THE DISLOYAL PATRIOT:
THE POLITICAL MARK TWAIN

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PREFACE

The political Mark Twain has been described as an inconsistent man often overwhelmed by despair about the American political system. Perhaps, his political changes do seem inconsistent; however, careful examination indicates that they were the result of the kind of change and growth that Twain felt necessary for maturity. Undoubtedly, he became discouraged by the evils that existed in American democracy; but he did not give up on democracy, because he believed it to be a system of government far superior to any other. As a result of his enduring faith in the democratic system, Twain considered elections and their results to be important; therefore, he felt that citizens should actively support the best candidate, regardless of any party loyalty. Although he often bitterly attacked his country, he was actually attacking those evils which he could not stand to see creeping into the government. His attacks show his life-long concern for his country. If he had not really cared about it, he would not have actively sought the reforms that he did.

In Chapter I, "The Child of Which a Voter Was Made," I have described Twain's political background--the influence of his father, John Marshall Clemens; his

brother, Orion; his home town, Hannibal; and his early experiences as a printer's apprentice, reporter, riverboat pilot, and soldier. I have discussed Twain's experiences as a legislative reporter in the Far West and Washington, D. C., in Chapter II, "The Origins of the Book Which Named an Age." Chapter III, "The Mugwump Who Evolved from the Gilded Age," deals with the period from 1870 through 1884, a period in which Twain collaborated with Charles Dudley Warner on The Gilded Age, wrote other political satire, and participated actively in political campaigns. In the final chapter, "The Disloyal Patriot," I have discussed Twain's increasing political independence and disgust with political parties; his novel, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court; and his writings on anti-imperialism.

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. Green Wyrick for his helpful suggestions on the preparation of this study and for the encouraging interest he showed in a shorter study on the same subject which I wrote while taking the course Mark Twain and His Times. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Charles Walton for his careful reading of my study and for his useful recommendations. My deepest thanks go to my husband, Manne, for encouraging me, for typing innumerable pages, and for remaining calm when I could not.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHILD OF WHICH A VOTER WAS MADE

Although Mark Twain resented in many ways the views of his cold, stern father, he never really turned against his father's basic political beliefs. Twain's father, John Marshall Clemens, named for the conservative chief justice, would probably have been a Federalist if that party had not died in the early nineteenth century.[1] Instead, John Clemens was a known Whig.[2] From his Whig and Federalist ancestors, Twain inherited the idea that a man's political rights should depend on his wealth.[3] The Whig Party, a major party for nearly twenty years, stood for right of property and talent and attacked the Democratic Party for appealing to the poor and illiterate.

In 1846, John Marshall Clemens demonstrated his Whig convictions as a delegate to the party's state convention.[4] During that same year, he ran for Clerk

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[1]Louis J. Budd, _Mark Twain: Social Philosopher_, p. 2.

[2]Dixon Wecter, _Sam Clemens of Hannibal_, p. 55.

[3]Budd, _op. cit._, p. 12.

[4]_Ibid._, p. 2.

of the Circuit Court of Marion County, Missouri, on the Whig ticket.[5] Undoubtedly, he would have been elected had he not died before election day.[6] At his death, he was praised by Hannibal's Democratic newspaper, the Gazette, for his "public spirit" and his "high sense of justice and moral rectitude."[7] Such a comment from a press opposing Clemens's views would seem to be a high compliment. Even though he was firm in his Whig convictions, John Marshall Clemens was known to be a nonconformist, because he was a freethinker, not unlike the man his literary son was to be.[8] Twain's comment, "The Clemenses have always done the best they could to keep the political balances level, no matter how much it might inconvenience them," would certainly apply to his father.[9]

Although John Marshall Clemens remained true to his party until his death, his son, Orion, was not so faithful. Twain often commented on Orion's political inconsistency, seemingly forgetting that his own

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[5]Wecter, op. cit., p. 114.

[6]Loc. cit.

[7]Quoted in ibid., p. 118.

[8]Ibid., p. 40.

[9]Samuel Clemens, The Autobiography of Mark Twain, p. 19.

inconsistency could easily be compared to that of his brother. In a letter to William Deam Howells dated September 21, 1876, Twain, obviously exaggerating, says that Tilden's defeat is certain because Orion has bolted from the Republican Party and intends to vote for Tilden, adding "For some inscrutable reason God never allows him [Orion] to vote right."[10] On October 11, Twain again assures Howells that Hayes will win the election because Orion joined forces with the enemy: "If you knew him as well as I do you would have confidence in him. His instinct to do the wrong thing is absolutely unerring."[11] Of Orion, he also observes, "Whig today, Democrat next week."[12]

Although Orion Clemens did change his party affiliation several times, he changed no oftener than Twain did. Indications are that, when Orion did change, he sincerely believed he was doing the right thing. For example, Orion's Whig attitudes were obvious in 1852 when he was writing obituaries in the Hannibal _Journal_ for statesmen Daniel Webster and Henry Clay.[13] The _Journal_ was a Whig paper when Orion bought it, and he continued the Whig partisanship by reporting the party's doings

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[10]Henry Nash Smith and William M. Gibson (eds.), _Mark Twain-Howells Letters_, I, 154.

[11]_Ibid._, p. 158.

[12]Quoted in Wecter, _op. cit._, p. 232.

[13]_Ibid._, p. 195.

and by attacking the Democratic Party as was expected of him. In nineteenth-century journalism, editors were partisan, winning or losing readers as politics shifted.[14] If the circulation of their newspaper increased, they became more important to their party.[15] Orion was a steady Whig, later becoming a Lincoln Republican[16] and an abolitionist.[17] Such affiliations required moral and sometimes physical strength in the Missouri of the pre-Civil War period.[18] Surely, they were the result of honest convictions, just as Mark Twain's later political affiliations were, not simply the whims of a vacillating man.

Although Orion probably only provided Mark Twain with comic material, John Marshall Clemens certainly provided Twain with his early political beliefs. Twain was quite young when his father died, but he was acquainted with his father's support of the Whig Party, as well as the party's support of his father.

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[14] Budd, _op. cit._, p. 3.

[15] _Loc. cit._

[16] Wecter, _op. cit._, p. 232.

[17] Fred W. Lorch, "Mark Twain and the 'Campaign That Failed,'" _American Literature_, XII (January, 1941), 459.

[18] Wecter, _op. cit._, p. 232.

Hannibal must, also, have influenced Mark Twain in a somewhat different way, however. In the mid-nineteenth century, many patriotic events occurred in Hannibal. The Democrats paid tribute to Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson when he died in 1845.[19] The Hannibal Whigs celebrated Zachary "Old Rough and Ready" Taylor's election as President in 1848.[20] These and numerous other patriotic and political affairs in Twain's home town provided news for the local papers, one of which Twain began working for at the age of thirteen.[21]

His first job was that of a printer's apprentice, or printer's devil, for Mr. Ament's paper, the _Missouri Courier_. While at the _Courier_, he was exposed to Democratic Party ideals; however, he maintained his Whig principles.[22] Later, in an article written for Orion's paper in Hannibal, Twain bitterly attacks his former employer, Mr. Ament, for the latter's political views, calling Ament ". . . this soft-soaper of Democratic rascality . . . this father of NOTHING."[23] In "Blabbing Government Secrets," an article Twain published in the

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[19] _Ibid._, p. 194.

[20] _Loc. cit._

[21] Budd, _op. cit._ p. 3.

[22] Kenneth Richmond Andrews, _Nook Farm: Mark Twain's Hartford Circle_, p. 111.

[23] Quoted in Budd, _op. cit._, p. 3.

September 16, 1852, issue of Orion's Hannibal Journal, he satirizes Missouri's Democratic governor and legislature for passing bills that favored friends.[24] Thus, if on the subject of politics, Twain's writing for the Journal usually followed his Whig views, even though his initial experience was with a Democratic Party newspaper.[25]

During Twain's early years as a reporter for the Hannibal Journal, he became interested in an issue that was to concern him for the rest of his life, one that he treated most thoroughly, but not most skillfully, in a book which named the age following the Civil War--*The Gilded Age*. The issue was that of corruption, especially that which seemed to engulf politics and government. In his comments in "Blabbing Government Secrets," he reveals his early interest in this moral issue in politics. In 1854, he reports the corruption of St. Louis policemen and of a bookkeeper in the St. Louis Democratic office.[26] Twenty years later, in a letter to H. H. Burrough of Cape Girardeau, Missouri,

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[24] *Loc. cit.*

[25] *Loc. cit.*

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

he comments on himself and on his civic pride, saying that he had been a

> . . . callow fool, a self-sufficient ass, a mere human tumble-bug, stern in air, heaving at his bit of dung and imagining he is remolding the world and is entirely capable of doing it right.[27]

Between 1853 and 1857, Twain traveled, writing many patriotic pieces, especially about Philadelphia and Washington.[28] Of course, some of these articles are not patriotic in the usual sense of the word; instead of blindly admiring his country and all that it stood for, Twain criticizes it, often bitterly. Perhaps, however, this kind of criticism comes only from a true patriot who really cares about his country and about what happens to it. During this period between 1853 and 1857, he began his relentless criticism of the Congress of the United States, complaining of a weak Senate, the chambers of which ". . . no longer echo the words of Clay or Webster or Calhoun."[29] He was even more critical of the House of Representatives in which ". . . nearly every man seemed to have something

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[27]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, The Portable Mark Twain, p. 750.

[28]Budd, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

[29]Ibid., p. 4.

weighing on his mind on which the Salvation of the Republic depended, and which he appeared very anxious to ease himself of."[30]

From 1857 to 1861, he was almost as inconsistent about political parties as he later accused Orion of being. He admitted his inconsistencies, comparing them to those of a relative, Sherrard Clemens, a Republican Congressman from West Virginia during the war, who later went to St. Louis and became a rebel. Twain said of himself and Sherrard Clemens, "At the time that he was a Republican I was a rebel; but by the time he had become a rebel I was become (temporarily) a Republican."[31]

During the years, 1857 to 1861, when Twain was a riverboat pilot, he probably often heard arguments for the South's cause while navigating the river between St. Louis and New Orleans. Surprisingly, however, he did not turn into a secessionist. In the 1860 election, he favored the National Constitutional Union Party that was primarily made up of former Whigs and Know-Nothings who straddled the issue of slavery.[32] Twenty years later, he evidently reproached himself for moving toward the Know-Nothing Party, but since

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[30]Loc. cit.

[31]Clemens, The Autobiography, p. 31.

[32]Budd, op. cit., p. 6.

many Whigs moved in the same direction when their party began to collapse, his move with them is understandable.[33] After the election, Twain's sentiments were probably in support of Jefferson Davis, but he remained, for a short time at least, loyal to the Union, true to his Whig origin.[34]

In 1861, he demonstrated his divided loyalties by serving briefly in the Confederate Army. Constant rain, nonexistent shelter and headquarters, tiresome moving, little food, disorganization, and poor leadership--all doubtless influenced him to desert the Confederate Army in Missouri about two weeks after he had joined it.[35] Perhaps even more influential was Governor Jackson's defeat at Boonville, Missouri, a defeat that gave the Union control of the Missouri River and kept newly formed units from reaching General Price, commander of the Missouri Confederate forces.[36]

After the experience described in his "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed," Twain ". . . resolved to retire from this avocation of sham soldiership" to

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[33] _Ibid._, p. 4.

[34] _Ibid._, p. 6.

[35] Lorch, _op. cit._, p. 468.

[36] _Loc. cit._

maintain his self-respect.[37] Evidently, he had no desire to fight for either side in the Civil War, not because he was disinterested in the outcome of the war, but because he did not like the idea of "shooting it out." Later, he declares that he joined the Confederate Army because of social pressure.[38] However, at one time, he wrote a series of letters, the Snodgrass Letters, for the Hannibal _Journal_, expressing prejudices which, although they seem incongruous with the better-known humanitarian Twain, could account for his short-lived Confederate fervor. Perhaps, after a few difficult days in the army, he recalled that he had actually voted for unity in 1860.[39]

Although Twain served briefly in the Confederate Army, he became a Republican when he traveled to Nevada with Orion, whom Lincoln had appointed to serve as secretary to the governor of the Nevada Territory.[40] In January of 1861, Orion had set out to obtain a political appointment in return for his active support of Lincoln.[41] Earlier, Orion had supported Edward Bates of St. Louis as a running mate for Millard

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[37]Clemens, _The Portable Mark Twain_, p. 139.

[38]Budd, _op. cit._, p. 6.

[39]_Loc. cit._

[40]Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 111.

[41]Lorch, _op. cit._, p. 459.

Fillmore.[42] Although Bates was not nominated, he was appointed United States Attorney-General after Lincoln's election.[43] He remembered Orion's support and, as a result, was instrumental in getting Orion the position in the Nevada Territory in 1861.[44]

With the help of his mother and sister, Orion managed to persuade Twain to go to Nevada with him for company and for financial help, although he was probably more interested in separating his brother from Confederate influences.[45] Twain's main reason for going was not the prospect of gold and adventure, but of escape from three months of bewilderment, unemployment, and military farce. The idea of trying something new and different, of being employed again, and of, perhaps, helping to build a new state probably lured him to Nevada in 1861.[46]

Among the many influences upon the political development of Twain, therefore, were his father, brother, home town, and his numerous job experiences. His father's Whig views were Twain's views during his early years

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[42]Wecter, _op. cit._, p. 195.

[43]Lorch, _op. cit._, p. 459.

[44]Wecter, _op. cit._, p. 195.

[45]Lorch, _op. cit._, p. 465.

[46]_Loc. cit._

and, to a certain extent, during his later years. For some time, he maintained the Whig view that a man's wealth and property should determine his political power. He usually saw his brother's political changes with humor; however, Twain's own changes were equally numerous. His various job experiences doubtless gave him the opportunity to observe and consider divergent political beliefs.

