

Mark Twain, Anson Burlingame, Joseph Hopkins Twichell, and the Chinese

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Mark Twain's liberal attitudes toward black citizenry and women's suffrage are better known than his defense of the Chinese, even though his interest in Chinese culture and people pervades his literary and journalistic writings. Recently, more extensive scholarly attention has been devoted to researching Twain's experience with and ideas on the Chinese (Zehr 8, Kanellakou 7). Some scholars assert that Twain understood the Chinese only in a general sense because he did not seem to have any close contact or personal relationships with any Chinese people (Li 44). To dispute this allegation, this article examines a specific Chinese connection that may have influenced Twain's references to the Chinese in his fiction and nonfiction. In particular, I argue that Twain's pro-Chinese sympathies are to a large extent attributable to his friendships with Anson Burlingame and Joseph Hopkins Twichell. Twain's growing empathy for Chinese immigrants resulted from his own humanitarianism, but, according to Martin Zehr, it was also reinforced by his admiration for Anson Burlingame. Moreover, Steve Courtney illustrates how Twichell's personality, theological education, and abolitionist background shaped his friendship with Twain, and Peter Messent traces the lifelong effects of their friendship on Twain's attitude toward religion. Drawing upon these findings, this article demonstrates that Twain's relationships with Burlingame and Twichell had significant impact on Twain's democratic ideas as a champion of the disenfranchised. This is apparent in his short stories, sketches, and newspaper and biographical articles.

I. Twain's Responses to Chinese Immigration before 1870

Twain probably met Chinese immigrants for the first time when he was seventeen. During his first trip to New York to seek his fortune, he wrote, on August 31, 1853, to his mother Jane Lampton Clemens in

Missouri about being appalled by the “mass of human vermin,” including “[n]iggers, mulattoes, quadroons, [and] Chinese,” who “would raise the ire of the most patient person that ever lived” (qtd. in Foner 195). Three months later, he was likewise revolted by foreigners in Philadelphia and wrote to his brother Orion expressing his indignation: “There are so many abominable foreigners here . . . who hate everything American” (*Mark Twain’s Letters* 29). Although these commentaries are indicative of racial discrimination, in his autobiography Twain explicates the anti-foreign attitude of his youth as being affected by convention, observing that in his boyhood “I had no aversion to slavery. I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it” (*The Autobiography of Mark Twain* 6). Twain spent his childhood in the community of Hannibal, in which nativist politics strengthened intolerance of foreigners, and consequently he acquired a xenophobic perspective; further, in a letter to Frank E. Burrough in 1876, he admitted his “intolerance” of other races at the age of nineteen and twenty (Foner 237).

At this time, there were few Chinese in New York, and they were in general regarded as a novelty. In Twain’s early western journalism in the 1860s, his depictions of the Chinese were resplendent with exoticism and sarcasm and were designed to entertain readers. As a young newspaper reporter for *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, Nevada, Twain published an account of his tour of the local Chinatown during late 1863 or early 1864, and the article was later reprinted in Chapter 54 of *Roughing It*. Initially, Twain seemed to be disgusted by the “two or three yellow, long-tailed vagabonds, coiled up on a sort of short truckle-bed, smoking opium” (“The Gentle, Inoffensive Chinese” 180). Later in the article, however, Twain presents Chinatown as a tourist spot full of exotic merchandise and amiable businessmen. He was impressed by Mr. Ah Sing’s grocery store at No. 13 Wang Street, which had “a thousand articles of merchandise, curious to behold, impossible to imagine the uses of, and beyond our ability to describe” (180). Inside the store, Twain was enthused by Chinese hospitality, albeit with some hesitation:

He lavished his hospitality upon our party in the friendliest way. . . . He offered us a mess of birds’-nests; also, small, neat

sausages, of which we could have swallowed several yards if we had chosen to try, but we suspected that each link contained the corpse of a mouse, and therefore refrained. (180)

Twain was also delighted to see another Chinatown shop, Mr. See Yup's fancy store on Live Fox Street, where he purchased a variety of trinkets:

He sold us fans of white feathers, gorgeously ornamented; perfumery that smelled like Limburger cheese, Chinese pens, and watch-charms made of a stone unscratchable with steel instruments, yet polished and tinted like the inner coat of a sea-shell [jade]. As tokens of his esteem, See Yup presented the party with gaudy plumes made of gold tinsel and trimmed with peacocks' feathers. (181)

In addition, Twain admired the skill of a Chinese bookkeeper in calculating by abacus: "He figured up his accounts on a machine like a gridiron with buttons strung on its bars; the different rows represented units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. He fingered them with incredible rapidity" (182). In most of these reports about the Chinese, Twain aims at attracting readers' attention through the allure of Chinese exoticism.

Twain left Virginia City, Nevada, and moved to San Francisco on May 29, 1864, where he was hired as the *Daily Morning Call's* full-time reporter. He wrote several short pieces pertaining to Chinese immigrants, at times sarcastically judgmental, but occasionally sympathetic or even laudatory. In one of these articles, "Opium Smugglers" (July 9, 1864), Twain remarks: "The ingenuity of the Chinese is beyond calculation. . . . [T]hey appreciate 'good' and 'bad,' but it is only in reference to business, to finance, to trade, etc. Whatever is successful is good; whatever fails is bad. So they are not conscience-bound" in smuggling opium (qtd. in Branch 70). Twain's criticism of Chinese utilitarianism may explain why, in 1864, he did not hesitate when he had a chance to play tricks on his Chinese neighbors. Albert Bigelow Paine, Twain's first biographer, tells of the "Sunday amusement" of Twain and his colleague Steve Gillis on California Street:

Their window looked down on a lot of Chinese houses, small wooden shanties covered with beatenout cans. Steve and Mark would look down on these houses, waiting until all 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, and pour out Chinese vituperation. By and by, when they had retired and everything was quiet again, their tormentors would throw another bottle. This was their Sunday amusement. (*Mark Twain: A Biography* 255–56)

Twain's "Opium Smugglers" was soon followed by another article, "Chinese Slaves," in which he again censures Chinese sense of morality with a sardonic twist, this time concerning the illegal importation of Chinese girls to be sold as slaves.

