of all sorts; and when influential citizens made their wishes known to the reigning statesmen, the sympathetic politicians were quick to turn the government into the fairy godmother the voters wanted it to be. A huge barbecue was spread to which all presumably were invited.[44]

Twain criticized not only the Great Barbecue but also lesser legislatures. He became one of the most feared political writers in Nevada,[45] and was ". . . unsparing in his ridicule of the Governor, the officials in general, the legislative members, and of individual citizens."[46] Elected president of that mock Nevada legislature called the "Third House," Twain concluded the session:

> Gentlemen: Your proceedings have been exactly similar to those of the Convention which preceded you. You have considered a subject which you knew nothing about; spoken on every subject but the one before the House, and voted, without knowing what you were voting for, or having any idea what would be the general result of your action.[47]

Twain had nothing but ridicule for the legislature of

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[44]Parrington, op. cit., III, 23.

[45]Mack, op. cit., p. 324.

[46]Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, op. cit., p. 206.

[47]Mack, op. cit., p. 276.

the Sandwich Islands, which he visited in 1866, and he wrote sarcastically to the Sacramento Union:

> The mental caliber of the Legislative Assembly is up to the average of such bodies the world over--and I wish it were a compliment to say it, but it is hardly so. . . . Few men of first class ability can afford to let their affairs go to ruin while they fool away their time in Legislatures for months on a stretch. . . . But your chattering, one-horse village lawyer likes it, and your solemn ass from the cow counties, who don't know the Constitution from the Lord's Prayer, enjoy it, and these you will always find in the Assembly; the one gabble, gabble, gabbling threadbare platitudes and "give-me-liberty-or-give-me-death" buncombe from morning till night, and the other asleep, with his slab-soled brogans set up like a couple of grave-stones on the top of his desk.[48]

On many occasions Twain criticized Congress. While working in Washington in 1868, he wrote, "Whiskey is taken into the committee rooms in demijohns and carried out in demagogues."[49] He added later, "This is a place to get a poor opinion of everybody in. There are some pitiful intellects in this Congress."[50] Never impressed with the city of Washington, Twain at one time wished that New York were the capital city:

> We should have a much better sort of legislation if we had these swollen country jakes in N. Y. as their capital. Congress ought to sit in a big city.
>
> I remember how those pigmy Congressmen used to come into the Arlington breakfast room with a bundle of

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[48]Freer, op. cit., p. 320.

[49]Paine, op. cit., I, 361.

[50]Loc. cit.

> papers and letters--you could see by their affection for it and their delight in this sort of display that out in the woods where they came from they weren't used to much mail matter.
>
> They always occupied their seats at table a level hour after breakfast, to be looked at, though they wore a weak pretense of settling the affairs of empires, over their mail--contracting brows, etc.
>
> How N.Y. would squeeze the conceit out of those poor little Congressmen.[51]

Other criticisms of Congress and Congressmen can be found in Twain's shorter sketches. "The Case of George Fisher," shows how the government is cheated by its own workers;[52] the "Story of the Bad Little Boy" depicts the type of man in Congress;[53] a "Letter Read at a Dinner of the Knights of St. Patrick" satirizes corrupt legislators;[54] the "Legend of Sagenfeld, in Germany" ridicules cabinets and legislatures;[55] and "Stirring Times in Austria" shows

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[51]Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebook, op. cit., pp. 131-32.

[52]Clemens, "The Case of George Fisher," Sketches Old and New, op. cit., pp. 132-42.

[53]Clemens, "Story of the Bad Little Boy," Ibid., pp. 54-59.

[54]Clemens, "Letter Read at a Dinner of the Knights of St. Patrick," Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer Detective, and Other Stories, op. cit., pp. 451-52.

[55]Clemens, "The Legend of Sagenfeld, in Germany," Ibid., pp. 388-96.

the ineffectiveness of a Vienna legislature. Some of the methods and results are surprisingly like those in the various American law-making groups.[56]

His greatest criticism of legislative bodies is found not in his shorter sketches, but in The Gilded Age. All phases of Congress are attacked. Landladies rented to Congressmen only if they paid in advance, because the legislators, secure from repercussions in their high offices, had often walked off without paying their bills.[57] Twain also thought merit meant nothing in Washington. "Unless you can get the ear of a Senator, or a Congressman, or a Chief of a Bureau or Department, and persuade him to use his 'influence' in your behalf," there was not even the most menial employment in Washington.[58] Congressmen dumped their friends upon the government for support nearly every day. "There is something good and motherly about Washington, the grand old benevolent National Asylum for the Helpless."[59] He referred to Benjamin Butler's scandalous "Salary Grab" of 1873 when he mentioned the Extra Compensation bill which ". . . slides neatly through, annually, with the extra grab that signalizes

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[56]Clemens, "Stirring Times in Austria," Literary Essays, op. cit., pp. 197-243.