As a young man, he moved first from Whig to Know-Nothing. Then, he developed at least token Confederate sympathies. Finally, he became something of a Republican when he traveled to the Nevada Territory with Orion. Although his early interest in politics was not great in comparison to that of the years from 1876 to 1884, he was demonstrating the development of a later belief that such inconsistency indicated growth. To Twain, that an individual should blindly and stubbornly retain the same political beliefs all of his life was a sign of immaturity, not one of maturity.

In addition to his later political independence, Twain's early years show the beginnings of his life-long concern about political corruption, an issue he became more conscious of when he reported the activities of the Nevada legislature for The Territorial Enterprise of Virginia City. Because of the corruption of elected representatives of the people, Twain was never to trust the American voter again.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS OF THE BOOK WHICH NAMED AN AGE

Fifteen months after his journey to the Nevada Territory in 1861, Mark Twain began reporting for the Virginia City *Enterprise*. During that period, he endured hardships similar to those which had encouraged him to desert after spending only two weeks in the Confederate Army in Missouri. However, in Nevada, he was prospecting unsuccessfully for gold and silver. His title, "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed," could be used to describe his prospecting ventures as aptly as it did his experiences in the Confederate Army.[47]

Twain was extremely discouraged about his lack of success in Nevada, so discouraged, in fact, that pride was the only thing that kept him from returning to Missouri. He had bragged too much about making his fortune in Nevada. Therefore, his determination probably led him to return to that field in which he had had some experience. Because some of his humourous letters had earlier been published in the Virginia

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[47]Henry Nash Smith and Frederick Anderson (eds.), *Mark Twain of the Enterprise*, pp. 4-5.

City *Territorial Enterprise*, the newspaper hired him as local reporter during the summer of 1862. There is evidence that in late September or early October of 1862 Twain began his full-time job as reporter for the *Territorial Enterprise*.[48]

While working for this newspaper, he covered the capitol in Carson City, Nevada. Although he often reported the facts of legislative proceedings in such detail that some of his reports were and are too dull to reprint fully, he sent light-hearted, irresponsible letters for the Sunday paper.[49] As a result of these contributions to the Sunday issue of the *Territorial Enterprise*, the Monday session of the legislature was usually disrupted

> . . . by the complaints of members . . . . They rose to questions of privilege and answered the criticisms of the correspondent with bitterness, customarily describing him with elaborate and uncomplimentary phrases, for lack of a briefer way. To save their time, I presently began to sign the letters, using the Mississippi leadsman's call, "Mark Twain" (two fathoms--twelve feet) for this purpose.[50]

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[49] Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[50] Clemens, *The Autobiography*, p. 114.

Twain's political humor that so greatly disturbed these legislators, although it often had a serious tone, was mainly written to entertain his readers. An example is "The Grand Bull Driver's Convention," a parody of a session of the Nevada legislature.[51] Other reporters in Carson City elected Twain governor of their mock-legislature, the Third House, an indication of their respect for his wit and satire and political understanding.[52]

Perhaps, because of his own youthful confusion about politics and because of the bewildering issues of the period, two major ironies run through Mark Twain's life and writings in the Far West. First, although he had served with the Confederate Army, he either avoided the issues of the Civil War or followed local opinion in Nevada, saying as little as possible about the matter. Second, his observations of government corruption in the Far West provided the information and the fury he later needed to write the book which named an age--*The Gilded Age*; however, he himself was at least slightly guilty of furthering such corruption, as shown below.

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[51] John Q. Reed, "Mark Twain: West Coast Journalist," *The Midwest Quarterly*, I (January, 1960), 147.

[52] Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Mark Twain ridiculed the Carson City Independent in a letter dated February 13, 1864, because, true to its name, this newspaper never took sides on anything. In fact, he observes, the "Independent is a consistent, harmless, non-committal sheet. I never saw a paper of that non-committal name that wasn't."[53] These comments could also describe Twain's own attitude toward the Civil War, since he was no less non-committal than the Independent.

Twain's views on the Civil War are confusing. Early in the 1860's, he considers himself a Southerner; however, soon after his arrival in Nevada, he develops Union attitudes. Most of the time, though, he is interested only in avoiding the issue.[54] When reporting, he gives the impression of taking the Union side; instead, he is actually following the Enterprise policy of editorializing on factions in the Union Party, the majority party in Nevada until after the Civil War.[55]

Even though Civil War news was an important part of all Nevada newspapers, Twain demonstrates no personal interest in any aspect of national politics.[56] On the other hand, his interest in local politics is great, and his writings about local politics are not harmless

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[53]Smith and Anderson (eds.), op. cit., p. 161.

[54]Ibid., p. 19.

[55]Budd, op. cit., p. 8.

[56]Smith and Anderson (eds.), op. cit., p. 17.

and non-committal. He could never refrain from expressing his views on dishonesty in politics, views which ripened into maturity during his days as a reporter in the Far West. In a piece called "The Great Prize Fight," first published in Golden Era, Twain satirizes a campaign for governor of California in which the personalities of the candidates hide the issues.[57] He implies, here, that the superficially likable Governor Nye of the Territory of Nevada had the kind of personality which would get him elected, but which also would obscure his lack of ability. In Twain's opinion, "Governor Nye was an old and seasoned politician from New York--politician, not statesman."[58] Nye did very little in his capacity as governor; actually, he was rarely in Nevada, usually leaving Orion Clemens as acting governor. His purpose for moving to Nevada from New York was to turn the territory into a state and become a United States Senator from the new state.[59] Nye obtained his Senate seat by this rather dishonest method.

While he was reporting for the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise, Twain discovered bribery, the buying and selling of votes, and the giving of jobs

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[57] Reed, op. cit., p. 147.

[58] Clemens, The Autobiography, p. 112.

[59] Ibid., p. 115.

for political favor.[60] In "Concerning Notaries," he ridicules those people who eagerly sought positions as well-paid notaries public from Governor Nye in Nevada.[61] The inefficiency and stupidity of these unnecessarily numerous notaries angered Twain. He discusses in his January 27, 1864, letter to the Enterprise the significance of a bill to reform the position of notary public:

> This is a most important bill, and if passed will secure clearer and more comprehensible records hereafter. It will leave Storey county twelve Notaries in place of the fifteen hundred we have at present, and these twelve will have to be men of solid reputation . . . .[62]

In the fall of 1865, he wrote letters to the Enterprise from San Francisco, attacking, for a change, political corruption in California rather than in Nevada.[63] In "What Have the Police Been Doing?," he discusses the corruption of the San Francisco police, who are ". . . easy and comfortable--always leaning up against a lamp post in the sun."[64] Specific events triggered the rage Twain directed at the police. For example, he had evidently seen groups stoning Chinese

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[60] Budd, op. cit., p. 8.

[61] Reed, op. cit., p. 147.

[62] Smith and Anderson (eds.), op. cit., pp. 143-144.

[63] Reed, op. cit., p. 147.

[64] Quoted in ibid., p. 148.

laundrymen; the police, instead of stopping this persecution, merely winked at the people who were throwing the stones. He saw that the police would not protect honest, hard-working minorities from the less respectable people of the city, because the police were too often corrupt.[65]

Another questionable practice which was distasteful to Twain was the passage of legislative bills that would personally help legislators.[66] The Sierra Seminary Bill was designed to grant twenty-thousand dollars to a private school with only forty students in Carson City.[67] In his letter of February 16, 1864, to the Enterprise, Twain comments on not only the corruption, but also, the stupidity of the members who favored the Sierra Seminary Bill:

> One member would vote $20,000 to the Seminary because he would reap an advantage, in dollars and cents, from the passage of the bill. Inasmuch as these statements come from the gentlemen referred to themselves, they are entitled to full credence. If there could be a merit attached to a wrong motive, I think that merit might be considered to be the small amount of intelligence required to keep from telling about it. But all Legislators are not diplomats.[68]

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[65]Budd, op. cit., p. 16.

[66]Smith and Anderson (eds.), op. cit., p. 165.

[67]Budd, op. cit., p. 11.

[68]Smith and Anderson (eds.), op. cit., pp. 165-166.

He, then, asks sarcastically, "Would it not be well to place the assembly where the press, and through the press the people, could look after it?"[69]

After his experiences in Nevada and California, he concluded that politics and corruption go hand in hand. He had seen corrupt men being rewarded whereas his brother Orion, demonstrating his honesty as secretary to the territorial governor, was not rewarded.[70] This discouragement and disillusionment may have caused Twain, for a time at least, to enjoy some of the spoils he himself could obtain.

The major ironies in Twain's famous story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," lie in the significance of the names given to the dog and the frog. For example, the dog named Andrew Jackson demonstrates the inconsistencies of Jackson as the famous frontiersman. The frog named Dan'l Webster demonstrates by his flip-flops the shifts that were typical of Webster. Therefore, the theme of this satire is the irony that Jackson and Webster were not what they appear to be.[71] Strangely enough, the Mark Twain who reported the bribery, the

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[69] _Ibid._, p. 166.

[70] Philip Sheldon Foner, _Mark Twain: Social Critic_, p. 65.

[71] S. J. Krause, "The Art and Satire of Twain's 'Jumping Frog' Story," _American Quarterly_, XVI (Winter, 1964), 568.

buying and selling of votes, and the giving of jobs for political favor in the Nevada Territory was not what he appeared to be, either. Twain himself received a job as recording secretary for the fair of the Washoe Agricultural, Mining, and Mechanical Association at a three-hundred-dollar salary; he also received seven dollars a day as a legislative reporter.[72]

After going to work for the Territorial Enterprise and becoming its Carson City reporter, Mark Twain was very much impressed by his own importance. In fact, as Budd notes, he considered himself ". . . political head of the family, a position he was never to resign."[73] He even bragged about his influence on the legislature:

> I was there every day in the legislature to distribute compliment and censure with evenly balanced justice and spread the same over half a page of the Enterprise every morning; consequently I was an influence.[74]

Although his financial records indicate that he was receiving little money that was not accounted for, Twain said that he knew how to blackmail mining companies.[75] In his February 11, 1864, report, he boasted that the

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[72]Budd, op. cit., p. 8.

[73]Ibid., p. 7.

[74]Clemens, The Autobiography, p. 114.

[75]Budd, op. cit., p. 8.

legislature would pass bills that he favored:

> While I was absent a moment, yesterday, . . . the House, . . knocked one of my pet bills higher than a kite, . . . I convened the members . . . and deluged them with blasphemy, after which I entered into a solemn compact with them, whereby, in consideration of their re-instating my bill, I was to make an ample apology for all the mean things I had said about them for passing that infamous, unchristian, infernal telegraph bill the other day. I also promised to apologize for all the mean things that other people had published against them for their depraved action aforesaid. They re-instated my pet to-day, . . . I hereby solemnly apologize for their rascally conduct in passing the infamous telegraph bill above mentioned.[76]

Twain's supposed influence on the legislature resulted in confidence that he could get his brother Orion a job when the need arose. In a letter written to his mother and sister on August 19, 1863, he says,

> We shall bud out into a State before many months, which will relieve Orion of his office. If I have influence enough, I mean to get him nominated a candidate for some fat office under the State Government, so that you can come out and live with him. I am a pretty good hand at such things. I was a mighty heavy wire-puller at the last [the second Territorial] Legislature. I passed every bill I worked for, & on a bet, I killed a bill by a three-fourths vote in the House after it had passed the Council unanimously. Oh, I tell you a reporter in the Legislature can swing more votes than any member of the body.[77]

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[76] Smith and Anderson (eds.), op. cit., p. 156.

[77] Quoted in ibid., p. 13.

Perhaps, boasting about his power in a letter sent to his family back home is the natural thing for a young man on his own to do. Therefore, one may excuse some of Twain's comments as mere exaggerations. However, his involvement in events surrounding the defeat of the Nevada Constitution on January 19, 1864, cannot be excused as easily.

At first, Twain's accounts for the _Enterprise_ were humorous, but impersonal. Eventually, however, he became more biting and critical, especially of William M. Stewart, whom he ridicules for giving the same speech again and again and for his insincerity about the miners.[78] Stewart favored rejection of the constitution, probably because of a tax on undeveloped mines. The _Enterprise_, at first, favored the constitution, and so Twain publishes an attack on a group which had broken with the Union Party and was against the constitution. His column was definitely partisan; but, on January 4, 1864, he wrote a letter in which he concluded that, because of certain flaws that it contained, the constitution should not be passed. His change of opinion was evidently caused by the same tax clause of which Stewart disapproved.

On January 27, following the defeat on January 19 of the Nevada Constitution, Twain received a gold watch from Theodore Winters, a major stockholder in the Ophir

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[78] Budd, _op. cit._, p. 9.

Silver Mining Company, and Alexander M. Baldwin, Stewart's partner.[79] Although he had originally been highly critical of William M. Stewart, not only was Twain now quick to change to Stewart's side on the constitutional issue, but he was also glad for the opportunity to become Stewart's private secretary in 1867.[80]

The extent of Twain's involvement in such affairs as the defeat of the Nevada Constitution, the passage of his "pet bills," and the acquisition of a good job for Orion is uncertain. However, as proved above, he did take part in certain practices that were at least on the borderline of the very kind of political corruption that he condemned. Later, in 1867, however, he began trying to detach himself from what he called "government pap," or, in other words, government favors.[81]

After his years as a reporter in the Far West, Twain spent some time abroad, reporting his observations in letters and, later, in books. Upon his return to the United States late in 1867, he became the Washington correspondent for various newspapers.[82] In Washington, he observed political corruption that was similar to that which he had seen in the West.

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[79] _Ibid._, p. 10.

[80] _Loc. cit._

[81] _Ibid._, p. 33.

[82] Justin Kaplan, _Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain_, p. 59.