Now-a-days, before a ship gets her cables out, the Police board her, seize the girls and shut them up, under guard, and they are sent back to China as soon as opportunity offers, at the expense of the Chinese Companies, who also send an agent along to hunt up the families from whom the poor creatures have been stolen, and restore to them their lost darlings again. Our Chinese fellow citizens seem to be acquiring a few good Christian instincts, at any rate. (*Daily Morning Call*, July 12, 1864)

The "Chinese Companies" in this account refers to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). As Twain accurately explains in "The Gentle, Inoffensive Chinese," in the western states of the United States "the Chinamen all belong to one or another of several great companies or organizations, and these companies keep track of their members, register their names, and ship their bodies home when they die" (179). Twain's news report about the slave girls points toward an immigration problem that became increasingly serious and, ten years later, led to the passage of the 1875 Page Law, which banned the immigration of Chinese women for immoral purposes. In another newspaper article reporting on Chinese criminals, "Chinese Railroad

Obstructions,” Twain mixed humor with irony when he ostensibly disparaged the bad influence of U.S. civilization on Chinese immigrants:

The Chinese in this State are becoming civilized to a fearful extent. One of them was arrested the other day, in the act of preparing for a grand railroad disaster on the Sacramento Valley Railroad. If these people continue to imbibe US ideas of progress, they will be turning their attention to highway robbery, and other enlightened pursuits. (*Daily Morning Call*, August 30, 1864)

In these reports about Chinese criminals, Twain tends to regard the Chinese as susceptible to the influences of American social vice and virtue.

With regards to Chinese works of art, Twain often depicted them as “hideous” but sometimes admired the cunning Chinese workmen. In “The New Chinese Temple,” Twain gives details of the new “Josh house” built by the Ning-Yong Company in Broadway (*Daily Morning Call*, August 19, 1864, reprinted in *Early Tales & Sketches* 2: 41). He describes the elaborately gilded woodwork as “representing human figures and birds and beasts of all degrees of hideousness,” among which the Chinese god is “as ugly a monster as can be found outside of China” (41). He even applies the Chinese rat-eating stereotype to this Chinese god: “[T]he general expression of this fat and happy god is as if he had eaten too much rice and rats for dinner” (41). Nonetheless, he praises tables that display “a perfect maze-work of carving,” which “only the cunning hand of a Chinaman could have wrought” (42). In another news report, “China at the Fair,” he again portrays a carving of a Chinese lion as a hideous monster and makes fun of how Chinese imagine gods:

Chy Lung, of Dupont street, near Washington, has deposited at the Fair Pavilion, a hideous carved image of a Chinese lion, for exhibition. It is embellished with all the ghastly-painted deviltry so pleasing to the Chinese taste and so grateful to his eye. It will be well for the prudent Christian to treat the monster with respect, for it may, possibly, be a Pagan god in disguise. (*Daily Morning Call*, August 31, 1864)

As early as 1864, Twain protested against the San Francisco police's abuse of the Chinese but was unable to disclose it in newspapers: "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" (Editor Memoranda, "Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy" 189). By the end of 1865, in "Our Active Police," written for The San Francisco *Dramatic Chronicle*, Twain was finally able to publicize his complaint:

The *Call* gives an account of an unoffending Chinese rag-picker being set upon by a gang of boys and nearly stoned to death If that unoffending man dies, and a murder has consequently been committed, it is doubtful whether his murderers will be recognized and punished, is it? And yet if a Chinaman steals a chicken he is sure to be recognized and punished, through the efforts of one of our active police force. . . . let it be looked to that the boys who were guilty of this murderous assault on an industrious and unoffending man are recognized and punished. (December 12, 1865, reprinted in Twain, *Early Tales & Sketches* 2: 511)

In 1866, Twain rewrote the story as "What Have the Police Been Doing?" and published it in the *Territorial Enterprise*, in which he ironically praises San Francisco police officers for victimizing Chinese immigrants: "What have the police been doing? . . . although many offenders of importance go unpunished, they infallibly snaffle every Chinese chicken-thief that attempts to drive his trade, and are duly glorified by name in the papers for it" (January 16–18, 1866). Twain's repeated emphasis on the unfair treatment of the Chinese brings to light his attention to social justice regardless of racial differences.

II. Twain's Friendship with Burlingame

Twain's growing empathy for Chinese immigrants resulted from his own commitment to humanitarianism, but it was also reinforced by his admiration for Anson Burlingame (Zehr 9). On June 14, 1861, President Lincoln appointed Burlingame as the first United States

Minister to China. Up to 1867, Burlingame made efforts to establish a policy of reciprocal cooperation between China and the United States. After Burlingame arrived in Peking in 1862, along with his diplomatic colleagues from Britain, France and Russia, he endeavored to protect Western interests in trade and missionary activity in China through cooperation among the foreign representatives and the Chinese government. Conciliatory toward the Chinese government, his policy contrasted with previous Western practices, in which Britain and France had used military force to compel China into allowing Western commercial, religious, and diplomatic activity in China (Anderson 239–55). The Chinese approved the cooperative policy, and in 1867 they honored Burlingame by naming him their first envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. Burlingame resigned his U.S. post and headed the Chinese Embassy mission to the United States in March 1868, advocating the passage of Sino-American treaties. On July 28, 1868, at Washington, D.C., the mission completed a series of articles, later known as the Burlingame Treaty (Williams 144). The main provisions of the treaty recognized China's right to dominion over her own territories, with China conceding her control over inland trade and navigation; granted China the right to appoint consuls to American Ports; insured freedom from persecution for followers of foreign religions in either country; allowed unrestricted voluntary migration between China and the United States; and admitted reciprocal rights of travel and residence (Tsai 28). As such, Burlingame was the first Western ambassador to recognize China's sovereignty and legalize Chinese immigration. Since U.S. traders and missionaries supported the "Open Door" policy, they promoted the Burlingame Treaty, which changed the "Chinese Question" from a nativist issue to a diplomatic resolution for American commercial interests.