[57]Clemens and Warner, The Gilded Age, op. cit., I, 238.

[58]Ibid., I, 239.

[59]Ibid., I, 240.

the last night of a session. . . ."[60] In this bill all the political henchmen were well rewarded.

Congressional appropriation bills and the corrupt purpose for which they were used were also criticized by Twain. When Harry Brierly asked the president of the Columbus River Slackwater Navigation Company what had happened to the $200,000 appropriation, he was told:

> Why the matter is simple enough. A Congressional appropriation costs money. Just reflect, for instance. A majority of the House committee, say, $10,000 apiece--$40,000; a majority of the Senate committee, the same each--say $40,000; a little extra to one or two chairmen of one or two such committees, say $10,000 each--$20,000; and there's $100,000 of the money gone, to begin with. Then, seven male lobbyists, at $3,000 each--$21,000; one female lobbyist, $10,000; a high moral Congressman or Senator here and there--the high moral ones cost more, because they give tone to a measure--say ten of these at $3,000 each, is $30,000; then a lot of small-fry country members who won't vote for anything whatever without pay--say twenty at $500 apiece, is $10,000; a lot of dinners to members--say $10,000 altogether; lot of jimcracks for Congressmen's wives and children--those go a long way--you can't spend too much money in that line. . . .[61]

The president continued his lecture with information on the successful methods used to secure advertising:

> Perhaps the biggest thing we've done in the advertising line was to get an officer of the U.S. Government, of perfectly Himalayan official altitude, to write up our little internal improvement for a religious paper of

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[60] Loc. cit.

[61] Ibid., I, 276-77.

> enormous circulation--I tell you, that makes our bonds go handsomely among the pious poor. Your religious paper is by far the best vehicle for a thing of this kind, because they'll "lead" your article and put it right in the midst of the reading-matter; and if it's got a few Scripture quotations in it, and some temperance platitudes, and a bit of gush here and there about Sunday-schools, and a sentimental snuffle now and then about "God's precious, the honest hard-handed poor," it works the nation like a charm, my dear sir, and never a man suspects that it is an advertisement; but your secular paper sticks you right into the advertising columns and of course you don't take a trick.[62]

All these expenses left the new company $25,000 in debt, and Harry discovered that he and Colonel Sellers, who hadn't received a penny in salaries, actually owed the company $7,960![63] Practices like these were frequent, and Twain told of the many derelicts in Washington who burned out their lives in an effort to secure government appropriations:

> . . . It must have been only eternal hope springing in the breast that kept alive numerous old claimants who for years and years had besieged the doors of Congress, and who looked as if they needed not so much an appropriation of money as six feet of ground. And those who stood so long waiting for success to bring them death were usually those who had a just claim.[64]

The Congressmen who were responsible for so many of these injustices were also criticized. One of the characters in The Gilded Age exemplified the spirit of the times even

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[62] Ibid., I, 278.

[63] Ibid., I, 275.

[64] Ibid., II, 126.

though he was not copied directly from any person living during the Great Barbecue:

> The Hon. Patrique Oreille was a wealthy Frenchman from Cork. Not that he was wealthy when he first came from Cork, but just the reverse. When he first landed in New York with his wife, he had only halted at Castle Garden for a few minutes to receive and exhibit papers showing he had resided in this country two years--and then he voted the Democratic ticket and went uptown to hunt a house. He found one, and then went to work as assistant to an architect and builder, carrying a hod all day and studying politics evenings. Industry and economy soon enabled him to start a low rum shop in a foul locality, and this gave him political influence.[65]

O'Riley gave alibis for his friends whenever they committed murders, and he soon became popular. Opening a saloon and gambling hall, he was soon rewarded with the position of alderman,[66] and thus became associated with William M. Weed (Boss Tweed). Next he ". . . furnished shingle-nails to the new courthouse at three thousand dollars a keg," and entered the state legislature as a reward for his efforts.[67] O'Riley, who had changed his name to Oreille, eventually reached Congress, along with the Honorable Oliver Higgins, a westerner who was elected to Congress because he sold the best liquor in his village.[68]

Still another aspect of Congress which came under

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[65] Ibid., II, 17.

[66] Ibid., II, 18.

[67] Ibid., II, 19.

[68] Ibid., II, 16.