In addition, the impeachment proceedings brought against Andrew Johnson in 1868 had an important effect on Mark Twain. During the proceedings, he had been sympathetic in his newspaper articles toward Johnson. However, in 1869, at the end of Johnson's administration, he wrote a bitterly humorous piece about Johnson's final hour as President. According to Twain, Johnson had served the United States by protecting perjurers, assassins, the Ku Klux Klan, and by encouraging political corruption, and he notes that Johnson leaves his post carrying much public property.[83] Just as the newspapers to which he sent his work in the late 1860's indicate Twain's increasing Republican Party partisanship, his attack on Johnson, a Democrat all of his life,[84] proved it.[85]

Out of the years between 1861 and 1870 came many of Twain's comments about the kind of politics that he hated. Actually, it was not political parties that he hated; it was, instead, political corruption.[86] He

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[83]*Ibid.*, p. 69.

[84]Andrew Johnson had been a Democrat all of his life; however, he was against secession. As a result of these views and his active political life, he was selected to serve on the Republican ticket with Lincoln.

[85]Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[86]*Ibid.*, p. 37.

considered corruption nonpartisan. He criticizes the corruption in the Congress of the United States without party prejudice. Enraged about the corruption of the 1860's, he set out to inform the people so that they would act. He exposes corruption in Nevada, San Francisco, and Washington, D. C.[87] The attitudes, ideas, and information that he acquired during his early years as a reporter materialize into The Gilded Age. But they had an even more important effect--they shaped his political beliefs.

During the years 1861 to 1870, Twain's faith in humanity died, never to be reborn.[88] The corrupt practices seen in the Nevada legislature seemed to make him more certain of the faults in the national election procedure, more certain of his Whig belief that voting should be restricted to property owners.[89] After his visit to Hawaii, he comments that the Hawaiian king had been smart to restrict voting to people with property.[90]

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[87] Foner, op. cit., p. 67.

[88] Budd, op. cit., p. 12.

[89] Ibid., p. 13.

[90] Ibid., p. 21.

The time which Twain spent as a newspaper reporter marks the beginning of his growing despair with democracy in America. His despair was certainly the result of his observation of corruption in the legislature of Nevada and in the Congress of the United States. It is not difficult to understand how a man of Twain's idealism and intelligence would be discouraged by what he saw taking place among men elected by the people to fulfill positions of high responsibilities. He was not without hope, however. His growing Republican Party partisanship in the late 1860's and in the 1870's was the result of his desire to find a party and a candidate to solve the problems facing America.

CHAPTER III

THE MUGWUMP WHO EVOLVED FROM THE GILDED AGE

To Mark Twain, settling into the Nook Farm community of Hartford, Connecticut, in 1871, meant also settling into local politics, especially Republican Party politics.[91] However, he was basically unconcerned about party politics during his first five years in Hartford, even though he respected U. S. Grant.[92] In general, until the campaign of 1876, Twain, like most educated and wealthy Northerners, maintained at least an interest in the future of the Republican Party.[93] Nook Farm residents, on the other hand, were more than just interested in the Republican Party, and, in 1876, Twain, partially as a result of this environment, became an avid supporter of the party's Presidential nominee, Rutherford B. Hayes.

The entrenchment of the Republican Party in Nook Farm resulted from happenings in 1856, when Joseph Hawley brought to light the community's interest in politics by calling the convention which was to form

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[91] Budd, op. cit., p. 48.

[92] Andrews, op. cit., p. 111.

[93] Budd, op. cit., p. 42.

the Republican Party in Connecticut.[94] It was obvious to Hawley, John Hooker, and others that the Free-Soil Party and the Know-Nothing Party would not be good for Nook Farm's political future. At the 1856 convention in Connecticut, two-hundred men under the leadership of the Nook Farm group met and combined elements of their Whig, Jeffersonian, and Free-Soiler Beliefs into a Republican Party which opposed the Democrats and Know-Nothings.[95]

Joseph Hawley was instrumental in founding the party in Connecticut as well as in disseminating the new party's views. With William Faxon, Hawley started the _Evening Press_ in 1857 for just that purpose.[96] Charles Dudley Warner became an editor of the _Evening Press_ and moved to Nook Farm in Hartford. During the Civil War, the Hartford _Courant_ evolved into a conservative Republican newspaper, and, in 1867, Warner and Hawley bought the _Courant_ and merged it with their _Evening Press_.[97]

Hawley changed from the radical Republican of the early party in Connecticut to a conservative Republican in the years after the Civil War,[98] becoming governor

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[94] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 6.

[95] _Loc. cit._

[96] _Ibid._, pp. 6-7.

[97] _Loc. cit._

[98] _Ibid._, p. 7.

in 1866 and later a congressman and an important senator.[99] The increase in communism in Europe and an inherent suspicion of uneducated leadership caused Hawley and the Hartford group to forsake the radical Republicanism of the late 1850's for more conservative politics.[100] Residents of Nook Farm remained loyal Republicans following the Civil War for two reasons: their intense dislike of the principles of the Democratic Party because it had approved of slavery and because, they believed, it had favored the immigrants, the workingmen, the Irishmen coming to Hartford as factory workers.[101] Because Nook Farm residents believed that the uneducated workingmen to whom the Democratic Party supposedly catered could not develop into adequate political leaders, they had no other choice than to remain loyal to the Republican Party.[102]

Although they continued to be staunch Republicans,[103] following the Civil War, the people of Nook Farm became less interested in national politics and more concerned about local politics and gubernatorial and

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[99] Kaplan, op. cit., p. 140.

[100] Andrews, op. cit., p. 111.

[101] Ibid., p. 110.

[102] Ibid., p. 111.

[103] Kaplan, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

senatorial elections.[104] Because Grant's election in both 1868 and 1872 was fairly certain, Hartford residents could not become very excited about the national campaign. Local elections, however, caused some anxiety, especially a hot battle for governor which the Republican candidate won.

Residents of Nook Farm retained their rather disinterested attitude toward national politics throughout Grant's administrations even though the corruption of those years from 1868 to 1876 should have awakened them. They believed, however, that this corruption was not Grant's fault nor his party's fault, but rather the fault of other dishonest people.[105]

Except for his sincere concern about the corruption which worried neither major party, Mark Twain, although he voted Republican, was, like his Nook Farm friends, disinterested in political campaigns.[106] Even though he respected Grant and was happy about Grant's election, he stayed out of political campaigns until 1876, concentrating, instead, on his satire of the corrupt practices of the Gilded Age.

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[104] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 110.

[105] _Ibid._, p. 111.

[106] Foner, _op. cit._, p. 93.

Before his collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner on The Gilded Age, Twain wrote several pieces of political satire which serve as harbingers of this novel. When he had finally admitted his support of the Republican Party, he began attacking the Democratic Party through his articles for the Buffalo Express.[107] In 1869, however, he found it easy to harass Democrats, but difficult to compliment Republicans, because, in New York, the spoils system had no respect for party lines. Twain was angry with both parties when he parodied a corrupt, mudslinging New York gubernatorial contest.[108]

In "The Facts in the Great Beef Contract," written in 1870, he satirizes the bureaucracy of the government. He shows that a man trying to collect on a contract for beef for the army learns that, because of the red tape, it is impossible to collect the money the government owes him. One official comments,

> We do things by routine here. You have followed the routine and found out what you wanted to know. It is the best way. It is the only way. It is very regular, and very slow, but it is very certain.[109]

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[107] Budd, op. cit., p. 43.

[108] Loc. cit.

[109] Samuel Langhorne Clemens, The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain, p. 45.

At the end of the story, the narrator expresses his discouragement:

> I only know that if a man lives long enough he can trace a thing through the Circumlocution Office of Washington and find out, after much labor and trouble and delay, that which he could have found out on the first day if the business of the Circumlocution Office were as ingeniously systematized as it would be if it were a great private mercantile institution.[110]

In the New York Tribune of September 27, 1871, Twain's "The Revised Catechism" was first published. By the end of October, Boss William M. Tweed and his Tammany Hall Ring, which Twain's satire denounces, was ruined. Although the article specifically deals with Tweed and his friends, it condemns the whole period in which man's goal in life is to get rich dishonestly.[111] The Tammany Ring controlled the courts, grand jury, district attorney, police, and literally every public official from the governor on down.[112] Such corruption, however, was not confined to New York; President Grant's vice-president, private secretary, brother-in-law, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Treasury were all implicated in corrupt practices similar to those

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[110] Loc. cit.

[111] Foner, op. cit., p. 68.

[112] Arthur L. Vogelback, "Mark Twain and the Tammany Ring," PMLA, LXX (March, 1955), 71.

that William M. Tweed used successfully in New York.[113] Therefore, although in "The Revised Catechism," Twain mentions only Tweed and his henchmen, he censures, in reality, a much larger group.

In "The Revised Catechism," Money is God; Tweed is God's prophet; and Tweed's friends are the twelve disciples. Twain parodies the Westminster Shorter Catechism which he had, perhaps, learned as a child to depict a class in modern Moral Philosophy answering questions concerning current standards. The class begins, for example, with the following recitation:

> First class in modern Moral Philosophy stand up and recite:
> What is the chief end of man:
> A. To get rich.
> In what way:
> A. Dishonestly if we can; honestly if we must.
> Who is God, the one only and true:
> A. Money is God. Gold and greenbacks and stocks--father, son, and the ghost of the same--three persons in one: these are the true and only God, mighty and supreme; and William Tweed is his prophet.[114]

By his use of the Biblical catechism, Twain hoped to convey to the public his anxiety about such corruption and to shock the public into genuine concern about it.[115]

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[113] Kaplan, _op. cit._, p. 156.

[114] Vogelback, _op. cit._, pp. 72-73.

[115] _Ibid._, p. 77.

He realizes that the society which had allowed Boss Tweed and his colleagues to exist and prosper should be denounced as well as the criminals themselves.[116] Because it demonstrates his genuine interest for his country's major problems, "The Revised Catechism" shows him as "both citizen and satirist."[117] Foreshadowing *The Gilded Age*, "The Revised Catechism" satirizes the ethics of the period more directly and concisely than the novel.[118]

The Spanish-American War ended a period in America, but the name given to that period as a result of Twain and Warner's novel, *The Gilded Age*, remains.[119] The title represents an important satire on people who imitate those better than they: they are not the real thing; they are gilded.[120] Morison observes, "Well did Mark Twain call this the Gilded Age, for when the gilt wore off one found only base brass; everyone was trying to make a 'fast buck.'"[121]

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[116] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[118] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[119] William M. Gibson, "Mark Twain and Howells: Anti-imperialists," *New England Quarterly*, XX (December, 1947), 470.

[120] Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[121] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People*, p. 732.

Literature of the Gilded Age had a tendency to ignore the existing political corruption, but Twain and Warner's The Gilded Age was to be contemporary.[122] Its criticism of the period is even remarkably applicable today.[123] Lowell and Whitman also noted the decay of the 1870's, but because they were not as involved in current affairs as were Twain and Warner, they and their works were not as significant.[124]

According to the chapters of The Gilded Age ascribed to Twain, he was mainly responsible for the social criticism, the real satire contained in the book.[125] He, of course, was well-qualified to write these chapters. For example, in a letter, he awkwardly describes his firsthand knowledge of Congress and corruption:

> Was reporter in a legislature two sessions and the same in Congress one session, and thus learned to know personally three sample-bodies of the smallest minds and the selfishest souls and the cowardliest hearts that God makes.[126]

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[122]Foner, op. cit., p. 70.

[123]Ibid., p. 71.

[124]Kaplan, op. cit., p. 158.

[125]Foner, op. cit., p. 71.

[126]Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), Mark Twain's Letters, II, 542.

Supplementing his experiences as a reporter was his personal acquaintance with the popular practice of lobbying. In 1870, he had lobbied in Washington, D. C., for either a federal redistricting bill which would apply to his father-in-law's ventures,[127] or a bill involving the Clemens Tennessee land. After his lobbying experiences, Twain wrote to Livy that he had enough information for a book.[128] For one thing, he explains that he has found the prototype for Senator Abner Dilworthy of The Gilded Age in a corrupt politician, Senator Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas.[129]

In The Gilded Age, he shows no partiality, attacking corrupt politicians in general rather than specifically as Democrats or Republicans.[130] He comments in a letter to Orion Clemens in 1875, as follows:

> The present era of incredible rottenness is not Democratic, it is not Republican, it is national. This nation is not reflected in Charles Sumner, but in Henry Ward Beecher, Benjamin Butler, Whitelaw Reid, Wm. M. Tweed. Politics are not going to cure moral ulcers like these, nor the decaying body they fester upon.[131]

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[127]Kaplan, op. cit., p. 12.

[128]Budd, op. cit., p. 50.

[129]Kaplan, op. cit., p. 121.

[130]Foner, op. cit., p. 93.

[131]Quoted in Kaplan, op. cit., p. 158.

To Twain, corruption was everywhere. The small towns as well as the cities were corrupt.[132] Even Twain's beloved Nook Farm was unable to escape the moral decay of the period: Henry Ward Beecher had accepted money and stock for endorsement and favors.[133] In general, therefore, The Gilded Age satirizes the practices of lobbying and bribery common in Washington, as a result of the corrupt Congress which exists because of universal suffrage. Although the events and characters often seem ridiculous and exaggerated, Twain drew most of them from real life, and they were certainly recognizable to many people in the 1870's.

Senator Abner Dilworthy, for example, is a character amazingly close to real-life Senator Pomeroy, also known as "Old Subsidy" Pomeroy. Just as a Senate committee did not censure Pomeroy, the Senate in The Gilded Age refused to censure Dilworthy when he was exposed for one of his attempts at vote bribery.[134] Furthermore, Senator Balloon, who franks his bags home as government documents, is Senator James Nye, former governor of the

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[132] Ibid., p. 166.

[133] Ibid., p. 157.

[134] Budd, op. cit., p. 51.