Twain met Burlingame in 1866 when he was working as a correspondent for the *Sacramento Union* in the Sandwich Islands, Hawaii. Burlingame was then returning to his post as minister to China with his son Edward, a Mark Twain fan, and General van Valkenburg, minister to Japan. On June 21, 1866, Twain visited the American minister, and heard about the arrival of fifteen starving sailors from the burning

vessel *Hornet* (from New York), who had battled a stormy sea for forty-three days. Twain acknowledged the importance of the news, especially because a ship would sail next morning for San Francisco. Burlingame interviewed those sailors and gave Twain the opportunity to write about the news. Twain's three-column story on the front page of the Sacramento *Union*, July 19, 1866, gave the U.S. public the first detailed account of the disaster (Paine, *A Short Life of Mark Twain* 93–95). In addition, Burlingame invited Twain to visit him in Peking next winter, promising to provide him with information about China. As a result, Twain persistently claimed that he intended to pay his debt of gratitude by visiting China had another job opportunity not come up for him to travel across the Atlantic to write for the San Francisco *Alta California*. Subsequently, he thought of applying for a position with American diplomats in China. On March 3, 1868, while informing his *Alta* readers of J. Ross Browne's nomination to replace Burlingame as minister to China, Twain mentioned that Browne "has kindly invited me to take a lucrative position on his staff in case he goes to China, and I have accepted. . . . I shall follow him out there as soon as I am free" (*Mark Twain's Letters: 1867-1868* 2: 230). Browne, however, did not share Burlingame's enthusiasm for cooperation with the Chinese. Arriving in Peking in September 1868, Browne soon concluded that China's civilization was irreconcilable with that of the West and that Burlingame's conciliatory policy was impractical (Rather 71–80). This could be one of the reasons why Twain did not join him in China.

Burlingame's diplomatic connections greatly reinforced Twain's interests in the Chinese. In a letter Twain wrote on June 27, 1866, to his family from Honolulu, he claims that Burlingame was "acknowledged to have no superior in the diplomatic circles of the world, and obtained from China concessions in favor of the United States which were refused to Sir Frederick Bruce and Envoys of France and Russia until procured for them by Burlingame himself—which service was duly acknowledged by those dignitaries" (*The Letters of Mark Twain* 148). Notably, Burlingame gave a speech in New York on June 23, 1868, prior to adoption of the treaty, to advocate fair treatment of China, claiming that "I desire that the autonomy of China may be preserved; that her

independence may be maintained; that she may have equality, and that she may dispense equal privileges to all the nations” (qtd. in Speer 675). Twain made similar statements in his “Treaty with China: Its Provisions Explained,” written with Burlingame’s assistance and published on the front page of the *New York Tribune* of August 4, 1868, followed in the next few days by pieces reporting the progress of the Chinese delegation (Zehr 5). In Twain’s analysis of the treaty, he eulogizes the provisions for giving the Chinese government the right to appoint Consuls with the same rights as the Consuls of Great Britain and Russia. Also, Twain predicts that the treaty would prevent further persecution inflicted on the Chinese by Westerners in China and Americans in California: “the howl . . . will go up from the cooks, the railroad graders, and the cobble-stone artists of California, when they read it. They can never beat and bang and set the dogs on Chinamen any more. These pastimes are lost to them forever” (qtd. in Geismar 98). Twain observes that the Chinese did not receive justice in the United States: “I have seen Chinamen abused and maltreated in all the mean, cowardly ways possible to the invention of a degraded nature [. . .] but I never saw a Chinaman righted in a court of justice for wrongs thus done to him” (qtd. in Geismar 98). Also, Twain believed that the competition from Chinese labour was never as menacing as the agitators claimed, since much of this agitation was stirred up by capitalists who diverted labour discontent from themselves.

Twain’s connection with Burlingame may have underpinned the humorist’s antagonism towards American exclusion of Chinese workers. Three months after his first encounter with Burlingame, in “Coolies for California,” published in the *Sacramento Daily Union* on September 26, 1866, Twain states:

Give this [Chinese] labor to California for a few years and she would have fifty mines opened where she has one now—a dozen factories in operation where there is one now—a thousand tons of farm produce raised where there are a hundred now—leagues of railroad where she has miles to-day, and a population commensurate with her high and advancing prosperity. (*Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii* 273)

Similarly, in several other letters Twain wrote from Honolulu, he advocates recruiting labourers from China and using them in Hawaiian sugar and whaling industries, California mines, factories, and railroad building, so as to bring profits to the U.S. economy. Twain claims that Chinese labour, instead of competing with American workers, will create an elite white working class: “all the best class of the working population who might be emancipated from the pick and shovel would find easier and more profitable employment in superintending and overseeing the coolies” (*Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii* 272). Besides, Twain declares that Chinese workers will contribute to U.S. “imperial affluence”: “You will not always go on paying \$80 and \$100 a month for labor which you can hire for \$50. The sooner California adopts coolie labor the better it will be for her” (*Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii* 274). At this stage, Twain propagated the imperial cause of the American Pacific mainly for mercantile purposes (Huang 14), and this tendency was arguably ascribable to Burlingame’s influence.

Unfortunately, Burlingame died in St. Petersburg, Russia, on February 23, 1870, during his diplomatic mission around the world as special ambassador to China. Twain published his eulogy, “Anson Burlingame,” in *Buffalo Express* on February 25, 1870, declaring that Burlingame “had outgrown the narrow citizenship of a state, and become a citizen of the world; and his charity was large enough and his great heart warm enough to feel for all its races and to labor for them” (qtd. in McCullough 153). Albert Bigelow Paine also mentions that among the best of Twain’s tribute to Burlingame is an editorial published by *Buffalo Express*, in which Twain praises Burlingame for the nobility of his character as a statesman and concludes: “He was a good man, and a very, very great man. America lost a son, and all the world a servant, when he died” (qtd. in Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography* 2: 401).

Notwithstanding its friendly nature, the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 failed because the American government failed to give Chinese immigrants equal treatment. Chinese immigrants in fact played a significant role in the economic development of the United States. After great numbers of peasants from China’s Pearl River Delta migrated during the California Gold Rush in 1849, more Chinese were encouraged to come

to the United States to work as miners or railroad workers. After the Civil War, Chinese immigrants helped with building the Transcontinental Railroad, and replaced slave labour in southern states. Yet, when the termination of the railroad and mining industries intensified competition for jobs, white labour blamed Chinese for unemployment, and western states passed hundreds of ordinances and laws restricting Chinese labour. In the late 1870s, when the nation fell into an economic depression, the debate over the “Chinese Question” became a national issue, especially when politicians made use of it to win votes. Violence against the Chinese occurred, particularly in Denver and Wyoming, but the U.S. Government was unable to secure the safety of the Chinese. The Chinese Six Companies wrote to President Ulysses S. Grant, demanding greater civil rights for the Chinese, but to no avail. And when Chinese ministers in the United States, including Yung Wing and Ch’en Lan-pin, complained that such actions against Chinese citizens were violations of the Burlingame Treaty, the American Government replied that it had no power to interfere with states’ rights (LaFargue 47). The violent anti-Chinese movement led to legislation to restrain the great influx of Asiatics (Yoshiyuki 177–96). In 1882, only fourteen years after the Burlingame Treaty, Congress passed the first Chinese Exclusion Act to bar Chinese labourers from immigrating to the United States and prohibit Chinese immigrants from naturalization.