Twain's baleful eye was the corrupt method of conducting Congressional investigations. The inimitable Colonel Sellers described the process to Washington Hawkins:

> Why they proceed right and regular--and it ain't bosh, Washington, it ain't bosh. They appoint a committee to investigate, and that committee hears evidence three weeks, and all the witnesses on one side swear that the accused took money or stock or something for his vote. Then the accused stands up and testifies that he _may_ have done it, but he was receiving and handling a good deal of money at the time and he doesn't remember this particular circumstance--at least with sufficient distinctness to enable him to grasp it tangibly. So of course the thing is not proven--and that is what they say in the verdict. They don't acquit, they don't condemn. They just say, 'Charge not proven.' It leaves the accused in a kind of a shaky condition before the country, it purifies Congress, it satisfies everybody, and it doesn't seriously hurt anybody. It has taken a long time to perfect our system, but it is the most admirable in the world now.[69]

The height of corruption was reached when Senator Dilworthy (Pomeroy, of Kansas) wanted to be violently attacked. He succeeded, and Mr. Noble, the righteous accuser, was censured for instigating disreputable talk about a Senator![70] Dilworthy knew the gullible American public would perceive his guilt, but would eventually feel sorry for him and back him even more firmly at the next election.

Twain criticized many other national evils in _The Gilded Age_, a satirical hodge-podge, but nothing was laid

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[69] _Ibid._, II, 204.

[70] _Ibid._, II, 286.

bare more bluntly than the graft, corruption, and inefficiency connected with the Congress of the United States. If he had not let his friendship for General Grant stand in the way, and if he had been able to look more deeply into causes, Twain might have written the greatest exposé in American literature. Even so, The Gilded Age was one of the few American novels of the period which did attempt to show the many nation-wide abuses.

III. THE JUDICIARY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Methods of law enforcement were far from satisfactory, according to Twain, and on several occasions he sharply criticized either police methods or the jury system. He saw lawlessness of the most flagrant sort in the West, and in Roughing It mentioned the almost complete absence of law enforcement on the Comstock. Money could make any criminal innocent.[71] After moving to San Francisco, he became disgusted at corruption in the inefficient police department and unsuccessfully attempted in the San Francisco papers to excoriate the police. His articles were not published because the papers had no desire to stir up trouble, but Twain sent the items back to Joe Goodman in Virginia

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[71]Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., II, 86.

City.[72] One of these Enterprise stories, "What Have the Police Been Doing?" was partly responsible for the libel suit filed by the San Francisco police chief against the Virginia City Enterprise. California, however, had no jurisdiction over Nevada newspapers, and the suit was dropped.[73] Several years later the San Francisco police were again the butt of criticism in Twain's article "Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy." Twain excoriated the corrupt police who let wealthy adults murder Chinese immigrants, but threw tiny defenseless poor boys into jail for throwing stones at the Chinese.[74]

Twain censured the police on other occasions. In Innocents Abroad he spoke of a Pompeiian soldier who died at his post:

> We never read of Pompeii but we think of that soldier; we can not write of Pompeii without the natural impulse to grant to him the mention he so well deserves. Let us remember that he was a soldier--not a policeman--and so, praise him. Being a soldier, he staid,--because the warrior instinct forbade him to fly. Had he been a policeman he would have staid, also--because he would have been asleep.[75]

In A Tramp Abroad Twain told the story of the German parents

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[72]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 101.

[73]Loc. cit.

[74]Clemens, "Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., p. 145.

[75]Clemens, Innocents Abroad, op. cit., p. 335.

who, without attempting to hide their actions from the townspeople, slowly starved their child. The couple were finally arrested two weeks after the inquest, and Twain added, "Yes, they were arrested 'two weeks after the inquest.' What a home sound that has. That kind of police briskness . . . reminds me of my native land. . . ."[76] A final criticism of the American police, "The Stolen White Elephant," satirized police detection methods. Police stupidity was showed to be even more startling than their corruption, for it took them weeks to find a lost elephant in the Metropolitan area. When asked about his duties, the inspector replied, "It is not our province to prevent crime, but to punish it. We cannot punish it until it is committed."[77] Twain here showed an awareness of one of the most important faults in law enforcement procedure.

Even more important than his criticisms of the police and their methods, were Twain's attacks on the American courts and jury system. Judges prejudiced against the defendants were mentioned in "The Evidence in the Case of Smith Vs. Jones;"[78] the use of legal technicalities to defeat justice

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[76]Samuel L. Clemens, A Tramp Abroad (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1907), II, 295.

[77]Clemens, "The Stolen White Elephant," Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer Detective and Other Stories, op. cit., p. 226.