Nevada Territory.[135] When Laura Hawkins and Senator Dilworthy have a brief conversation in The Gilded Age about the custom of franking, Laura says of Senator Balloon,

> He seemed to be packing the day I was there. His rooms were full of dry-goods boxes, into which his servant was crowding all manner of old clothes and stuff. I suppose he will paint "Pub. Docs." on them and frank them home. That's good economy, isn't it?[136]

Senator Dilworthy replies,

> Yes, yes; but, child, all Congressmen do that. It may not be strictly honest; indeed, it is not unless he had some public documents mixed in with the clothes.[137]

An important characteristic of the period which Twain and Warner satirize in The Gilded Age was that of greed. The desire for the "fast buck" was widespread. In the book, congressmen found it possible to get rich faster than almost any other group in society.

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[135] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[136] Samuel Langhorne Clemens and Charles Dudley Warner, The Gilded Age, II, 42.

[137] Loc. cit.

For example, Colonel Sellers compliments Senator Dilworthy's abilities along this line:

> He's an able man, Dilworthy, and a good man. A man has got to be good to succeed as he has. He's been in Congress a few years, and he must be worth a million.[138]

According to the novel, the people are to blame for the problem of corruption because of their ignorance or their lack of interest in what is going on in their government. Colonel Sellers, however, explains to Washington Hawkins that such corruption is a natural thing:

> . . . in a free country like ours, where any man can run for Congress and anybody can vote for him, you can't expect immortal purity all the time--it ain't in nature. Sixty or eighty or a hundred and fifty people are bound to get in who are not angels in disguise, as young Hicks the correspondent, says; but still it is a very good average; very good, indeed. As long as it averages as well as that, I think we can feel very well satisfied. Even in these days, when people crow so much and the newspapers are so out of patience, there is still a very respectable minority of honest men in Congress.[139]

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[138] Ibid., I, 126.

[139] Ibid., II, 201.

Twain's firm belief that the corruption in government was the result of universal suffrage is expressed again and again in the novel. An explanation of this voting practice in The Gilded Age implies that people are primarily concerned about safeguarding this right to vote, regardless of the consequences, whether they really care about the candidates or not. The democratic process begins in the cities where

> . . . the ward meetings elect delegates to the nominating conventions and instruct them whom to nominate. 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.[140]

In The Gilded Age, Philip Sterling, whose name symbolizes his character, explains sadly that men are no longer elected to Congress because of their qualifications:

> . . . the chances are that a man cannot get into Congress now without resorting to arts and means that should render him unfit to go there; . . . I could not go into politics if I were a lawyer without losing standing somewhat in my profession, and without raising at least a suspicion of my

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[140]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

> intentions and unselfishness: Why, it is . . . commented on as something wonderful if a Congressman votes honestly and unselfishly and refuses to take advantage of his position and steal from the government.[141]

Philip comments that he does not know how reform can be carried out, because the people seem satisfied with the government as it is:

> I've seen a perfectly capable, honest man, time and again, run against an illiterate trickster, and get beaten. I suppose if the people wanted decent members of Congress they would elect them.[142]

Critics do not agree on whether or not Twain and Warner's The Gilded Age communicates its authors' belief that reform in the democratic system is possible and practical or that the system is doomed to fail. Kaplan thinks that the topic of the novel is "democracy gone off the tracks,"[143] and that the collaborators had a "skeptical outlook on American democracy."[144] He believes that The Gilded Age shows Twain's contempt for American society, especially government in 1870's. According to Kaplan, the time Twain spent in England further emphasized for Twain the flaws in American society,

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[141]Ibid., p. 193.

[142]Ibid., p. 194.

[143]Kaplan, op. cit., p. 162.

[144]Ibid., p. 160.

because

> he saw about him stability, government by a responsible elite, the acceptance of a gentleman's code. These were painful contrasts with chicanery and cynicism, the demoralized civil service, the abuse of universal suffrage and legislative power, and all the excesses and failures of American society in the 1870's . . . .[145]

Andrews agrees with Kaplan in thinking that The Gilded Age shows the conviction of both authors that democracy in the 1870's had failed and their belief that universal suffrage invariably resulted in government corruption.[146] On the other hand, Budd contends that both Twain and Warner believed in the democratic way of life and only wanted to change manners and morals.[147] Twain himself often found it difficult to decide how he really felt about democracy. He reproached it bitterly for its sins. Even when he was so bitter, however, he seemed like a stern father scolding his son. He was, of course, angry, but only because his son had upset him and because he cared so much for his son.

There are ironies in Twain's attitudes during the Gilded Age just as there were ironies in his attitudes toward the corruption he had observed in the West. He

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[145] Ibid., p. 154.

[146] Andrews, op. cit., p. 184.

[147] Budd, op. cit., p. 50.

hated the worship of the almighty dollar; yet, he succumbed to this worship himself. Perhaps he hated materialism so intensely because of his own weakness for wealth. Although he disassociated himself from his family's Tennessee land, he always seemed to be involved in some "get-rich-quick" scheme.[148] He deplored the legislator who accepted a bribe, but he could not see the sin of the rich man who offered it. He seemed to think that the legislator went looking for the bribe. Ignoring their corruption, he respected and admired rich people, apparently convincing himself that wealth was a sign of virtue.[149] He considered the lower class of people to be the ignorant electorate responsible for universal corruption; yet, he respected the upper class that often became wealthy corruptly and passed its wealth on in bribes.

Twain's attitudes on suffrage did change, however, After his trip to Hawaii in the mid 1860's, he favored voting rights only for those who owned property. After his trip to England in the late 1860's, he approved the British system of voting rights only for taxpayers. However, when he went to Washington and saw the corruption resulting from the wealthy who were bribing members of Congress, he decided that suffrage should be increased,

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[148] Kaplan, op. cit., p. 159.

[149] Budd, op. cit., p. 127.

not decreased.[150] He believed that "In any crisis of a great and dangerous sort the common herd is not privately anxious about the rights and wrongs of the matter, it is only anxious to be on the winning side."[151] Therefore, he proposed a change in the suffrage laws to solve the problem of corruption in government. He offers his solution in an article for the Atlantic, entitled "The Curious Republic of Gondour." According to his plan, each individual would have at least one vote; a person of education would have more votes as would a person of wealth. Thus, the wealthy and educated could outvote the more numerous common people.[152]

Evidently, Mark Twain believed in women's suffrage, thinking that women's influence would reduce corruption and improve the quality of elected officials.[153] In "The Temperance Crusade and Woman's Rights," written in 1873, he expresses the belief that there is no sense in not allowing educated women to vote ". . . while every ignorant whisky-drinking foreign-born savage in the land may hold office, help to make the laws, degrade the dignity of the former and break the latter . . . ."[154]

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[150]Foner, op. cit., p. 87.

[151]Quoted in Svend Petersen (ed.), Mark Twain and the Government, p. 16.

[152]Andrews, op. cit., p. 112.

[153]Ibid., p. 142.

[154]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, p. 666.

Although he had discussed his disillusionment with American democracy with numerous people, Twain became involved in the campaign of 1876 more enthusiastically than in any previous election. In that year, the Tilden-Hayes contest brought him and his Nook Farm friends to life, thus helping to renew that interest in national politics that had lain dormant for many years.

Because many people were against President Grant and had demonstrated their opposition to him by electing a Democratic Congress in 1874, a Republican victory in 1876 was doubtful; therefore, a strong Presidential nominee was needed to improve the party's position, but the nomination of Hayes made such an improvement uncertain.[155] By the election year of 1876, Twain's party preference was not well known. In fact, he was asked by Hartford Democrats to speak at a Tilden Club gathering.[156] When he wrote to Howells on August 9, Twain mentions that he has been asked to speak at the raising of the Tilden and Hendricks flag. Since he could not, of course, speak at such a gathering, he advised them in a letter "not to raise [the flag] ."[157]

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[155]Andrews, op. cit., p. 112.

[156]Foner, op. cit., p. 93.

[157]Smith and Gibson (eds.), op. cit., I, 143.

Rutherford B. Hayes, Mrs. Howells's cousin, was the candidate whom Howells favored. He was, in fact, to write the campaign biography for Hayes.[158] In an August 5, 1876, letter to Twain, Howells comments that Mrs. Howells ". . . thinks that anyone who votes for Tilden will go to the Bad Place."[159] Twain replies that the whole nation ". . . will go pretty straight to Mrs. Howells's bad place" if Tilden wins.[160]

In 1876, for the first time Twain really participates in a party's campaign for its Presidential nominee. His reasons, however, are uncertain. Perhaps, he sincerely felt that Hayes could right the wrongs which existed. Or, perhaps, he could not deny the Republican influence of his Nook Farm environment. In any case, it is interesting and important that his "Letter to the Knights of St. Patrick" be considered, because it could confirm his honest belief in Hayes as a possible St. Patrick, or it could foreshadow Twain's own fall into party politics. The first paragraph of this letter describes St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland and his decision to rid the country of its corruption from

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[158] Ibid., p. 142.

[159] Loc. cit.

[160] Ibid., p. 143.

the president on down. For example, St. Patrick ". . . found that the secretary of war had been so unbecomingly economical as to have laid up $12,000 a year out of a salary of $8,000, and he killed him."[161] St. Patrick also

> . . . discovered that the congress which pretended to prodigious virtue was very anxious to investigate an ambassador who had dishonored the country abroad, but was equally anxious to prevent the appointment of any spotless man to a similar post; that this congress had no God but party; no system of morals but party policy; no vision but a bat's vision, and no reason or excuse for existing anyhow. Therefore he massacred that congress to the last man.[162]

In conclusion, Twain says in the "Letter to the Knights of St. Patrick,"

> St. Patrick had no politics; his sympathies lay with the right--that was politics enough. When he came across a reptile, he forgot to inquire whether he was a democrat or a republican, but simply exalted his staff and "let him have it." . . . I wish we had him here to trim us up . . . . His staff, which was the symbol of real, not sham reform, is idle. However, we still have with us the symbol of Truth--George Washington's little hatchet--for I know where they've buried it.[163]

Perhaps, Twain believed that Rutherford B. Hayes could dig up George Washington's buried hatchet, because, for the first time, Twain was really interested in a political campaign, probably because of Hayes's acceptance letter in which he said he favored civil service reform

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[161] Leonard C. Lewin (ed.), A Treasury of American Political Humor, p. 178.

[162] Ibid., p. 179.

[163] Loc. cit.

and prosecution of corrupt officials.[164] In addition, he said that he would accept only one term, so that he would not be tempted to please people while in office in order to insure himself another term.[165] Twain remarks that he does not care what party Hayes belongs to, but cares only about the candidate's interest in abolishing corruption.[166]

In his August 20 letter to Twain, Howells suggests that Twain make public his support of Hayes, adding that no one in the United States could aid Hayes as much as could Twain.[167] Certainly flattered by Howells's comments, Twain replies on August 23 that he wants in some way to show his support of Hayes. However, he makes it clear that he does not want to write or say anything until just the right time and until what he would say of Hayes was worded perfectly, because "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."[168]

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[164] Foner, op. cit., p. 93.

[165] Smith and Gibson (eds.), op. cit., I, 145.

[166] Foner, op. cit., p. 93.

[167] Smith and Gibson (eds.), op. cit., I, 145-146.

[168] Ibid., p. 146.

Eventually, he did demonstrate his support of Hayes in 1876, leading a Hartford rally at which he spoke on civil service reform and encouraged all writers to help secure the election of Hayes.[169] As a campaign advertisement, he suggested a book the size of a stamp, named _What Mr. Tilden Has Done for His Country_, to be pasted on a large book named _What Mr. Tilden Has Done for Himself_.[170] The enthusiasm which Twain demonstrated in the campaign for Hayes prompted Howells to write to his father on November 26, 1876, "[Twain is] the most comfortable Republican I have met in a long while; hereabouts, you know, they are a very lukewarm brotherhood."[171]

Perhaps, because he wanted so much to believe that things could and would get better, Twain campaigned vigorously for Hayes in 1876. Hayes's acceptance letter also indicates that he stood for the things that Mark Twain was most concerned about. Many years later, however, Twain attributed his fervor to his youth:

> I was an ardent Hayes man but that was natural, for I was pretty young at the time. I have since convinced myself that the political opinions of a nation are of next to no value, in any case, but that what little rag of value they

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[169] Foner, _op. cit._, p. 94.

[170] Budd, _op. cit._, p. 65.

[171] Smith and Gibson (eds.), _op. cit._, I, 163.

> possess is to be found among the old, rather than among the young. I was excited and inflamed as was the rest of the voting world . . . .[172]

In 1907, Twain commented that voters in the United States in 1876 ". . . were excited away up to the election limit, for that vast political conflagration was blazing at white heat . . . ."[173] The people of Nook Farm were no exception, becoming more nervous and tense as election day neared. On that day, all the men went faithfully to the polls to vote.[174]

One man in Hartford, Connecticut, was not so excited, however. Bret Harte spent several days during the 1876 election with Mark Twain in Nook Farm.[175] Twain, surprised at Harte's calm, said that Harte was ". . . doubtless the only serene and tranquil voter in the United States . . . ."[176] When he learned that Harte did not intend to vote, Twain was even more shocked. Harte, however, had quite an interesting explanation for not voting. By both Hayes and Tilden, he had been promised a consulate.[177] Therefore, he did not care

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[172]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, p. 287.

[173]Loc. cit.

[174]Andrews, op. cit., p. 112.

[175]Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, pp. 286-287.

[176]Loc. cit.