III. Twain’s Writings in the Early 1870s¹

Burlingame’s Chinese policy, along with Twain’s sense of justice, enhanced Twain’s interest in the Chinese during the next forty years. Twain hailed the Burlingame treaty because of its emphasis on social justice and racial equality, as he states in a public letter in 1868: “I am not fond of Chinamen, but I am still less fond of seeing them wronged and abused” (qtd. in Foner 183). More explicitly than before, Twain exhibited sympathies toward Chinese immigrants in the 1870s, particularly in his three satires published in the *Galaxy* magazine. “Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy” ostensibly criticizes the arrest of a well-dressed boy in San Francisco, who “on his way to Sunday-school was arrested and thrown into the city prison for stoning a Chinaman” (188). The

boy learns from his parents and the daily papers that the police look on with enjoyment while butchers set their dogs on inoffensive Chinese immigrants. In addition to the unfair vaccination law for Chinese immigrants, the California government imposes an unlawful mining-tax upon them to discourage them from working in mines. A Chinese can be hanged for stealing a slouch-box, and even for a mysterious crime he may not have done. His petty crime is often exaggerated, in order to keep the public from noticing the many uncaptured serious criminals. Accordingly Twain concludes:

It is in this way that the little boy found out that a Chinaman had no rights that any man was bound to respect; that he had no sorrows that anyone was bound to pity; that neither his life nor his liberty was worth the purchase of a penny when a white man needed a scapegoat; that nobody loved Chinamen, nobody befriended them, nobody spared them suffering when it was convenient to inflict it; everybody, individuals, communities, the majesty of the state itself, joining in hating, abusing, and persecuting these humble strangers. (189)

Seemingly a defense of the boy's innocence, Twain's critique implies that the adults are to blame for the brutal racial intolerance of Chinese immigrants. Twain is protesting the calamitous treatment of the Chinese at the hands of the San Francisco government and police. Implicitly comparing the Chinese with African Americans (Fishkin 136), Twain touches on issues of different races with similar humanity, reminiscent of Shylock's view in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?" (III. i. 44–62).

In "John Chinaman in New York," the narrator, a news reporter, raises his objection against the use of a "Chinese" man as an advertisement for "one of those monster American tea stores" (231) and expresses compassion toward this ill-fated man who is berated by passersby while paid only four dollars a week:

Is it not a shame that we, who prate so much about civilization and humanity, are content to degrade a fellow-being to such an office as this? . . . Men calling themselves the superior race, the race of culture and of gentle blood, . . . cracked some unseemly joke about his outlandish attire or his melancholy face, and passed on. (231)

The correspondent tells the “Chinese” man: “America has a broader hospitality for the exiled and oppressed. America and Americans are always ready to help the unfortunate” (231), but then he finds out that the “poor Chinaman” is actually an Irish man in Chinese costume. Criticizing shop owners for making use of Chinese exoticism but degrading Chinese racial dignity, the narrator concludes: “The New York tea merchants who need picturesque signs are not likely to run out of Chinamen” (232). Twain’s multiple satire condemns American employers and passersby for their inhumanity and racial discrimination, mocks the Irish man for disguising himself as Chinese to exploit the Chinese stereotype, and denounces the narrator for his misconception concerning ethnic stereotypes.

“Goldsmith’s Friend Abroad Again,” a series of fictional letters purportedly written by a San Francisco Chinese immigrant, Ah Song-Hi, to his friend Ching-Foo back in China, shows Twain an expert in the art of scoffing satire using the convention of a foreigner’s writing letters home, which Oliver Goldsmith adopted for his *Citizen of the World*. As soon as the Chinese narrator arrives in California, he becomes the victim of violent attacks. He is kicked by the Custom officers; his luggage is taken away; and he is charged ten dollars for a small-pox vaccination when doctors in San Francisco would gladly do it for fifty cents. While he is strolling along the streets, some ruffians set a vicious dog after him while two policemen watch joyfully and only beat the dog off after a passerby protests. Ah Song Hi is arrested for disturbing the peace, thrown in jail, and convicted of a crime without witnesses. During the trial, he realizes that white men can testify against anyone, but the Chinese are not allowed to testify against white men. Finally, the judge quickly gives him a five dollar fine or ten more days in prison. Alluding to Burlingame’s

notion of the citizenship of the world, these three sketches relate a historical period when the disruptions in China's economic conditions, occasioned by U.S. and European interventions between 1839 and 1860 (Mark, Lin and Chih 5–7), compelled impoverished Chinese to leave their country for survival. Having suffered from war, famine and floods, Chinese labourers came to the American West, where they worked for their family's livelihood in an insecure position, facing racial exploitation and cultural discrimination. By expressing outrage at the abuse of Chinese labourers in the United States, Twain excoriates the American government officers for abuse of power.

Furthermore, Twain's respect and concern for the Chinese, according to John O. Stark, date back to his early days in the West, and Twain "spoke up in *Roughing It*, devoting chapter 54 to the Chinese in Virginia City and complaining about the persecution that they suffered and extolling their virtues" (36). In the chapter titled "The Gentle, Inoffensive Chinese" (1872), Twain lavishes praise on Chinese immigrants, who "are quiet, peaceable, tractable, free from drunkenness, and they are as industrious as the day is long" (177). The Chinese demonstrate their industrious spirits by gathering up waste articles and producing valuable things from them, and many of them survive on old mining claims, but the officers come down on them "with an exorbitant swindle to which the legislature has given the broad, general name of 'foreign' mining tax, but it is usually inflicted on no foreigners but Chinamen" (178). Thus, Twain expresses a measure of indignation at anti-Chinese scapegoatism: "He [the Chinese] 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 murders. Any white man can swear a Chinaman's life away in courts, but no Chinaman can testify against a white man" (177). Whereas Westerners in China were protected against prosecution in Chinese courts, Chinese immigrants in the United States were denied the right even to testify in courts, and hence Twain concludes: "Nobody denies that America is the land of the free, nobody challenges it, maybe because we don't let other people testify" (177). In defending Chinese immigrants, Twain spoke out against the manifest unfairness of

American legislature, echoing the epochal policy Burlingame advocated for establishing more friendly relations with China.