[78]Samuel L. Clemens, "The Evidence in the Case of Smith Vs. Jones," The Wit and Humor of America, Marshall P. Wilder, editor (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1911), X, 1919.

appeared in Twain's sketch, "From the 'London Times' of 1904;"[79] and a satirical remark that there is a resemblance between a bench of modern judges and a basket of vegetables appeared in "Switzerland, The Cradle of Liberty." Twain told how a skeleton was once admitted as a witness in an old Swiss law case; his implications were that modern law had not advanced far beyond that stage.[80]

One of Twain's most outspoken attacks on American courts was the sketch, "A New Crime," which lamented that justice was being defeated by the insanity plea. He pointed out that many really insane people had been executed, but criminals with money were being acquitted on grounds of insanity. Twain listed several hypothetical instances of how the defendants escaped justice. One case at first proved difficult:

> The jury were hardly inclined to accept these as proofs at first, inasmuch as the prisoner had never been insane before the murder, and under the tranquilizing effect of the butchering had immediately regained his right mind; but when the defense came to show that a third cousin of Hackett's wife's stepfather was insane . . . it was plain that insanity was hereditary in the family, and . . . the jury then acquitted him.[81]

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[79]Clemens, "From the 'London Times' of 1904," Literary Essays, op. cit., pp. 313-28.

[80]Clemens, "Switzerland, The Cradle of Liberty," What is Man? And Other Essays, op. cit., p. 200.

[81]Clemens, "A New Crime," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 246-47.

Twain related other instances, and then concluded his outburst:

> Insanity certainly is on the increase in the world, and crime is dying out. There are no longer any murders--none worth mentioning, at any rate. Formerly if you killed a man, it was possible that you were insane--but now, if you, having friends and money, kill a man, it is evidence that you are a lunatic.[82]

In Roughing It he began his eloquent criticism of the American jury system:

> The men who murdered Virginia's original twenty-six cemetery-occupants were never punished. Why? Because Alfred the Great, when he invented trial by jury, and knew that he had admirably framed it to secure justice in his age of the world, was not aware that in the nineteenth century the condition of things would be so entirely changed that unless he rose from the grave and altered the jury plan to meet the emergency, it would prove the most ingenious and infallible agency for defeating justice that human wisdom could contrive. For how could he imagine that we simpletons would go on using his jury plan after circumstances had stripped it of its usefulness, any more than he could imagine that we would go on using his candle-clock after we had invented chronometers? In his day news could not travel fast, and hence he could easily find a jury of honest, intelligent men who had not heard of the case they were called to try--but in our day of telegraphs and newspapers his plan compels us to swear in juries composed of fools and rascals, because the system rigidly excludes honest men and men of brains.[83]

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[82] Ibid., p. 249. Mark Twain could be found on both sides of almost every question, and although he usually criticized American law and courts, he championed the American system in The Prince and the Pauper, op. cit., p. 281, where he said the English judicial system had lagged behind ours in the dispensation of true justice.

[83] Clemens, Roughing It, op. cit., II,73.

Twain continued, "The jury system puts a ban upon intelligence and honesty, and a premium upon ignorance, stupidity, and perjury.[84] He believed intelligent men, even if they had a priori opinions on a law case, should serve on the jury. "Why could not the jury law be so altered as to give men of brains and honesty an equal chance with fools and miscreants?"[85]

Twain raised the same question on two occasions in The Gilded Age. Once he spoke of a jury composed of ". . . nine gentlemen from a neighboring asylum and three graduates from Sing Sing,"[86] but he was more realistic in his description of Laura Hawkins' trial. The defense attorney, Mr. Braham, had succeeded in obtaining a sympathetic jury:

> The result of the whole day's work was the election of only two jurors. These, however, were satisfactory to Mr. Braham. He had kept off all those he did not know. No one knew better than this great criminal lawyer that the battle was fought on the selection of the jury. The subsequent examination of the witnesses, the eloquence expended on the jury are all for effect outside.[87]

Great pains were taken in selecting the jury:

> It was four weary days before this jury was made up, but when it was finally complete, it did great credit to the counsel for the defense. So far as Mr. Braham

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[84] Ibid., II, 76.

[85] Loc. cit.

[86] Clemens and Warner, The Gilded Age, op. cit., II, 19.

[87] Ibid., II, 230.