[177]Ibid., p. 287.

who won the election. In addition, Harte feared that if he voted for one candidate, the other would find out and refuse him the consulate.[178] In 1907, Twain said that Harte's situation in 1876

> . . . was a curious satire upon our political system: Why should a president care how an impending consul had voted? Consulships are not political offices; naturally and properly a consul's qualifications should begin and end with fitness for the post; and in an entirely sane political system the question of a man's political complexion could have nothing to do with the matter. However, the man who was defeated by the nation was placed in the presidential chair and the man without a country got his consulship.[179]

News of Tilden's victory arrived the day after the election.[180] Twain's reaction to it is best described in a poem which he telegraphed to William Dean Howells: "I love to steal a while away / From every cumbering care / And while returns come in today / Lift up my voice & swear."[181] All of the Nook Farm residents were disgusted by Tilden's victory, but they consoled themselves by rationalizing that the Republican Party needed just such a defeat. Twain's close friend, the Reverend Joseph Twichell, wrote a biting letter to the Hartford Courant about "the better element" being "outvoted by the worse." The letter, published November 9,

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[178] Ibid., p. 223.

[179] Loc. cit.

[180] Andrews, op. cit., p. 113.

[181] Smith and Gibson (eds.), op. cit., I, 162.

1876, was one that Twichell, however, immediately regretted.[182] Soon, however, residents of Nook Farm received the news that the election count was doubtful. They anxiously waited through counts and recounts. When Hayes was peacefully installed as President in March, 1877, they were so thankful that they ignored the fraudulent vote counts.[183]

Twain telegraphed Howells the following message when he first heard that the election had turned in Hayes's favor: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow praise him all creatures here below praise him above ye heavenly host praise Father Son & Holy Ghost, The congregation will rise & sing."[184] By the end of February, 1877, when Hayes's election was almost certain, Twain wrote Howells, expressing his jubilation.[185] In his later years, however, Twain changed his mind about the outcome of the 1876 election, calling it

> . . . one of the Republican party's most cold-blooded swindles of the American people, the stealing of the presidential chair from Mr. Tilden, who had been elected, and the conferring of it upon Mr. Hayes, who had been defeated.[186]

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[182] Andrews, op. cit., p. 113.

[183] Loc. cit.

[184] Smith and Gibson (eds.), op. cit., I, 163.

[185] Ibid., p. 172.

[186] Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, p. 287.

Twain, Warner, and Twichell kept abreast of national politics during Hayes's administration, "Twichell in faith, Warner in anxious conservatism, and Mark in transition toward independence."[187] The early months of the new administration encouraged Twain. He wrote to Howells, "It's been a long time since we've had anybody to feel proud of and have confidence in. I mean to take my fill now while the meat's hot and the appetite ravenous."[188]

It was not long, however, before things began to go wrong. Miners and railroad workers went on strike. There were riots in several major cities. These events brought Twain's dislike of democracy to the surface again, and he attacked democracy, suffrage, and the jury system.[189]

In addition to the conflicts over strikes, changes were occurring in the country, changes that troubled Twain because he did not understand them. Immigration added five and a quarter million people to the population of fifty million between 1880 and 1889.[190] Organized labor was increasing. Even more frightening was the

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[187] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 114.

[188] Smith and Gibson (eds.), _op. cit._, I, 187.

[189] Kaplan, _op. cit._, p. 205.

[190] _Ibid._, p. 214.

rumor that communists were marching in Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis, and that cities were preparing to stop a rebellion.[191] Twain feared that they would overthrow "the asinine government" of this "leatherheaded Republic."[192] He implied that he would not mind the overthrow of the government if it were not for the fact that he and Livy would lose their money.[193]

The railroad strike in 1877 caused him to change his snobbish attitude toward universal suffrage to a skeptical attitude toward capitalism in general. Because one-hundred thousand men struck against the railroad industry's fourth ten-per-cent wage cut in seven years, Twain was forced to re-examine his earlier suffrage beliefs. Sympathy for the plight of these people overruled his idea that their voice at the polls should be restricted.[194]

Twain was probably the only member of the Nook Farm community who eventually sympathized with the labor movement. Twichell, on the other hand, sympathized with the poor and thought it important to help them, but did not see the relationship of his feelings to his

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[191] _Loc. cit._

[192] Quoted in _loc. cit._

[193] _Loc. cit._

[194] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 114.

political beliefs.[195] Because of his sympathy for the workingman, Twain's Republicanism cooled, and he moved in the direction of the political independence of his later years.[196] The workingman was the underdog whom he had always seemed to favor even though he had been skeptical of universal suffrage.

In 1880, however, Twain once more expressed his Republican Party affiliation because the party nominated Garfield. Twain, Nook Farm, and all of Hartford, for that matter, were happy about Garfield's nomination in 1880.[197] Even though he was becoming more liberal, he campaigned vigorously for Garfield, addressing a local rally, welcoming U. S. Grant, and helping Grant to persuade the people to elect a Republican President in 1880.[198]

On October 26, 1880, Twain spoke at a Hartford rally for the election of James A. Garfield. This was to be Twain's last election speech as a Republican.[199] His speech was humorous, using irony to describe the evils which would result from the tariff reduction favored by

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[195] _Ibid._, p. 132.

[196] _Ibid._, p. 114.

[197] _Loc. cit._

[198] _Loc. cit._

[199] Foner, _op. cit._, p. 94.

the Democrats. For example, he said that architecture would improve because of the attractive poorhouses which would be everywhere. He said that a tenth of the population would be housed in these poorhouses.[200] Twain's candidate was elected in 1880, but, shortly thereafter, he was shot and months later, died. Garfield's death shocked and saddened Twain and the residents of Nook Farm.[201]

Even before 1876, Twain had favored the side of the Republican Party that was concerned about declining party idealism and party machines.[202] With the nomination of James G. Blaine in 1884, he was convinced that this idealism had disappeared. Although the Republican conventions of 1876 and 1880 would not nominate Blaine, the convention of 1884 nominated him on the first ballot.[203] Immediately after Blaine's nomination, Twain said that he would not vote for him.[204] Blaine had been investigated by a Congressional Committee while he was Speaker

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[200] Smith and Gibson (eds.), _op. cit._, II, 871.

[201] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 114.

[202] Budd, _op. cit._, p. 107.

[203] Foner, _op. cit._, p. 95.

[204] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 114.

of the House in 1869 for his involvement in the Crédit Mobilier railroad scandal. He had arranged a land grant for a railroad, and, as a reward, was allowed to sell railroad stocks at a large commission.[205]

In an article published in the Kansas City _Journal_ on June 15, 1876, Twain had made fun of those who felt that what Blaine had done should not affect his candidacy for President. Twain announced in the article that he was going to run for President. Since the ideal candidate should have all of his evil acts exposed so that the opposition could not expose them, Twain went on to list his crimes. For example, he buried his dead aunt under his grapevine because the vine needed fertilizing.[206]

Because he could not support Blaine, Twain became associated with the reform Republicans, under the leadership of Carl Schurz, who helped to get Grover Cleveland elected in 1884.[207] This group of men, called Mugwumps, favored economy in government, civil service reform, tariff reduction (four years earlier, Twain had

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[205]Foner, _op. cit._, p. 114.

[206]_Ibid._, p. 95.

[207]Jerry Allen, _Adventures of Mark Twain_, p. 241.

satirized the tariff reduction favored by the Democrats), the gold standard, and honesty in politics.[208] Because the Mugwumps considered themselves superior to other voters, they believed their duty was to seek reforms.[209]

In 1876 and 1880, Twain had spoken at large Republican rallies in Hartford. In 1884, however, he spoke as a Mugwump to a large Hartford rally. He attacked party loyalty and called for the defeat of Republican Blaine and the election of Democrat Cleveland.[210] The notes that Twain made for _A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court_ indicate that he was not being disloyal to the Republican Party when he voted for Cleveland; instead, he was being loyal to himself. He wrote:

> Loyalty is a word which has worked vast harm for it has been made to trick men into being "loyal" to a thousand iniquities . . . . The first thing I want to teach is _disloyalty_, till they get used to discussing that word _loyalty_ as representing a virtue. This will beget--independence which is loyalty to one's best self and principles, and this is often disloyalty to the general idols and fetishes.[211]

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[208] Gerald W. McFarland, "New York Mugwumps of 1884: A Profile," _Political Science Quarterly_, LXXVIII (March, 1963), 40.

[209] _Ibid_., p. 43.

[210] Foner, _op. cit_., p. 94.

[211] Quoted in Allen, _op. cit_., p. 241.

Twain did not want to join the Democratic Party in 1884; he did not become a Democrat. He tried to remain Republican, hoping to influence that party by petitioning it and staying away from the polls.[212] Even though he respected Cleveland for refusing to accept the support of Tammany Hall on their terms, his vote for Cleveland was a result of his dislike of Blaine. He worked until the last moment to put an independent candidate in the race.[213]

Nook Farm residents were evidently upset by Blaine's nomination, since it left them with a very unpleasant decision to make. Neither candidate satisfied them. They had to decide whether to vote for Cleveland, a Democrat with a mistress, or for Blaine, a Republican known for his dishonesty. Most of the strong Republicans voted for Blaine and criticized those who did not, but they did not formally disavow the dissenters.[214] This election showed that Hartford residents were more opposed to sexual sin than to political corruption.

Surprisingly, the loyal Republicans of Nook Farm were not very upset about Cleveland's election. In spite of the dissention over the candidates, the election controversy had been a rather calm one, and it ended quickly after the election. After 1884, Nook Farm

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[212]Budd, op. cit., p. 107.

[213]Foner, op. cit., p. 96.

[214]Andrews, op. cit., p. 115.

and Hartford were conservative, but, as it had been thirty years before, Nook Farm again was the origin of a slowly developing liberalism.[215]

In 1876, Twain had contrasted the political tolerance of Nook Farm with the lack of tolerance in the West; the election of 1884 confirmed his opinion of Nook Farm. He wrote to a St. Louis friend in 1876:

> I think I comprehend the position there--perfect freedom to vote just as you choose provided you choose to vote as other people think--social ostracism, otherwise . . . Fortunately a good deal of experience of men enabled me to choose my residence wisely. I live in the freest corner of the country. There are no social disabilities between me and my Democratic personal friends. We break the bread and eat the salt of hospitality freely together and never dream of such a thing as offering impertinent interference in each other's political opinions.[216]

Although his Nook Farm environment had evidently encouraged Twain to vote for Republican candidates in previous elections, its liberal climate was one which allowed Twain's political independence to exist and grow.

Twain and his friends, Reverend Joe Twichell and Reverend Francis Goodwin, Mugwumps, were the only ones in Hartford who did not vote for Blaine. Ballots were public, and, as a result, Twain and his friends were

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[215] Ibid., p. 116.

[216] Quoted in ibid., p. 117.

quickly censured by the town.[217] Twain attacked his critics in a speech, saying that they taught that freedom of thought was to think as the party thinks.[218] The Nook Farm group, however, had not attempted to silence or ostracize them for speaking their minds in 1884.[219]

Goodwin and Twain were not hurt by Hartford's censure of them, Goodwin because he was rich, and Twain because he earned his living elsewhere. Twichell, however, almost lost his pulpit because of it, but was saved by a church member who convinced the other members that losing Twichell, "their popular, population-drawing preacher" would have a bad effect on Hartford's real estate.[220] Twenty-two years later, Twain wrote that Twichell ". . . never made any political mistakes since."[221]

Twain's closest friend, William Dean Howells, remained faithful to the Republican Party, supporting Grant, Hayes, Garfield, and Blaine, even though he often

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[217] Allen, _op. cit._, p. 117.

[218] Foner, _op. cit._, p. 96.

[219] Andrews, _op. cit._, p. 117.

[220] Allen, _op. cit._, p. 241.

[221] Quoted in _loc. cit._

criticized those who persisted in supporting the wrong side.[222] Consequently, their political disagreement in 1884 was a test of the Twain-Howells relationship, but they managed to disagree good-humoredly without ruining their friendship.[223] Twain begged Howells not to vote for Blaine even if Howells could not vote for Cleveland because of what Twain considered an unreasonable prejudice. He expressed these views to Howells in a letter dated August 31, 1884:

> To see grown men, apparently in their right mind, seriously arguing against a bachelor's fitness for President because he has had private intercourse with a consenting widow! Those grown men know what the bachelor's other alternative was--& tacitly they seem to prefer that to the widow. Isn't human nature the most consumate sham & lie that was ever invented? Isn't man a creature to be ashamed of in pretty much all his aspects? Is he really fit for anything but to be stood up on the street corner as a convenience for dogs?[224]

In the same letter, Twain complained that he did not despise Blaine as much as Hawley, Clark, and Warner did; yet, all were supporting Blaine rather than Cleveland.[225] Howells announced to Twain in his

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[222]Louis J. Budd, "Howells, the Atlantic Monthly, and Republicanism," American Literature, XXIV (May, 1952), 147.

[223]Smith and Gibson (eds.), op. cit., II, 500.

[224]Ibid., p. 501.

[225]Loc. cit.

letter of September 4 that he, too, would support Blaine and that he did not think Blaine was guilty of all he had been accused of. Although he considered Cleveland no worse than many other men, Howells detested the double standard that held that a woman must suffer for such behavior.[226] Howells wanted Cleveland to be destroyed by his private life. In his opinion, Cleveland's supporters and their wives would visit Cleveland at the White House if he were elected, but not if he were to marry his mistress and "make her an honest woman." "Besides," Howells added, "I don't like his hangman face. It looks dull and brutal."[227]

In the next few letters which passed between Howells and Twain, there is no mention of campaigns or candidates. The subject of their disagreement was dropped. They seemed to know when their argument was getting the best of them, and rather than endanger their friendship, they enforced their tacit agreement to let their tempers cool.

On September 17, however, Twain brought up the subject again, cautioning Howells to restrain from voting if he were merely being loyal to the Republican Party.

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[226] _Ibid._, p. 503.