IV. Twain's Friendship with Twichell

To add another dimension to our understanding of Twain's views of the Chinese, one needs to explore the relationship between Twain and the Reverend Joseph Hopkins Twichell (1838–1918), Twain's pastor, who performed Twain's wedding, christened his children, and presided over the family's weddings and funerals. After Twichell's graduation from Yale and his Civil War service as a Union chaplain in New York's Excelsior Brigade, he was the popular pastor of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut, for almost forty-seven years, from December 1865 to July 1912. He was one of Twain's best friends for almost as long, from the autumn of 1868 to Twain's death in April 1910. While the cynical Twain's ideological emphasis was often more on humanitarianism than on religion, he nevertheless cherished Twichell's companionship, probably because Twichell, having served as a chaplain to a group of Irish-Americans, had learned tolerance and was strengthened by exposure to war (Twichell 11). In 1871, Twain moved his family to Hartford and became Twichell's neighbor. Throughout the 1870s, the two men took long walks following a route of country roads and wooded paths (Courtney 148). In May 1896, Twichell published a biographical article on Twain in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Later he explained in his diary that he wrote this essay because of his close friendship with Twain.

H. [Harmony, Twichell's wife] thought that it due to M. T. whom we had known and loved so long, and from whom we had received so many kindnesses and bounties, that I should,—especially as he had fallen into financial troubles and had a special present claim on us for anything that might be construed as an office of friendship. (qtd. in Messent 52)

Twain made friends with parsons probably because they were skilled in interpreting literature, articulate as orators, and generally aimed at a more just society and a universal brotherhood (Phipps 52). Indeed,

Twichell was compassionate in terms of his assistance to immigrant labourers and support of overseas missions and cultural exchanges. Most importantly, he helped with a project known as the Chinese Educational Mission, proposed by Yung Wing, a Chinese educational worker, and approved by Li Hung-chang, a leading statesman of the late Qing Empire. The project would send one hundred twenty young Chinese, ages twelve to fifteen, to Western schools for fifteen years to study sciences related to the military, mathematics and engineering, and to return to China as experts. The mission began in Hartford in 1872, when thirty Chinese youths came to American colleges. Yung Wing was the first Commissioner, and, because of Yung Wing's friendship with Twichell, Hartford, especially Asylum Hill, was the headquarters of the mission. Twichell probably acted as their pastor, since an article in the *Springfield Union* of December 20, 1872, reports: "Invited by a friend, I attended last Sabbath one of Hartford's 'model churches,'" whose congregation included "a delegation of Chinese" (qtd. in Messent 70).

The fact that the Chinese mission figures constantly in Twichell's diaries and addresses illustrates his concern. In his 1874 address, Twichell reported that ninety Chinese boys had already been sent to the New England states: "[H]ere the boys are, and the Church of Christ is called upon to regard them with tender interest, to pray for them, and to watch them with real solicitude" (qtd. in Courtney 146). Twain recounts Twichell's devotion to the care of the Chinese in Hartford in his letter to Dean Sage on April 22, 1875: "[Twichell] reached Hartford after midnight that night, so as to be on hand early next day—for he had an opportunity to bury a Chinaman with some Congregational orgies & would not have missed it for the world" (*Mark Twain Letters* 6: 452). Twichell used his influence to advocate for the mission by speaking of it in sermons, in the *New York Herald*, and before the Kent Club of the Yale Law School (Courtney 181). Above all, Twichell appreciated the adaptability of these Chinese students, as he stated on April 10, 1878: "A visitor to the city of Hartford, at the present time, will be likely to meet on the streets groups of native boys, in their native dress, though somewhat modified, and speaking their native tongue, yet seeming, withal, to be very much at home" (qtd. in Courtney 181–82). Meanwhile, Twichell

cultivated a close friendship with Yung Wing. In 1875, Yung Wing married Mary Kellogg after returning from a visit to Peru with Twichell to investigate the Chinese workforce there, and Twichell performed the ceremony at the bride's family home (Courtney 151–57, 201–2). In the same year, Yung's co-commissioner Chen Lanbin was appointed the first Chinese minister to the United States, and Yung was named associate minister. At Yale's centennial commencement in 1876, Twichell, a member of the Yale Corporation, arranged for the university to grant Yung an honorary Doctor of Laws.

As such, Twichell sponsored Yung Wing and worked hard on behalf of the Chinese Educational Mission in Hartford. Twain sometimes joined Twichell in these efforts. In February 1875, Twichell mentioned in his diary that he initially planned to give a public lecture on the circumstances of Chinese labourers in Peru but then withdrew: "I was to lecture for Father Hawley on Peru, and M. T. was to introduce me. But when it came to the 'scratch' I backed out and got M. T. to stand in my place" (qtd. in Messent 71). Also, Twain's family held at least one neighborhood reception for Yung Wing in their new Farmington Avenue mansion (Courtney 147). One of the Chinese students, Yung Shang Him, recalls in his memoir that he was in the same class with Twain's daughter (Qien and Hu 79). Whereas in 1876 President Grant shook hands with the Chinese students who visited the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, unfortunately the California Senate passed a resolution favoring Chinese exclusion, because of the economic depression that gave rise to fierce competition of Chinese labour with American workers. When President Hayes vetoed the first Chinese Exclusion Bill on March 1, 1879, on the grounds that it violated the Burlingame Treaty, Twain, along with Twichell, praised him: "I knew the President would veto that infamous China Bill" (qtd. in Courtney 191).

Twain's friendship with Twichell and the Chinese intellectuals may have had an influence on his writings in the late 1870s, especially his characterization of the Chinese in *Ah Sin* (1877). Written by Twain and Bret Harte, the play first appeared at the National Theater in Washington on May 7, 1877, and then in the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York, but finally it proved to be a financial failure. Frederick Anderson, however,

states in the preface to the first published version of the play, “a play about the west by two authors whose experiences in the area provided materials for some of their most effective writing deserves examination” (v). In the play, the farcical Chinese character Ah Sin amuses the audience with both his cunning and exoticism on stage. Initially, he is constantly pounded and rebuked as an “unsolvable political problem” (11), but at the end of the play he outwits the other characters. *The New York Times* praised the play’s charm of local color:

[T]he character of Ah Sin has unquestionably originality and newness. The typical Chinaman, who acts, too, as a sort of *deus ex machina*, presents a variety of phases of Chinese humor, cleverness, and amusing rascality. His comical naivete, his propensity to beg and steal, his far-seeing policy, thanks to which a happy denouement of this particular story is brought about, are happily illustrated. (“Amusements. Fifth-Avenue Theatre,” 1 August 1877)