> knew, only two could read, one of whom was the foreman, Mr. Braham's friend, the showy contractor. Low foreheads and heavy faces they all had; some had a look of animal cunning, while the most were only stupid. The entire panel formed that boasted heritage commonly described as the "bulwark of our liberties."[88]

Twain, in public letters, also attacked the judicial system. A man named Foster was condemned to death in 1873, and Twain, in a letter to the New York Tribune, called for a revision in penal law:

> The humorist who invented trial by jury played a colossal, practical joke upon the world, but since we have the system we ought to try to respect it, a thing which is not thoroughly easy to do, when we reflect that by the command of the law a criminal juror must be an intellectual vacuum, attached to a melting heart, and perfectly macaronian bowels of compassion.
>
> I have had no experience in making laws or amending them, but still I cannot understand why, when it takes twelve men to inflict the death penalty upon a person, it should take any less than twelve men more to undo their work. If I were a legislature [sic] and had just been elected, and had not time to sell out, I would put the pardoning and commuting power into the hands of twelve able men instead of dumping so huge a burden upon the shoulders of one poor petition-persecuted individual.[89]

This outburst was answered in the Tribune by a Mr. "H. K.," who spoke of those ". . . actors and clowns," who ". . . make it a business to cater to our amusement in jest and burlesque," and write of the Foster case with ". . . ghastly flippancy. . . ."[90] There was no more comment by Twain on

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[88] Ibid., II, 231.

[89] Arthur L. Vogelback, "Mark Twain: Newspaper Contributor," American Literature, XX (May, 1948), 113.

[90] Loc. cit.

the subject, and his next letter to the Tribune dealt with the less sensational topic of life rafts for ocean liners.[91] Arthur L. Vogelback inferred from a study of these letters that Twain was a powerful social critic,[92] but the conclusion could also be drawn that Twain shied away from sustained social criticism because the public would not take him seriously.

IV. OTHER POLITICAL OR PUBLIC INTERESTS

Twain was concerned with many other aspects of political and public affairs. In a letter from the Sandwich Islands he mentioned the corrupt army contract system;[93] he satirized bureaucracy and governmental inefficiency in "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract;"[94] and he stated in a speech on January 4, 1901, that only one out of fifty city residents was corrupt, but the honest men did not organize and thus lost control of their city.[95] Twain also spoke against the corrupt practice of purchasing newspaper editorial space for private propaganda,[96] spoke at

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[91] Ibid., p. 117.

[92] Ibid., p. 128.

[93] Frear, op. cit., p. 316.

[94] Clemens, "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 121-31.

[95] Clemens, Mark Twain's Speeches, op. cit., p. 218.

[96] Ibid., p. 48.

Albany in 1901 in favor of the Seymour bill to legalize osteopathy in New York State,[97] and made a long speech in 1906 in which he favored financial assistance for the blind.[98] In his Autobiography he also criticized treatment of the average blind person in New York State:

> He lives merely by the charity of the compassionate, when he has no relatives able to support him--and now and then, as a benevolence, the state stretches out its charitable hand and lifts him over to Blackwell's Island and submerges him among the multitudinous population of thieves and prostitutes.[99]

Twain was not seeking pure charity; he wanted an intelligent plan by which the blind could be educated to help themselves.[100]

Other objects of attack were corrupt tax collectors and millionaires who perjured themselves in tax evasions,[101] corruption in a New York City taxi company,[102] exorbitant prices requested by undertakers for Negro funerals,[103] the

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[97] Ibid., pp. 232-34.

[98] Ibid., pp. 306-14.

[99] Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, op. cit., I, 296.

[100] Loc. cit.

[101] Clemens, "A Mysterious Visit," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 417-24.

[102] Paine, op. cit., III, 1125-26.

[103] Clemens, Life on the Mississippi, op. cit., p. 186.

disreputable decay into which the New York City cemeteries had fallen,[104] vivisection,[105] cruelty to animals in bull-fighting,[106] and the corrupt practice whereby ships "bought" health permits without inspection upon entering New York harbor. Twain ironically suggested that the latter process be simplified even further by an annual exchange of permits and fees by mail![107]

One of the less important public servants whom Twain consistently criticized was the coroner. Twain's "Petrified Man" sketch, written during his Washoe days, ridiculed Judge G. T. Sewall, the Humboldt Coroner.[108] "A Small Piece of Spite" was a later attack on coroners, criticizing the coroner's office in San Francisco which refused to give information to the newspapers.[109] Another satire on coroner's jury methods appeared in The Gilded Age. A steam-

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[104]Clemens, "A Curious Dream," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 251-64.

[105]Clemens, "A Dog's Tale," The $30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories, op. cit., pp. 48-64.

[106]Clemens, "A Horse's Tale," Harper's Monthly Magazine, CXIII (August and September, 1906), 327-42, 539-49.

[107]Clemens, "Some Rambling Notes of An Idle Excursion," Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer Detective, and Other Stories, op. cit., p. 301.

[108]Clemens, "The Petrified Man," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 316-20.