[227] _Loc. cit._

He told Howells that the masses, not the political parties, make the nation. In Twain's opinion, a man should first consider his own honor. Twain ended his letter by telling Howells not to be offended; "I am not so concerned about the rest of the nation, but--well good-bye."[228]

After Cleveland's election, Twain was probably shocked to see the country operating under a Democratic President.[229] Never sorry he broke from the Republican Party in 1884, he felt completely free for the first time to follow his own beliefs.[230] The election of 1884 established his political independence, one that gave him a great peace of mind.[231] Cleveland's election resulted in Twain's new faith in the electorate; he now believed that common, ordinary men, left alone, could do the right thing and put America before party loyalty.[232]

After the election of 1884, Twain was not a Democrat, but a Mugwump, believing that the Mugwump was the true patriot. To Twain, the Mugwump ancestors were

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[228] Ibid., p. 508.

[229] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 109.

[230] Ibid., p. 108.

[231] Andrews, op. cit., p. 116.

[232] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 108.

Washington, Garrison, Galileo, Luther, and Christ.[233] By becoming a Mugwump, Twain hoped to work with true patriots seeking to cleanse the country of evils and to strive for laissez-faire.[234]

Following the Blaine-Cleveland campaign of 1884, he read a paper entitled "Consistency" to the Hartford Monday Evening Club.[235] In this paper, he attacked consistency and those people who condemn others for inconsistency because they believe "inconsistency is a treason and matter for scorn."[236] In Twain's opinion, true consistency is change:

> What is the most rigorous law of our being? Growth. No smallest atom of our moral, mental, or physical structure can stand still a year . . . . In other words, we change--and must change, constantly, and keep on changing as long as we live. What, then, is the true Gospel of consistency? Change. Who is the really consistent man? The man who changes. Since change is the law of his being, he cannot be consistent if he stick in a rut.[237]

He argued that loyalty to oneself is more important and more consistent than a meaningless loyalty to a

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[233] Foner, op. cit., p. 96.

[234] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 110.

[235] Clemens, The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, p. 577.

[236] Loc. cit.

[237] Loc. cit.

political party. Such ridiculous devotion to a party is, according to Mark Twain, dangerous because it

> . . . plays directly into the hands of politicians of the baser sort--and doubtless for that it was borrowed--or stolen--from the monarchial system. It enables them to foist upon the country officials whom no self-respecting man would vote for, if he could but come to understand that loyalty to himself in his first and highest duty, not loyalty to any party name. The wire workers, convention packers, know they are not obliged to put up the fittest man for the office, for they know that the docile party will vote for any forked thing they put up, even though it do [sic] not even strictly resemble a man.[238]

For the rest of his life, Twain continued to battle for the political independence that he had attained for himself in 1884. In 1901, he wrote in his notebook,

> There are bigots who can accept nothing which their party-opposites approve. If you could work the multiplication table into a democratic platform the Republicans w [oul] d vote it down at the election.[239]

The election of 1884 was a turning point in Mark Twain's political beliefs. His main political and social concern up to this time had been that of corruption. His various suffrage proposals, whether he actually took them seriously or not, were aimed at eliminating corruption. When his own party nominated a man whose corrupt activities were well known, Twain was enraged.

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[238] _Ibid._, p. 580.

[239] Quoted in Foner, _op. cit._, p. 97.

Although his friends implored him to consider party loyalty above all else, he could not allow a political party to tell him how to vote. For his own peace of mind, he had to be true to himself. The events of the 1884 campaign undoubtedly influenced the development of Twain's later "third party" theory, a theory which he hoped, if it were put into practice, would rid the country of its absurd party loyalty and the resulting corruption.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISLOYAL PATRIOT

The Mark Twain of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has often been characterized as an old man overwhelmed by despair about his personal life, his country, and, in general, the "damned human race." Certainly, his personal life gave him good reason to despair: his publishing firm failed; his and Livy's money was lost in the failure of the Paige typesetting machine; his health deteriorated; he was bankrupt; his oldest daughter died; his youngest daughter developed epilepsy and died; and his wife became more and more an invalid and finally died.[240] These events had to have some effect upon his political attitudes, but the nature and extent of this effect is open to question.

Andrews believes that Twain's despair was so overpowering that he was convinced that the "Great Republic was rotten to the heart."[241] In Andrews's opinion, Twain acted entirely on impulse; yet, Andrews adds that

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[240]Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, xix.

[241]Quoted in Andrews, op. cit., p. 117.

there is no "simple explanation" for Twain's actions.[242] Justin Kaplan concludes that Twain was pessimistic about democracy, but that his pessimism resulted in a declaration for democracy. According to Kaplan, Twain's

> . . . pessimism, as it became a powerful leveling principle which obliterated the difference between high and low, educated and ignorant, honest and corrupt, became also, by the way of paradox, a somber and cautious affirmation of democracy itself.[243]

Budd contends that, in the later years, Twain despaired only if he became completely bewildered by events.[244] In Budd's opinion, Twain's politics were thoroughly tied to his other interests[245] and ". . . followed a coherent pattern that made solid sense to most of his contemporaries."[246] Budd seems to believe that Twain often appeared to be impulsive, observing that "Sometimes the speed with which he reacted to the news made him reverse his stand as dazzlingly as a syndicated columnist of today." However, he considers Twain's changes to be the results of events, not of mere impulse.[247] Geismar basically agrees with Budd,

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[242] Ibid., p. 237.

[243] Kaplan, op. cit., p. 170.

[244] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 188.

[245] Ibid., vi.

[246] Ibid., v.

[247] Ibid., p. 212.

believing that the work of Twain's later years was not the result of the deterioration of a once-great author, but merely the result of the combination of a man of Twain's character and the time in which he lived. Geismar observes that Twain's personal life did affect Twain, because it ". . . was part of the slow death of the American dream he had followed for so long."[248] However, Geismar adds, "Personal misfortune was not the cause of Twain's political and social radicalism, but a realm of experience which coexisted with it and gave it tragic depth."[249]

Although Twain was undoubtedly angry about various happenings in the United States and this anger, in turn, was made more depressing by his general despair, he did occasionally write about the problems which the country faced, those which he hoped could eventually be solved. He had not given up on democracy even at the time of his death. He wrote shortly before his death, "If I were to start over again I would be a Reformer."[250] He certainly had bouts with pessimism, but not for long,

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[248] Maxwell Geismar, "Mark Twain on U. S. Imperialism, Racism and Other Enduring Characteristics of the Republic," Ramparts, VI (May, 1968), 66.

[249] Loc. cit.

[250] Quoted in Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 209.

or he could not have been the reformer he was and, at the same time, a true pessimist. Helen Keller once asked Twain to participate in a gathering to help the blind become independent. When he agreed, she wrote him with surprising perception, "You once told me you were a pessimist . . . . You are an optimist. If you were not you would not preside at this meeting."[251] The man who wrote A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, published in 1889, was not despairing over the possibilities of democracy. He saw the need for reform, but he also saw the advantages of democracy over monarchy.

Twain's feeling toward the British system changed perceptibly during the 1870's and 1880's. At one time, he wrote that he wanted A Connecticut Yankee to be more of a contrast than a satire, emphasizing that he did not want to seem critical of the Middle Ages or the nineteenth century in the book. His changing feelings about the British began in 1879 and reached a peak in 1888 and 1889.[252] His notebook entries between April, 1888, and December, 1889, best describe his new attitude:

> Better the Almighty Dollar than a tub of rancid guts, labeled king, noble & so on.

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[251]Quoted in ibid., p. 202.

[252]John B. Hoben, "Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee: a Genetic Study," American Literature, XVIII (November, 1946), 202.

> Monarchial govt is a system invented to secure the comfort, safety & prosperity of the few; republican govt is a system invented to secure the liberty, comfort, safety & prosperity of the many.[253]

The reaction of Twain's British publishers to *A Connecticut Yankee* shows that his criticism of monarchy was obvious. His publishers wanted an expurgated version of the book, but Twain refused to allow them to publish such an edition, telling them that the book was written for England. Englishmen had been criticizing America, telling America what was wrong with it; and, now, he was doing the same thing for England. Finally, the book was published exactly as it was written.[254]

In *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain's purpose was to defend democracy against critics of the United States, particularly Matthew Arnold.[255] He complimented the rich, busy, creative United States as a country that exemplified what Great Britain was not.[256] He showed that the attainments of a civilization are the result of the works of common men and that common men are the ones who can improve a civilization.[257]

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[253] Quoted in Foner, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[254] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[255] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[256] Budd, *Mark Twain: Social Philosopher*, p. 118.

[257] Foner, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

As a result of a number of interests, Mark Twain wrote A Connecticut Yankee. Although one of his main reasons for writing it was his desire to defend America against foreign critics, he had always studied history and was convinced that the Middle Ages was a period of ignorance and cruelty. In addition, he was becoming increasingly interested in and concerned about the mass of common people that he had earlier believed could not be trusted.[258]

More than a decade before the publication of A Connecticut Yankee, Twain had written numerous pieces favoring the abolishment of universal suffrage. This novel, however, shows that he considered the universal suffrage he had once despised now to be the basis of democracy.[259] The Yankee concludes that "Men write many fine and plausible arguments in support of monarchy, but the fact remains that where every man in a state has a vote, brutal laws are impossible."[260]

Twain believed that the people could develop the system of government they preferred if they would let their wishes be known.[261] If the Yankee had enough

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[258] Andrews, op. cit., p. 185.

[259] Foner, op. cit., p. 110.

[260] Samuel Langhorne Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, p. 237.

[261] Foner, op. cit., p. 110.

people who could see the advantages of a civilization in which every man had a vote, he ". . . would make a strike for the welfare of this country," hoping to prove he was ". . . its loyalest citizen by making a wholesome change in its system of government."[262] The Yankee believes in ". . . loyalty to one's country, not to its institutions or its office-holders" because ". . . institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing, and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to be comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease, and death."[263] As a result, he concludes that loyalty to such rags ". . . is a loyalty of unreason, it is pure animal; it belongs to monarchy, was invented by monarchy; let monarchy keep it."[264]

The Yankee believes in another kind of loyalty. Because the Constitution of Connecticut says that

> . . . all political power is inherent in the people, . . . and that they have _at all times_ an undeniable and indefeasible right to _alter their form of government_ in such a manner as they may think expedient,

the Yankee contends that

> . . . 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

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[262]Clemens, _A Connecticut Yankee_, p. 107.

[263]_Loc. cit._

[264]_Loc. cit._

> 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.[265]

He cannot abide the mass of people who do not speak out against a government of oppressors.

The influence of the American labor movement on Mark Twain is obvious in _A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court_. During his visit to the Middle Ages, the Yankee predicts to the peasants the rise of groups of workers who can organize themselves and speak out against their employers when wages and working conditions are not satisfactory; rather than sitting by and meekly allowing the few employers to dictate conditions, they will be able to let their wishes be known. The Yankee explains the difference in the state of the worker of the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century:

> The masters are these: nobles, rich men, the prosperous generally. These few who do no work, determine what pay the vast hive shall have who _do_ work . . . . They're a "combine"---a trade-union . . . who band themselves together to force their lowly brother to take what they choose to give. Thirteen hundred years hence . . . the "combine" will be the other way and then how these fine people's posterity will fume and fret and grit their teeth over the insolent tyranny of trade-unions! . . . the magistrate will tranquilly arrange the wages from now clear away down into the nineteenth century; and then . . . the wage-earner will

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[265] _Ibid._, pp. 107-103.

> consider that a couple of thousand years or so is enough . . . ; and he will rise up and take a hand in fixing his wages himself.[266]

Twain's article, "The New Dynasty," which he read to the Monday Evening Club of Hartford on March 22, 1866, bears out this interest in the labor movement.[267] The article not only expresses the idea that laborers must band together to improve their lot, but also implies that the great mass of people must band together to improve their country. In the article, Twain said ". . . in POLITICAL SOCIETIES, it is the PREROGATIVE of MIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT IS RIGHT; that it is the prerogative of Might to create Right---and uncreate it at will."[268]

Twain seemed optimistic about the success of the people who would band together to correct intolerable situations. To Twain, these people were

> . . . a greater than any king [that] has arisen upon this the only soil in this world that is truly sacred to liberty; . . . he will stretch out his sceptre, and there will be bread for the hungry, clothing for the naked, and hope in eyes unused to hoping; and the sham nobilities will pass away, and the rightful lord will come to his own.[269]

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[266] Ibid., p. 332.

[267] "The New Dynasty," published in Paul J. Carter, Jr., "Mark Twain and the American Labor Movement," New England Quarterly, XXX (September, 1957), 384.

[268] Loc. cit.

[269] Ibid., p. 385.

He said that when ". . . all the myriad of toilers in whom is slumbering the reality of that thing which you call Power . . . rise . . . a NATION has risen!"[270] The difference between the oppression that results from this power is that ". . . he will oppress the few, they oppressed the many; he will oppress the thousands, they oppressed the millions . . . ."[271]

In concluding "The New Dynasty," Twain reaffirms his faith in the accomplishments of American democracy and the common man in contrast to those of lower civilizations:

> He is the most stupendous product of the highest civilization the world has even seen--and the worthiest and the best; and in no age but this, no land but this, and no lower civilization than this, could he ever have been brought forth.[272]

In Twain's opinion, monarchy was a lower form of civilization than democracy. Shortly before the publication of A Connecticut Yankee, he called monarchy ". . . the grotesquest of all the swindles ever invented by man."[273] He hoped to show the wealthy in America, who desired a monarchy to rid the country of the "radicalism" of

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[270] Loc. cit.

[271] Ibid., p. 387.

[272] Ibid., p. 388.

[273] Quoted in Foner, op. cit., p. 106.

organized labor and farmers, the superiority of a democratic system of government.[274] The publication of A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court was ". . . a triumphant celebration of nineteenth century democracy."[275]

Because he was out of the country between June 6, 1891, and October 15, 1900, except for a brief period in 1895, Twain did not participate actively in political campaigns in the 1890's.[276] His primary concern during those years was his need for money, one that caused him to suggest that sections of A Connecticut Yankee could be used by the Democratic Party in campaigns.[277] However, he was still more interested in electing those candidates that he preferred[278] and was glad that Cleveland was re-elected in 1892.[279]

On two specific issues--tariff reduction and the gold standard--Twain spoke out in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1880, he had spoken against the Democratic Party's stand for tariff reduction. However, he became a Mugwump in 1884, and the Mugwumps

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[274] Ibid., p. 107.