The play undercuts the stock characters of ignorant Chinese servants. Significantly, the play represents Ah Sin as a trickster figure, who, in folklore or modern popular culture, is a highly subversive character, clever and mischievous, surviving in a dangerous world through the use of trickery. According to Hynes and Doty’s *Mythical Trickster Figures*, a trickster has such traits as those of anomalous deceiver, trick-player, shape-shifter, and situation-inverter (34–42). Mocking the role being modeled for him by white Americans, Ah Sin imitates their mistakes, throwing plates and tablecloths on the ground. In this regard, he resembles Tom Sawyer, who tricks other boys into white-washing a fence and surprises everyone at his own funeral, or Huckleberry Finn, who assumes different identities (once by cross-dressing), fakes his own death, and rescues the Black slave Jim. Regrettably, the contemporary audience seemed to misunderstand the playwrights’ intentions, or preferred to believe that the play illustrated the Chinese character as “a contemptible thief and an imperturbable liar” (*The World: New York*, 1 August 1877, 5), probably because the working classes could hardly be amused by the competitive Chinese who might “beg and steal” their jobs. Also, in an

attempt to improve the play's box office success, Twain revised the play at the expense of the Chinese character, addressing the issue of Chinese immigration in such a hilarious vein that the characterization increasingly complied with the popular casting of the Chinese stereotype.

V. Twain's 1881–1885 Involvement with the Chinese Education Mission

Twain's 1881–1885 involvement in the Yung Wing matter further reflected his interest in the plight of the Chinese (Stark 36) and may have reinforced his sympathy for the Chinese in his later writings. Along with Twain, Twichell spoke out publicly against Senator James G. Blaine of Maine, whose nativist activity contributed to their dislike (Messent 53), and Twichell was one of the first to disapprove Blaine's backing of anti-Chinese bills in Congress (Andrews 114). When Blaine demanded a bill proscribing Harford supporters of the Chinese Education Mission, Twichell attacked Blaine in a speech to the American Missionary Association (Courtney 202–203). Nonetheless, the relations between the United States and China became less and less amicable. Given this fact, it is not surprising that when the Chinese government learned that Yung Kwai, a nephew of Yung Wing, had become a Christian and cut off his braided hair, they deprived him of his place in the mission when he was ready to enter Harvard College. In December 1880, Twichell helped Yung Kwai by secretly transferring funds from Yung Wing to Yung Kwai for the latter to finish his education in the United States (LaFargue 45).

The mission, in fact, was already in peril in October 1880 because the new Commissioner, Woo Tse Ting, sent reports to the Chinese government claiming that the boys were being Americanized and that Yung Wing was pampering them (Shang Him Yung 71). To solve the crisis, Yung Wing asked Twichell to draw up a petition letter to be signed by the presidents of major American colleges. With Yale president Noah Porter's help, the letter was forwarded to the American ambassador to China and then the patron of the mission, Li. In December, however, Yung wrote to Twichell that "Woo's representations of the students together with the new treaty concerning Chinese immigration & the howl

of the Pacific coast against Chinese all contributed to disgust Li & he has finally to my utter sorrow decided to give up the scheme” (qtd. in LaFargue 49–50). Yung asked Twichell to appeal to former President General Grant, and then Twichell asked Twain for help.

Twain’s intercession with Grant was not publicized until 1917, when Twain’s letters were published. In the late 1870s Twain had a close friendship with Grant and would later publish the General’s memoirs. Twain wrote to William Dean Howells on Christmas Eve of 1880 about his arrangement of the meeting with Grant on December 21, 1880: “next day I attended to business—which was, to introduce Twichell to Gen. Grant & procure a private talk in the interest of the Chinese Educational Mission here in the U.S.” (*Mark Twain’s Letters* 391). According to Twain, Grant acted effectively: “Grant took in the whole situation in a jetty & before Joe had more than fairly got started, the old man said ‘I’ll write the Viceroy [Li] a letter—a separate letter—& bring strong reasons to bear upon him; I know him well, and what I have to say will have weight with him’” (*Mark Twain’s Letters* 391). Twichell’s diary consistently notes that Twain “readily undertook this and wrote to Gen. Grant asking for both of us an interview with him the following Tuesday at New York. . . . Thus we succeeded easily beyond our expectation, thanks largely to Clemens’s assistance” (qtd. in LaFargue 49–50). Grant’s intervention brought about, though temporarily, the recall of the Mission. On March 10, 1881, Yung Wing informed Twichell that he had received instructions from Li to continue the mission, at least for the present (LaFargue 50). Twain wrote to Grant from Hartford on March 16, 1881: “Your letter to Li Hung Chang has done its work, & the Chinese Educational Mission in Hartford is saved. This cablegram mentions the receipt of your letter, & at the same time it commands the minister Chin to take Yung Wing into his consultations” (qtd. in Stark 36).

Nevertheless, Li was preparing to disband the mission. Li wrote to the Foreign Office of China on March 30, 1881, stating that, although Grant had requested that the mission be continued, its expenses were too great for the Chinese Government. On June 8, 1881, the Foreign Office recalled the students and teachers, who then left Hartford,

Connecticut, in July 1881. The majority of these students later had distinguished careers, nearly all rendering great service to the emerging new China (LaFargue 49–53). In later years, Twichell invited to his home some former students, now Chinese civil servants on official visits, and he maintained his interest in China, joining Yung to excoriate Chinese exclusion, though it became law in 1882 (Courtney 207). Twain in his autobiography also mentions another visit to Grant, early in 1884, or late in 1883, with Yung Wing, during which he tried to influence Grant to support building a network of railroads in China, and Grant gave a letter to Twain and Twichell so they could send it on to the Viceroy (Paine, *Mark Twain's Autobiography* 1: 20). Yung Wing appreciated Twain's and Twichell's efforts to help the Chinese students, as he states in his 1909 autobiography, *My Life in China and America*:

The breaking up of the Chinese Educational Commission and the recall of the young students in 1881 was not brought about without a strenuous effort on the part of some thoughtful men who . . . came forward in their quiet and modest ways to enter a protest against the revocation of the Mission. Chief among them were my life-long friend, the Rev. J. H. Twichell, and Rev. John W. Lane, through whose persistent efforts Presidents Porter and Seelye, Samuel Clemens, T. F. Frelinghuysen, John Russell Young and others were enlisted and brought forward to stay the work of retrogression of the part of the Chinese. (211)