[109]Benson, op. cit., p. 190.

boat had exploded because of negligence in taking safety precautions during a race:

> A jury of inquest was impaneled, and after due deliberation and inquiry they returned the inevitable American verdict which has been so familiar to our ears all the days of our lives--'NOBODY TO BLAME.'[110]

A final activity to be mentioned in this chapter was Twain's attack in 1901 on Tammany Hall. Wagenknecht has said, "Undoubtedly his most spectacular public service came in connection with his assault against Tammany,"[111] while Ferguson added, "However loudly he might damn the human race, he was always trying to save it or portions of it by mental healing, by osteopathy, by plasmon or by opposing Tammany."[112] A fusion ticket was attempting to break the power of Tammany Hall, and Twain joined the Acorns, a society in opposition to Tammany. He spoke at the club's dinner, and criticized Tammany by paraphrasing Edmund Burke's speech against Warren Hastings.[113] Paine spoke of Twain's enthusiasm for the reform movement:

> Clemens was really heart and soul in the campaign. He even joined a procession that marched up Broadway, and he made a speech to a great assemblage at Broadway

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[110]Clemens and Warner, The Gilded Age, op. cit., I, 38.

[111]Wagenknecht, op. cit., p. 235.

[112]Ferguson, op. cit., p. 287.

[113]Wyatt, op. cit., p. 605.

> and Leonard Street, when, as he said, he had been sick abed two days and, according to the doctor, should be in bed then.[114]

The movement succeeded, and Tammany was defeated. Newspapers celebrated Twain in verse:

> Who killed Croker?
> I, said Mark Twain,
> I killed Croker,
> I, the Jolly Joker![115]

Paine has called Mark Twain a political knight-errant, always doing what he could for the betterment of the people,[116] but the evidence does not seem to be so strong. Twain, it is true, did show a considerable interest in politics and public affairs, but for many years he was a strict Republican party man. He also allowed friendship to blind him to the evils of corruption, and took the expedient side rather than the reformer's when an issue was extremely controversial. He spoke or wrote on a great many things, but many which are listed in the latter part of this chapter are relatively minor topics. Compare, for instance, the list of reform movements compiled by Thomas M. Pearce, with which William Cullen Bryant was associated. Bryant was one of the ". . . most untiring enemies of Tweed, and all he

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[114]Paine, op. cit., III, 1146.

[115]Ibid., III, 1147.

[116]Loc. cit.

stood for,"[117] and "A list of his attitudes reads like the history of the steps forward in this country. . . ."[118] Pearce continued:

> . . . He supported Andrew Jackson in the campaign of 1827, opposed the private financial interests during the stormy days of the United State Bank, opposed the "gag" rule in Congress upon petitions against slavery, supported the low tariff policy of the Democratic party and opposed its commitments to slavery, stood with the Free Soilers against admission of Texas as a slave state and for indemnity to Mexico, campaigned for an international copyright law, stood by Lincoln and opposed the Copperheads, such as Mayor Fernando Wood, in New York City, favored President Andrew Johnson's mild policies toward the South (though aware of Johnson's unfitness as an executive), supported better housing in slum areas, and approved fire, police and sanitation services.[119]

Twain's activities were more diversified, for at times emotional whims led him to champion or oppose various causes. His activities, while important, do not seem to have astonishing depth, degree, or distinction.

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[118] Ibid., p. 211.

[119] Ibid., pp. 211-12.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

Mark Twain has supplied literary critics with a fruitful field for research and discussion. As this thesis has illustrated, Twain's reputation has undergone several major changes. During his lifetime he was considered the "Jolly Joker," but many critics did not accept him as a serious literary artist. In the decade after Twain's death most of the critics continued to rate Twain solely as a humorist. Some critics approved of his humor, while others considered it negligible. Gradually, however, critics began to state that Twain was a serious critic of his times. In 1920 this concept was modified by Van Wyck Brooks who admitted the great satirical potentiality in Twain, but insisted that Twain had been repressed from ever expressing his innate satire. The Brooksian theory, after some early opposition, gradually became more widely accepted, and until 1932 was considered the ultimate in Mark Twain analysis. At that time, however, Bernard DeVoto sharply rebuked Brooks, insisting that Twain had not been repressed, and offered his own theory that Twain, who never became a great satirist because he saw the futility of attempting to

reform mankind, gave American literature tragic laughter in his memorable pictures of the American frontier. Since 1932 Mark Twain criticism has gradually approached a middle ground between Brooks and DeVoto. To this day opposing opinions can, however, be discovered. Some critics believe Twain was a great critic of his times; others hold a nearly opposite viewpoint. Wagenknecht called for a look at the record in any total evaluation of Mark Twain, and it has been the purpose of this thesis not only to show how Twain criticism has developed, but to look at the record in order to determine the extent of Twain's social criticism.