[275] Andrews, op. cit., p. 185.

[276] Foner, op. cit., p. 99.

[277] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 156.

[278] Loc. cit.

[279] Ibid., p. 157.

favored tariff reduction. During the 1890's he rejected most of the ideals of the Republican Party, especially the high protective tariff.[280]

Tom Sawyer Abroad, published in 1894, even expresses Twain's dislike for the high tariff. Tom, Huck, and Jim hit upon the idea of bringing sand from the Sahara Desert back to America to sell. However, before they can start packing it, Tom remembers the tariff, telling Huck and Jim, ". . . if you don't pay the duty they'll hog your sand. They call it confiscating, but that don't deceive nobody, it's just hogging and that's all it is."[281] Huck and Jim do not understand the reason for this duty, and so Tom explains, "Well, they can't raise Sahara sand in America, of course, and when they can't raise a thing there, the duty is fourteen hundred thousand per cent . . . ."[282] In 1895, Twain wrote in his notebook, "The man that invented protection belongs in hell."[283]

In 1884 and 1892, he took the Mugwump point of view in favor of the gold standard; however, in 1896, he favored free silver. The Republicans feared that,

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[280]Foner, op. cit., p. 97.

[281]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Tom Sawyer Abroad, p. 98.

[282]Loc. cit.

[283]Quoted in Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 157.

if Democrat William Jennings Bryan were elected in 1896 and the free silver policy that he supported became law, the country would face financial ruin.[284] The Mugwumps, who were in name Democrats, avoided the "free silver mania" and voted for Republican conservative William McKinley.[285] Twain predicted in the 1890's that the free silver law would eventually be considered a "Second Independence Day" if it were ever put into effect.[286]

When Republican McKinley was elected in 1896, Twain prophesied that Bryan's election and the passage of the free silver plan would have meant financial stability and prosperity for the United States.[287] By 1900, however, Twain was uncertain about free silver, remaining uncertain until the death of the issue. He did not even vote in 1900, because he could not support McKinley's foreign policy and he was uncertain about Bryan on the financial issue.[288]

In 1901, Mark Twain again waged a battle against Tammany Hall in New York City. When Bishop Henry Codman Potter asked for Twain's help in this seemingly

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[284] Foner, op. cit., p. 98.

[285] McFarland, op. cit., p. 40.

[286] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 195.

[287] Foner, op. cit., p. 98.

[288] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 195.

never-ending battle, he plunged into the campaign with all the enthusiasm of the younger Twain.[289] He worked to elect Seth Low, president of Columbia College, mayor on a fusion ticket.

Twain lectured against Tammany Hall, and his speeches were widely circulated.[290] He and Bishop Potter discussed "The Causes of Our Present Municipal Degradation" before the City Club in New York City on January 4, 1901.[291] By using a childhood example, Twain convinced the City Club that it must organize in order to defeat Tammany Hall. He told about a few members of a boy's club who were forced to stop doughnut bribing by an Anti-Doughnut group.[292] His point was that Tammany Hall existed because the few corrupt politicians were organized and the many voters were not.[293] The Anti-Doughnut Party was organized to make the two major parties select the best men for offices.[294]

Twain's Anti-Doughnut Party was the same as the "Casting Vote Party," which he explained in a "Skeleton Plan of a Proposed Casting Vote Party" in 1901. The

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[289]Foner, _op. cit._, p. 99.

[290]_Ibid._, p. 100.

[291]_Ibid._, p. 99.

[292]_Ibid._, p. 100.

[293]_Ibid._, p. 99.

[294]_Ibid._, p. 100.

purpose of this group was to force the two major parties "to nominate their best man always," and good government would follow. The party had to be well-organized in order to accomplish its purpose. No member could seek office, accept nominations, or accept office. The members were to vote as a body for one or the other of the major parties' nominees.[295]

Seth Low was elected mayor of New York City in 1901. Because he had worked enthusiastically to abolish corruption, Twain was considered an important influence on the outcome of the election.[296] One paper even printed the following poem about Twain and Croker, the Tammany Hall boss: "Who killed Croker? / I, said Mark Twain. / I killed the Croker, / I, the Jolly Joker."[297] The poem is a fitting tribute to Twain and his constant fight against corruption in government, especially since the 1901 contest was the last campaign in which Twain took an active part.[298]

In 1905, Twain was discouraged to learn that Tammany Hall was, again, in control in New York City. He openly supported the ticket opposing Tammany, but

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[295] Clemens, The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, p. 647.

[296] Foner, op. cit., p. 100.

[297] Quoted in loc. cit.

[298] Ibid., p. 101.

was not active in the campaign.[299] In an essay entitled "Christian Citizenship," published shortly before the elections in 1905, Twain attacked political machines in America and the people who seemed to put aside Christian ethics when they voted.[300]

During the early years of the twentieth century, Mark Twain was praised not only for his stand on municipal corruption in New York, but also for his stand on imperialism. His work against corruption and imperialism is especially admirable because of the adverse effect it could have had on the sales of his books.[301]

Although Twain's anti-imperialism is usually considered to be the attitude of an embittered old man, it is not, As early as 1867, he expressed his opposition to America's expansion into Alaska, the Virgin Islands, and Cuba.[302] In 1873, he wrote an article for the New York _Tribune_ about the possible annexation of the Hawaiian Islands.[303] He stated

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[299] Budd, _Mark Twain_: _Social Philosopher_, p. 199.

[300] _Ibid_., pp. 199-200.

[301] Gibson, _op_. _cit_., p. 448.

[302] Budd, _Mark Twain_: _Social Philosopher_, p. 33.

[303] Geismar, _op_. _cit_., p. 66.

that the United States "*must* annex these people" because it could "afflict them with our wise and beneficient government."[304]

According to Twain, there were many things the United States could do for the backward Hawaiian Islands. Criminals could be instituted on the islands, and the United States could show Hawaii "how amusing it is to arrest them and try them and turn them loose--some for cash and some for 'political influence.'"[305] In addition, the United States could contribute railway corporations to the islands to ". . . buy their Legislatures like old clothes, and run over their best citizens" and Jay Goulds to "do away with their old time notions that stealing is not respectable."[306] In conclusion, in the article, he says,

> We can make that 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?"[307]

Before the Spanish-American War, Twain had concluded that civilizations were doomed to rise and fall. The imperialism of America, in his opinion, was destroying

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[304] Quoted in *loc. cit.*

[305] *Loc. cit.*

[306] *Loc. cit.*

[307] *Loc. cit.*

the ideals of the Republic, and America was becoming a conqueror who would follow others to destruction.[308]

Twain and Howells had different views on the Spanish-American War, often writing of their opinions during the twenty-one-month period between Spain's surrender to American forces in Cuba and the election of 1900.[309] Even though he had observed a frightening rise of imperialistic tendencies in America before this war, Twain honestly believed that America had intervened against Spain to free Cuba. Howells, however, saw the possibility that America had intervened to gain something for herself.[310] On the other hand, the two men agreed that England's war in South Africa was unjust.[311] Because of their commitment to anti-imperialism, unpopular and generally considered to be "unpatriotic," Twain and Howells spent hours and hours together discussing the issue.[312] According to Gibson, neither man was formally allied with an anti-imperialist group.[313] However, Budd says that Twain was an honorary

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[308]Roger Solomon, Twain and the Image of History, p. 42.

[309]Gibson, op. cit., p. 436.

[310]Ibid., p. 437.

[311]Ibid., p. 436.

[312]Ibid., p. 450.

[313]Ibid., p. 467.

vice-president of the Anti-Imperialist League.[314] Regardless of the question of formal membership, both Twain and Howells had shown their support of anti-imperialist groups; and on July 4, 1901, they signed a booklet distributed by the national American Anti-Imperialist League.[315]

The anti-imperialists of the turn of the century were significant because of their success in making their position known and because of their social, political, and intellectual importance.[316] Among the prominent members of the Anti-Imperialist League were E. L. Godkin, Andrew Carnegie, and Grover Cleveland.[317] Although they failed really to change United States policy, the anti-imperialists managed to keep the issue before the public for more than two years.[318]

Twain's anti-imperialistic feelings about the Filipino, Boer, and Chinese situations seem to have reached some sort of peak in a brief, but convincing, piece entitled "A salutation-speech from the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth." The speech is, Gibson believes, "perhaps Twain's most perfect single piece of

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[314] Budd, _Mark Twain: Social Philosopher_, p. 177.

[315] Gibson, _op. cit._, p. 467.

[316] _Ibid._, p. 435.

[317] Budd, _Mark Twain: Social Philosopher_, p. 177.

[318] Gibson, _op. cit._, p. 435.

persuasive writing, . . . eloquent in its prose rhythm, humorous and colloquially forceful in its final injunction."[319] It expresses his distaste for the combination of money, Christianity, and colonialism moving into a country supposedly to civilize it.[320] The following is the salutation-speech as it was printed in the Herald:

> A Salutation-speech from the Ninteenth Century to the Twentieth, taken down in short-hand by Mark Twain:
>
> I bring you the stately matron named Christendom, returning bedraggled, besmirched, and dishonored from pirate-raids in Kiao-Chou, Manchuria, South Africa, & the Philippines, with her soul full of boodle and her mouth full of pious hypocrisies. Give her soap and a towel, but hide the looking-glass.[321]

This "salutation-speech" was printed on cards and distributed by Albert S. Parsons, who was connected with the New England Anti-Imperialist League. Undoubtedly, Twain consented to the printing and distribution of these cards, thus associating himself with an established anti-imperialist group.[322]

On the anniversary of the "Greeting from the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth," Twain wrote "The Stupendous Possession." Again, he used the character,

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[319] Ibid., p. 451.

[320] Kaplan, op. cit., p. 362.

[321] Quoted in Gibson, op. cit., p. 451.

[322] Ibid., pp. 451-452.

Christendom. In "The Stupendous Possession," Christendom was attended by the countries of the world who were dirtied by war and imperialism.[323]

In his fight against American imperialism, Twain seemed like the younger Twain.[324] Even though he was angry in his essays protesting imperialism, Twain's humor and satire were great.[325] His comments as an anti-imperialist attained for Mark Twain a significant position as national satirist in 1900.[326]

Mark Twain evidently wrote very little and published nothing about the Philippine question in 1899, probably because he was too busy and still too concerned with personal problems.[327] When America took possession of the Philippines as a result of the Treaty of Paris in 1900, Twain doubted that the venture could be successful.[328]

In a letter to Joseph Twichell early in 1900, Twain indicated his disgust with the Philippine-American War.

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[323] Ibid., p. 469.

[324] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 167.

[325] Geismar, op. cit., p. 66.

[326] Gibson, op. cit., p. 448.

[327] Ibid., p. 439.

[328] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 176.

He had probably learned that the priests in the Philippines would continue to hold their wealth and property and that the United States did not plan to give the islands their independence.[329]

Upon his return to America on October 15, 1900, Twain was interviewed by a reporter for the New York *Herald*. He told the interviewer that he had been "a red-hot imperialist" a year before. He had "wanted the American eagle to go screaming into the Pacific" because he "thought it would be a real good thing to do."[330] He had hoped that the United States could make the Philippines

> as free as ourselves, give them a government and country of their own, put a miniature of the American Constitution afloat in the Pacific, start a brand-new republic to take its place among the five free nations of the world. It seemed a great task to which we addressed ourselves.[331]

However, after much thought and careful study of the Treaty of Paris, Twain concluded that the United States did "not intend to free but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem."[332]

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[329]Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

[330]Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 445.

[331]*Loc. cit.*

[332]*Loc. cit.*

He realized the similarity of the actions of the United States in the Philippines and those of imperialists in Africa and China.[333]

Twain objected to the United States's pledge to "protect the abominable system established in the Philippines by the Friars." Instead, he believed that the Filipinos should be set free and should then be allowed to "deal with their own domestic questions in their own way."[334] Concluding his comments on imperialism, Twain said, "And so I am anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land."[335]

Mark Twain made several speeches in 1900 and 1901 in which he discussed the issue of imperialism, particularly American imperialism in the Philippines. On November 10, 1900, he commented to the Lotus Club that the United States had set Cuba free, but that the plan to do the same for the Philippines had for some reason gone wrong.[336] When he introduced Winston Churchill to an audience in New York City in December of 1900, Twain could not resist commenting on the imperialism of the United States and England:

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[333]Kaplan, op. cit., p. 362.

[334]Quoted in Gibson, op. cit., p. 446.

[335]Loc. cit.

[336]Ibid., p. 447.

> I think that England sinned when she got herself into a war in South Africa, just as we have sinned . . . in the Philippines. And now that we are also kin in sin, there is nothing more to be desired.[337]

In his speech to the City Club in New York on January 4, 1901, Twain criticized harshly the McKinley administration, saying that he had not voted for Bryan in 1900 because of his stand on the financial question and that he had not voted for McKinley because of his imperialistic attitudes toward the Philippines.[338] The following day, Twain told a reporter that he had not meant to make some of the comments he had about the administration's Philippine policy; however, he could not understand the inconsistency of United States policy.[339] He said,

> We find a whole heap of fault with the war in South Africa, and feel moved to hysterics by the sufferings of the Boers, yet we don't seem to feel so very sorry for the natives in the Philippines.[340]

"To a Person Sitting in Darkness," published in the North American Review in February, 1901, is Twain's bitter attack on the forces of world-wide imperialism.[341] He condemned as forcefully as he could all of the

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[337]Quoted in Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

[338]Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

[339]*Ibid.*, pp. 453-454.