VI. Twain's Later Writings

During the last two decades of his life, Twain criticized imperialist policies during the McKinley and Roosevelt presidencies, and his unpopular perspectives were partially attributable to his resentment at the Western powers' expansion in China, as he was influenced by Burlingame's and Twichell's friendly attitudes toward the Chinese. Yet, condemning the vice of imperialist "civilization," Twain gradually disagreed with Twichell's viewpoints, and this motivated Twain to leave Twichell behind as a formative influence on his later thought (Messent 76). In his letter to Twichell on August 12, 1900, Twain denounced mission-

ary activities in China: “[M]y sympathies are with the Chinese. They have been villainously dealt with by the sceptered thieves of Europe, and I hope they will drive all the foreigners out and keep them out for good” (*Mark Twain’s Letters* 699). Twain even rebuked Twichell for his conservative role in a letter on January 29, 1901 (Courtney 266). In June 1901, again he wrote to Twichell: “Whenever you ask people to support [foreign missions], Joe, do bar China. Their presence there is forbidden by the Bible, & by every sentiment of humanity & fair-dealing; & they have done vast mischief there” (qtd. in Phipps 212). Moreover, Twain regards missionary conversion as a “criminal” trade in his letter to Twichell on April 19, 1909: “Joe, where is the fairness in the missionary’s trade? His prey is the children: he cannot convert adults. He beguiles the little children to forsake their parents’ religion & break their hearts. . . . To my mind the Christian missionary is easily the most criminal criminal that exists on the planet” (qtd. in Messent 201).

Although Twain and Twichell remained close friends for many more years, unequivocal anti-imperialism characterizes Twain’s late writings. His later report on global travels, *Following the Equator* (1897), was the result of his 1895–1896 world lecture tour to raise money to pay his debts. During this tour to Honolulu and the Fiji Islands, Sydney and Melbourne, Tasmania, Ceylon, Bombay, Calcutta, Cape Town and Johannesburg, Twain encountered many different cultures exposed to western colonial exploitation. As a result, he modifies his earlier views on America’s Manifest Destiny in the Pacific. In this travelogue, Twain assails imperial ventures of Great Britain in South Africa, the U.S. in Cuba and the Philippines, and Western powers in China, disparaging whites’ disdain for native traditions and accentuating the similarity between slavery and colonization. In 1899 he further condemned anti-foreign sentiment in his notebook: “Patriotism is being carried to insane excess. I know men who do not love God because He is a foreigner” (qtd. in Foner 238).

In the last decade of his life, Twain invented a satanic narrator who visits the earth to comment on human behavior. *The Mysterious Stranger* (1900) is described by Bernard DeVoto as a highly “important key to Mark Twain’s books,” one that would shed light on “many

areas of Mark Twain's personality that have so far been dark" (vii–ix). Dating the composition of the manuscripts, John S. Tuckey asserts that Twain attempted at least four versions of the story, which survive in three different manuscripts, all in Twain's handwriting, left unfinished when he died in 1910. All of these manuscripts are collected in the Mark Twain Papers, stored at the General Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Six years after Twain's death, *The Mysterious Stranger* was published as edited by Albert Bigelow Paine, Twain's literary executor, and Frederick A. Duneka, then general manager of Harper & Brothers, and the book represents, partially, the first manuscripts in order of composition (Tuckey 9–10). Twain's titles for each, in the order of composition, were "The Chronicle of Young Satan," "Schoolhouse Hill," and "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger" (Gibson 2–4). Satan, alias "No. 44," is the primary character in all three manuscripts, and this mysterious stranger, I believe, represents Twain's authorial voice. In "The Chronicle of Young Satan," Satan chooses China for his excursion, very likely because in 1899 Twain was defending the "cautious Chinaman" against "the Western missionary" (*Mark Twain's Letters* 683). DeVoto asserts that, while working on the different versions of the story, Twain was suffering through a period of private and public misfortunes. His own increasing infirmities, financial troubles, the death of his wife and his daughter Susy, and the discovery that another daughter, Jean, was an epileptic, had induced a sense of despair. Yet, above all, Twain was distressed at the imperial wars, and at the incapability of religious belief to correct these evils, which religion seemed to enhance (Berret 186). Twain's religious skepticism was acknowledged by Howells, who had a forty-one-year friendship with Twain, in an article published in *Harper's Magazine* in March 1918: "[T]he doubt about Christianity that has always haunted [Twain] hardens into denial and effects itself at last in such an allegory as *The Mysterious Stranger*, who bedevils a world without reason and without pity" (qtd. in Messent 63).

Another article by Twain, "The Stupendous Procession" (1901), similarly presents a pageant of warring nations, slaughter and corpses, as observed by a satanic stranger. One of the scenes is depicted as follows:

A majestic matron in flowing robes drenched with blood. On her head a golden crown of thorns; impaled on its spines the bleeding heads of patriots who died for their countries—Boers, Boxers, Filipinos; in one hand a slung-shot [sic], in the other a Bible, open at the text “Do unto others,” etc. Protruding from pocket bottle labeled “We bring you the blessings of civilization.” (Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography* 1149)

In the eleven “Letters from the Earth,” again through the archangel Satan (writing to other archangels about earthly life), Twain satirizes hypocritical Christians and their un-Christian behavior. In all these writings, he assumed the mask of Satan in order to demonstrate that, as he proclaims at the beginning of his “Concerning the Jews” (1899), he has no prejudices of race, color, caste, or creed, not even a prejudice against Satan, “on account of his not having a fair show” (528).

Indeed, during the time when the allied Western powers were slaughtering the Chinese in the cause of Christ, these imperialists revolted Twain’s democratic conscience. In the speech Twain prepared for the Red Cross Society for New Year’s Eve, 1900, he relates his aversion to the attitudes of the “civilized” nations toward other ethnicities:

I bring you the stately nation 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 towel, but hide the looking-glass. (Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography* 1127)

According to the *New York Times*, in the speech to the Public Education Association in New York on Nov. 23, 1900, again Twain articulated his agreement with the Chinese Boxers in preserving autonomy in their own country: “It is the foreigners, who are making all the trouble in China, and if they would only get out, how pleasant everything would be!” (qtd. in Geismar 159). And on Nov. 24, 1900, Twain argued that Boxer nationalism was parallel to that of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion

Act in American law: "As far as America is concerned we don't allow the Chinese to come here, and we would be doing the graceful thing to allow China to decide whether she will allow us to go there" (*Mark Twain's Speeches* 69).