In an evaluation of Mark Twain, Bernard DeVoto once observed, "He is usually to be found on both sides of any question he argues."[1] This has been pointed out in almost every chapter of this thesis. He remained relatively silent about the Mexican and Civil Wars, at first ardently supported the Spanish-American War and then later criticized it with equal vehemence. He gloried in American Westward expansion, but took a two-sided view of foreign imperialistic movements, although he usually sided with the oppressed smaller nations. Critics often speak of Twain's hatred of monarchy, and although some of his anti-monarchical strictures are sharp indeed, Twain was too close, in both

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[1]Clemens, The Portable Mark Twain, Bernard DeVoto, editor, op. cit., p. 15.

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[1]Clemens, The Portable Mark Twain, Bernard DeVoto, editor, op. cit., p. 15.

temperament and association, with monarchs to make his criticisms thoroughly convincing. Another popular critical comment concerns Twain's utter lack of belief in progress. This thesis, however, has pointed out that Twain was often enthusiastic about material progress, even though the human heart had not showed much development. Howells, Parrington, and others have asserted that Twain, in his later years, leaned toward the left and away from the greedy nineteenth century capitalism. This theory also seems questionable in light of Twain's constant alignment on the side of the big business men and speculators. Twain did side with the "little people" more often in the question of minority groups. His attitude toward such persecuted people as the Chinese, Indians, Jews, and Negroes was admirable, although he failed to exhibit much social consciousness in perceiving the plight of the American laborer. On the question of politics Twain was again divided. For many years he steadfastly voted the straight Republican ticket; in later life he became an independent. His perception of vital issues, however, was weak. Toward the corruption of the Gilded Age he showed a keen public spirit, but often he criticized minor abuses or failed to see the basic causes of the Great Barbecue.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The writer began this thesis with the a priori idea that Twain was a great social critic. The thesis was intended to back up this assumption, and settle the point for all time. A look at the record shows considerable social criticism in Twain's writings, but also shows that Twain did not act consistently as a critic of his times. A final judgment could be that Twain, at times, did write social criticism which was vehement and heartfelt. However, his ideas were rarely profound, and assuredly his future reputation will not come from his social criticism. As a creative writer he was, at times, great; as a sustained social critic Twain was, at best, mediocre.

Throughout the thesis several reasons have been given for Twain's failure as a social critic. One reason not often mentioned by critics was Twain's disparaging attitude toward reformers. Social criticism is a type of reform movement, and on at least five occasions Twain showed his disgust at popular reform methods.[2]

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[2]In his Letters, op. cit., II, 803, Twain criticized the dull method of advocating reform for the blind; in "Lionizing Murders," Sketches New and Old, op. cit., pp. 238-43, he pointed out the stupidity and impracticality of much prison reform; in "Edward Mills and George Benton," The $30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories, op. cit., pp. 209-17, he showed how much reform was wasted on naturally evil persons, while the good people went without help; in "Traveling With a Reformer," Literary Essays, op. cit., pp. 78-99, he depicted the typical reformer as a nuisance to people who wanted to be left alone; and in "A Scrap of Curious History," What Is Man? And Other Essays, op. cit., pp. 182-92, he showed how successful reform was always accompanied with (p. 192) ". . . riot, insurrection, and the wrack and restitutions of war."

A serious defect of Twain's social criticism was his preoccupation with "little things" or remote incidents. He was infuriated because a cab driver overcharged his servant, but he never attacked the great railroad pirates. He raged at the ill treatment of Filipinos, but never considered the hordes of sweat shop laborers who toiled under American "captains of industry." Ten years after slavery had been abolished, he wrote about pre-war southern Negroes, but he never considered contemporary Negro problems.

Another defect of his social criticism was its tone. Always a perpetual "Youth," Mark Twain was far more emotional than intellectual in his judgments. He formed hasty opinions, was stirred sympathetically by individual instances of suffering but ignored larger abuses, and at times became much too angry for successful criticism. If his sympathies were aroused, he would stubbornly defend a person or principle; if he became angry, he wanted to pound the object of his wrath to a pulp. He had no ability to analyze causes of problems, and was not intellectually equipped to become a profound thinker.