Twain continued his severe criticism of American imperialism in his essay "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," first published in *The North American Review* (Feb. 1901, CLXXII: 162–67). The title is derived from the Bible (Matthew 4:16, Verses 13–17), but Twain used it to satirize the insincerity of the imperialists who claimed to have brought the benefits of civilization to the colonized peoples. Playing on the word "darkness," Twain refers to the colonized natives as "sitting in darkness" not only because they were not enlightened by Christianity but also because, ironically, they were deceived by the Christians who forced imperial "civilization" on them. Twain excoriated supporters of imperialists, including merchants who desired new markets and missionaries who craved new converts. In particular, he reprimanded Reverend William Scott Ament, director of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, for seeking indemnities from the Chinese after the Boxer Rebellion against western exploitation in 1900. Twain divulges the crimes the imperialists perpetrate in the name of the "Blessings-of-Civilization Trust," a parody of what Rudyard Kipling had called "the white man's burden." Opposing Kipling's concept of imperialism as beneficial to the world, Twain attacks the Western exploitation of the colonized natives, or the "lesser breeds" as Rudyard Kipling called them in his poem "Recessional." Defending the Chinese Boxers who defied foreign invasion of their nation, Twain condemns the American missionaries in China as well as European civilization:

Next to the damage made by the American missionaries, Kaiser went to play the same game, and two missionaries were killed: China had to pay a hundred thousand dollars apiece for them, in money; twelve miles of territory, containing several million of inhabitants and worth twenty million dollars. (205)

Although Twain's anti-imperial perceptions were not popular, he did have supporters. Responding to Twain's essay, a letter to the Editor of

the *New York Times* with the title “AGREES WITH MARK TWAIN” states: “On the Boer war, the Chinese questions, and the vicious methods of many of the missionaries in China and the East, Russia’s treatment of Japan, our conduct in the Philippine invasion . . . , he [Twain] speaks for patriotic Americans, who look at these questions without commercialism or maudlin Christian or otherwise perverted progressiveness” (February 8, 1901).

Nevertheless, when Twain was establishing himself as the voice of American society’s conscience, his voice was sometimes silenced. In the early 1900s, publishers rejected Twain’s essays such as “The War Prayer” and “The United States of Lyncherdom,” both published posthumously. In “The United States of Lyncherdom” (1901), Twain urges the missionaries to leave China and return to the United States to reform the mobs who were lynching African Americans: “O kind missionary, o compassionate missionary, leave China! come home and convert these Christians,” especially because the Chinese are “universally conceded to be excellent people,” and almost “every convert runs a risk of catching our civilization” (198–99). In “The Dervish and the Offensive Stranger,” Twain argues that missionaries may have meant well but achieved evil outcomes.

The Offensive Stranger: With the best intentions the missionary has been laboring in China for eighty years.

The Dervish: The evil result is—

The Offensive Stranger: That nearly a hundred thousand Chinamen have acquired our Civilization.

The Dervish: And the good result is—

The Offensive Stranger: That by the compassion of God four hundred millions have escaped it. (149–50)

Thus, Twain expanded his conscientious concern for the Chinese taunted by American racists in the United States to those oppressed by Western imperialists in China. His association with Burlingame and Twichell very likely strengthened his humanitarian sentiment in his writings, through which he repeatedly voiced his outrage over racial dis-

crimination against the Chinese and over the negative impact of imperial culture upon them.

VII. Conclusion

Twain's earlier depictions of the Chinese accorded with prevalent anti-Chinese caricatures and depicted this minority group as a source of entertainment. Yet, when he became acquainted with the Chinese in San Francisco, he paid more attention to Chinese cultural and religious particulars. The exclusionary policies in the United States against Chinese immigration in the 1880s strengthened Twain's support of this ethnic minority, essentially because of his relationships with Burlingame and Twichell. In exposing the outrageous treatment of the Chinese in the land of the free, Twain understood that a minority group was entitled to the rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" under the Declaration of Independence. When Twain was interviewed by *South Australian Register* in 1895 concerning the racial feeling in America, he talked about his feeling for Chinese immigrants:

I was never disposed to make fun of the Chinaman; I always looked upon him as a pathetic object; a poor, hardworking, industrious, friendless heathen, far from home, amongst a strange people, who treated him none too well. He has a hard life, and is always busy and always sober, therefore I never could see anything to make fun of in the Chinaman. No, he is not wanted in America. The feeling is that he ought to go, but America is a place for all people, it seems. ("Mark Twain Put to the Question" 6)

Characterizing the United States as a nation for all races, Twain defended the American ideals of democracy in order to contend with the white culture that subordinated the Chinese. Twain actually spoke the mind of many Chinese Americans. In 1885, the *American Missionary's* October issue published a letter, entitled "A Protest against the Statue of Liberty," from Saum Song Bo, responding to a flyer requesting donations to build a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty:

I consider it as an insult to us Chinese to call on us to contribute toward building in this land a pedestal for a statue of liberty. That statue represents liberty holding a torch which lights the passage of those of all nations who come into this country. But are the Chinese allowed to come? As for the Chinese who are here, are they allowed to enjoy liberty as men of all other nationalities enjoy it? (qtd. in Archuleta 225)

Few acknowledged Twain's efforts to improve Chinese-American understanding. Twain admired Chinese ethics, including traditional Confucianism, some aspects of which he believed had improved Christianity: "We borrow the Golden Rule from Confucius after it has seen service for centuries" (Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography* 1355). Moreover, in the 1880s, Twain's support of the Chinese Educational Mission resulted in his involvement with the diplomacy between the United States and China, providing irrefutable evidence of Twain's empathy toward the Chinese in the United States. Twain was concerned not only about the predicaments of Chinese immigrants to the United States but also about the Chinese mistreated by the Western imperialist powers in China. In his later years, while expressing his deep pessimism about the human race, his rage over the attitude of Europe in China was his extension of the American national ideals of democracy. In 1897 Twain observed that "The universal brotherhood of man is our most precious possession" (*Mark Twain's Notebook* 347). In a letter to Ray J. Friedman on March 19, 1901, Twain summarizes his attitude toward peoples of different colors: "One of my theories is, that the hearts of men are about alike, all over the world, no matter what their skin-complexions may be" (Mark Twain Papers, qtd. in Foner 237). These statements indicate that Twain's compassion, reinforced by his relationships with Burlingame and Twichell, enabled him to be alarmed by the injustice done to the Chinese.

Note

- 1 For more details concerning Mark Twain's writings pertaining to the Chinese, especially those published in the 1870s, please see Ou.

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