Closely related to the above reason was Twain's genius for comedy. Time after time he began a satire which had great promise, but concluded with wild burlesque. Perhaps a good example of this was his Connecticut Yankee. Possessing some excellent satire, the story nevertheless loses much

of its impact because of the burlesque. When the knights pedal to the rescue on their bicycles, the preceding chapters are almost ruined. Twain's genius for true comedy also hampered his social criticism. He started out to make his part of The Gilded Age a cutting satire on American life. Colonel Sellers was to be the vehicle for much of this satire, but Twain created one of his greatest comic characters--so great that many effects of the intended satire were irrevocably lost. Many passages in which Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, and the Negro Jim appear also have their social criticism masked by pure comedy. The American public's insistence upon reading humor into Twain's works also deterred him from serious criticism. "I suppose it's my own fault," he once said wistfully. "I've cried 'wolf' so often and then led in a monkey that now when I try to write seriously everybody is sure I am only shamming."[3]

Still another reason why Twain did not become a great social critic was his attitude toward the contemporary scene. He was far more a product of his age than a protest against it. A true Colonel Sellers at heart, he was an industrial pioneer who saw "the vision of the possibility of things." All through his life he looked for schemes with "millions in them," and had he been blessed with a keen financial

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[3]J. R. Clemens, "Some Reminiscences of Mark Twain," Overland Monthly, LXXXVII (April, 1929), 125.

sense and a cold heart, Mark Twain would have been another Morgan or Vanderbilt and had the biggest plate at the Barbecue.

His increasing pessimism was also important in deterring him from serious social criticism. In his avid readings of ancient and medieval history he observed that human beings had exhibited remarkably little moral progress. If the human race really was morally stationary, then why try futilely to improve people? Undoubtedly an attempt to improve society is far more noble than the adoption of a do-nothing attitude, but the temptation is always strong to take the easy way out. The causes of Twain's pessimism have been argued by many critics, but it is not the purpose of this thesis to enter the controversy. Perhaps it was Twain's doubts about a hereafter that caused his black despair; whatever the cause, his pessimism did become extremely strong, and in light of such despair it is to Twain's credit that he produced any social criticism at all.

A final reason why he never became a great social critic was his expediency in almost all aspects of life. Reform and progress have always required strong hearts. Charles A. Madison mentioned this in his description of American progress:

> Each of these gains was achieved only after a long and bitter struggle. Men and women fought for them

> step by step, year after year, usually at great personal sacrifice. Driven by zeal of conscience and by a strong social idealism, these reformers and crusaders dedicated their lives to the greater good of all the people.[4]

Mark Twain never exhibited this degree of moral courage. He was not Captain Ahab, but Starbuck; nor was he Taji who spurned Serenia for the uncertainty of the Ideal to be found in the open sea. Whenever the criticism of certain aspects of American life could possibly work to the financial or social detriment of himself and his family, Twain avoided the controversy. He is not to be condemned for protecting his own interests instead of acting on behalf of humanity, for such a course of action is not, in all instances, wrong. This attitude, however, is not conducive to courageous social criticism.

If Twain was not a great social critic, what, then was he, and what were his achievements? In the opinion of this writer, Mark Twain was three things: a humorist, a recorder of American life, and a critic of the human race. Twain's humor was often mere burlesque, but certain passages of his better comedy will undoubtedly live, as Twain said, for several generations--then will start anew and live another five hundred years. His humor needs no defense; certain pseudo-intellectuals seem afraid to admit the comic spirit in Twain,

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[4]Madison, op. cit., p. viii.

but that group is, happily, in the minority. Some of Twain's pictures of American life will also live for generations. Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Pudd'nhead Wilson, and parts of Roughing It and Life on the Mississippi need no signposts to point out the indelible pictures of the Mississippi Valley and Rocky Mountain West. Howells once wished he had been on "that raft," but there are few red-blooded readers who have not been "on" the raft. This writer has never been in Hannibal, Missouri, and never particularly wishes to go there; any sightseeing around those old landmarks--Jackson's Island, Cardiff Hill, and all the others--would spoil the clear mental picture formed from many readings in Twain's works.

Mark Twain was also a keen critic of the human race. Perhaps the distinction between criticism of social conditions and criticism of the human race seems slight, but there is a difference. Criticism of the human race is not restricted to any place, time, or specific institution. Twain was not a great diagnostician of political, economic, and sociological movements, but on many occasions he was a keen critic of the human heart. Many of the evils depicted in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," Pudd'nhead Wilson, The Mysterious Stranger, and Huckleberry Finn are timeless, and will help make those stories live on in literature. Another thesis could be written about Twain's criticism of

the human race, and it is the hope of this writer that he may be enabled, at some future time, to do so. Mark Twain's amazing inconsistency has made this study exceptionally interesting, and a fitting conclusion is a quotation from Gamaliel Bradford:

> For . . . years I read little of him. Now, leaping over that considerable gulf, reading and re-reading old and new together, to distil the essence of his soul in a brief portrait, has been for me a wild revel, a riot of laughter and criticism and prejudice and anti-prejudice and revolt and rapture, from which it seems as if no sane and reasoned judgment could ensue. Perhaps none has.[5]

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[5]Bradford, op. cit., p. 3.

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