[340]Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 454.

[341]Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

individuals and countries that he considered guilty of criminal acts of imperialism. The essay was so angry and pointed that Howells, even though he approved of it and advised Twain to publish it, cautioned him to hang himself before publication because otherwise the public would hang him.[342]

At the beginning of "To a Person Sitting in Darkness," Twain attacks the American missionary, William S. Ament, who forced payment from the Chinese for the damage done in the Boxer Rebellion. According to Twain, "Ament is the right man in the right place," because Americans wanted their missionaries not only to ". . . represent in their acts and persons the grade and gentleness and charity and lovingkindness" of Christianity, but also to "represent the American spirit."[343] Twain further comments upon Ament's remarkable ". . . financial feat of squeezing a thirteen-fold indemnity out of the pauper peasants to square other people's offenses," a feat which would result in the starvation of the peasants. To Twain, the fact that "the blood money so acquired might be '_used for the propagation of the Gospel_'" was "a blasphemy . . . hideous and . . . colossal."[344] He

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[342]Gibson, _op. cit._, p. 456.

[343]Clemens, _The Portable Mark Twain_, p. 596.

[344]_Ibid._, p. 597.

expresses with irony his hope that the missionaries would ". . . remain in the almost morbidly fair and just and gentle temper which is affording so much satisfaction to their brother and champion today."[345]

Because the administrations that sought to extend "the Blessings of Civilization to our Brother who sits in Darkness"[346] were not adept at their job, the "person"--the Filipino, the African, the Boer, the Chinese--had "become suspicious of the Blessing of Civilization" and, even more serious, had "begun to examine them."[347] Twain explained that President McKinley, Cabinet Minister Joseph Chamberlain of Great Britain, the Kaiser of Germany, the Tsar of Russia, and the French had not taken the proper precautions to hide from "the person sitting in darkness" the true color of "the Blessings of Civilization." They had sent "the Actual Thing _with the outside cover_ left off."[348]

In discussing the British involvement in the Boer War in Africa, Twain wrote that Mr. Chamberlain ". . . tries hard to persuade himself that it isn't purely a

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[345] _Ibid._, p. 598.

[346] _Ibid._, p. 599.

[347] _Loc. cit._

[348] _Ibid._, p. 600.

private raid for cash but has a sort of dim vague respectability about it somewhere, if he could only find the spot."[349]

Because the Kaiser "lost a couple of missionaries in a riot in Shantung," he insisted that the Chinese pay

> . . . a hundred thousand dollars apiece for them in money; twelve miles of territory, containing several millions of inhabitants and worth twenty million dollars; and . . . build a monument and also a Christian church; whereas the people of China could have been depended upon to remember the missionaries without the help of these expensive memorials.[350]

Twain next asks, "Would Germany do like this to America, to England, to France, to Russia. Or only to China, the helpless--imitating the elephant's assault upon the field mice?"[351]

When Russia committed imperialistic crimes against Japan and Manchuria, "the person sitting in darkness" probably said to himself,

> It is yet another, Civilized Power, with its banner of the Prince of Peace in one hand and its loot basket and its butcher knife in the other. Is there no salvation for us but to adopt Civilization and lift ourselves down to its level?[352]

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[349] Ibid., p. 601.

[350] Ibid., p. 602.

[351] Ibid., p. 603.

[352] Ibid., p. 604.

Next, in Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," is America's "Philippine temptation," a temptation that America could not resist.[353] The Americans were to move in and free the Filipinos from Spanish tyranny after which they were to be independent. However, Twain said that the purpose was ". . . ostensibly to help the native patriots put the finishing touch upon their long and plucky struggle for independence, but really to take their land away from them and keep it."[354] As a result of the latter act, "the person sitting in darkness" would surely say,

> There is something curious about this---curious and unaccountable. There must be two Americas, one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on, then kills him to get his land.[355]

Twain brought his attack to a close by rationalizing for America:

> There have been lies, yes, but they were told in a good cause. We have been treacherous, but that was only in order that real good might come out of apparent evil. . . . we have debauched America's honor and blackened her face before the world; but each detail was for the best.[356]

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[353]Ibid., p. 605.

[354]Ibid., p. 607.

[355]Ibid., p. 606.

[356]Ibid., pp. 611-612.

To climax his essay, he suggested a new flag for America:

> We can have a special one--our states do it: we can have just our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and crossbones.[357]

In 1902, Twain was among the notable citizens who signed a petition to Congress to end the war in the Philippines. Congress, however, took no action. Even though Twain continued his attacks on imperialism, the movement against it had all but died by the spring of 1902.[358] He expressed his firm beliefs about the evils of imperialism in numerous other articles and speeches, but "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" encompasses and transcends all of his other works on the subject. It was this essay, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," that made Twain, just as it probably would today, the hero of students.[359]

In the Presidential-election year of 1904, Mark Twain did not take an active part in politics. Disillusioned by the methods of those campaigning for office, he could do nothing but criticize party politics.[360]

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[357] Ibid., p. 613.

[358] Gibson, op. cit., p. 468.

[359] Kaplan, op. cit., p. 364.

[360] Paine (ed.), op. cit., II, 761.

Twain's disillusionment is best expressed by a letter that he wrote to his old friend, Joseph Twichell, in whom he was bitterly disappointed by 1904. His disappointment in Twichell began as early as 1901, when he wrote Twichell about the situation in the Philippines. He was disturbed that Twichell taught people to keep their opinions to themselves because of the possible damage of making such opinions public.[361] In 1904, he was again disappointed that Twichell was faithful to a party when parties were so useless. He wrote to Twichell on November 4, 1904, "Oh, dear! get out of that sewer--party politics--dear Joe. At least with your mouth."[362] In addition, he warned Twichell that party politics change men morally, using as his examples McKinley, Roosevelt, and Twichell. In private life, they were of the highest character--kind, honest, incorruptible, but in the public life of politics, they were the opposite.[363] Twain's "Corn-Pone Opinions" expressed the same idea about party politics more colorfully: ". . . and where the party leads they [men] will follow, whether for right and honor or through blood and dirt and a mush of mutilated morals."[364]

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[361]Gibson, op. cit., p. 454.

[362]Paine (ed.), op. cit., II, 761.

[363]Ibid., p. 762.

[364]Clemens, The Portable Mark Twain, p. 577.

Twain's letter of November 4 criticized Twichell for condemning members of the opposing party for certain beliefs and actions, yet concealing those same beliefs and actions when they appeared in his own party. Twain believed that an individual's principles disappeared when he became involved in party politics. He, then, told Twichell that he (Twain) would be doing just what Twichell was doing if involved in party politics.[365]

In Twain's opinion, Cleveland was responsible for the gold standard, but Twichell had implied that the Republicans were responsible for it. Twichell had said that the pension which was given to people who did not deserve it was favored by the Democrats; however, Twain told him that half of those who _opposed_ the fund were Democrats.[366] In "Corn-Pone Opinions," Twain best explained the point he was trying to make to Twichell in their long argument:

> Men think they think upon great political questions, and they do; but they think with their party, not independently; they read its literature but not that of the other side; they arrive at convictions but they are drawn from a partial view of the matter in hand and are of no particular value.[367]

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[365]Paine (ed.), _op_. _cit_., II, 762.

[366]_Loc_. _cit_.

[367]Clemens, _The Portable Mark Twain_, p. 577.

In 1904, unable to see how his friend, Joe Twichell, could believe all of the statements that he had made, Twain concluded that Twichell had become adept at politics because he had trained for it all of his life. About Twichell's political writing, he commented, "There isn't a paragraph in it whose facts or morals will wash--not even a sentence, I believe."[368] Twain rationalized about Twichell's political activities in his letter written a short time before the election of 1904:

> 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.[369]

In the postscript of his letter, Twain reminded Twichell to remember that man is not responsible for his acts, but that man is being controlled by God.[370]

Early in 1906, Twain became involved with a Socialist committee in America formed to help the Russian revolutionary forces.[371] He planned to participate actively in the cause; however, before it could actually get started, Maxim Gorky, the well-known Russian author,

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[368]Paine (ed.), op. cit., II, 763.

[369]Loc. cit.

[370]Ibid., p. 764.

[371]Foner, op. cit., p. 121.

who had come to America as an emissary of the revolutionaries, committed several indiscretions that ruined the chances of their receiving any moral or financial help from the United States.[372]

Many years before, Twain had expressed his approval of revolution when it was necessary to unseat a monarchy. A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court expresses his admiration of the French Revolution. In his September 4, 1889, letter to Howells, Twain said, "Next to the 4th of July & its results, it was the noblest & holiest thing & the most precious that ever happened in this earth."[373] Twain held the Marxist belief that violence is sometimes necessary to overthrow tyranny.[374] His active struggle against Russian Czarism is an example of his belief that revolution is the only way to rid a country of tyranny.[375] Although Twain did not again take an active part in revolutionary causes outside of the United States, his name could be found on the letter-head of many organizations for freedom.[376]

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[372] Ibid., p. 122.

[373] Frederick Anderson, William M. Gibson, and Henry Nash Smith (eds.), Selected Mark Twain--Howells Letters, p. 286.

[374] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 185.

[375] Foner, op. cit., p. 118.

[376] Ibid., p. 124.

In the early twentieth century, Twain could see nothing commendable in the Republican Party's principles or record. He did not believe that the Democrats could defeat the Republicans. Even if they could, he reasoned that the parties seemed the same anyway; both were interested only in money.[377] Commenting on the beauty of the motto, "In God we trust," he said that the United States trusted instead of God "the Republican party and the dollar--mainly the dollar."[378] Twain was also convinced that the Republican Party was solely responsible for the system of high tariffs that would result in the growth of monopolies and a new kind of slavery.[379] In his opinion, the party was acting for the rich. He said that he could never support Theodore Roosevelt even with his "trust buster" reputation, because anyone who, like Roosevelt, favored high tariffs could not be the enemy of monopoly. Twain believed that Roosevelt was actually furthering monopoly.[380]

After 1905, Twain became increasingly concerned about the seemingly unbeatable Republican Party.[381]

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[377] Ibid., p. 101.

[378] Kaplan, op. cit., p. 363.

[379] Foner, op. cit., p. 97.

[380] Ibid., p. 98.

[381] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, p. 204.

As the election year of 1908 approached, he recalled a letter he had written to Howells in 1874 forecasting a monarchy. He gave two reasons for his forecast: (1) it is man's nature to want someone to look up to; (2) great republics have never lasted long.[382] One condition, however, must exist before a monarchy could develop from a republic: the republic had to be a great power with wealth which would cause corruption and develop harmful ambitions. The republic would not consciously desire a monarchy or see it coming, but circumstances would leave the path to monarchy open to some person who desired to destroy the republic and build his own kingdom.[383]

In 1908, Twain concluded that, even before he had forecasted a monarchy, a constitutional monarchy had existed in the United States, the Republican Party being the monarchy.[384] With the exception of Cleveland's few years in office, which really made no real mark on American history, the "crown" had been passed down in the same political family for fifty years.[385] Twain

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[382] Clemens, _Mark Twain in Eruption_, pp. 1-2.

[383] _Ibid._, p. 2.

[384] _Loc. cit._

[385] _Ibid._, p. 3.

felt that Roosevelt would only be handing the power down to Taft in the election of 1908.[386] Even though he was angry when Roosevelt seemed to select William Howard Taft, Twain voted for Taft in 1908 rather than Bryan who he feared would not maintain laissez-faire.[387]

Because the monarch in America could override the Constitution, law, Congress, States, and Supreme Court (by appointing friendly justices), Twain ascertained that the monarch was more powerful in America than in any of the European counties.[388] Twain noticed that the monarch pushed through tariffs which resulted in a few very rich men; then, the monarch declared himself an enemy of monopoly. However, Twain said, "It thoughtfully puts off that assault till 'after election.' A thousand years after is quite plainly what it means, but the people do not know that."[389]

Although he often became discouraged and attacked the administration of American democracy, he retained his belief in the system. He considered it the best system because of its basis--the equality of men.[390]

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[386] Ibid., p. 28.

[387] Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher, pp. 204-205.

[388] Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, p. 3.

[389] Loc. cit.

[390] Foner, op. cit., p. 101.

Mark Twain's participation in the election campaign of 1908 was limited to his attacks on Theodore Roosevelt. He repeated his belief that the morals of a candidate for public office disappeared as soon as the candidate began seeking office. Once, Roosevelt had wanted to reform the civil service system. However, he did not want to reform it enough to resist sending three hundred federal officeholders to the Republican Convention in Chicago to uphold his interests.[391]

Twain's remarks about Theodore Roosevelt are both biting and humorous. At one time, he made fun of Roosevelt, the great white hunter, who shot a cow, mistaking it for a bear.[392] Referring to Roosevelt's war heroics, Twain said,

> I think the President is clearly insane in several ways, and insanest upon war and its supreme glories. I think he longs for a big war wherein he can spectacularly perform as chief general and chief admiral, and go down in history as the only monarch of modern times that has served both offices at the same time.[393]

His bitter attack against Roosevelt climaxed his controversial political life because he was not to live until the next Presidential election. Once a strong Republican, he finally became an independent

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[391]Clemens, Mark Twain in Eruption, p. 29.

[392]Ibid., p. 11.

[393]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

critic of politics, not only in America, but also in the world. Were he alive today, Twain would find material for his political writings plentiful.

Primarily, Twain objected to party politics because people simply voted with their party rather than voting for the best candidate. Consequently, the two major parties were not forced to nominate their best men, the result being corruption in government.

In his essay "As Regards Patriotism," Mark Twain criticized blind patriotism:

> The Patriot did not know just how or when or where he got his opinions, neither did he care, so long as he was with what seemed the majority---which was the main thing, the safe thing, the comfortable thing.[394]

This blind patriot is the voter whom Twain despised, the voter who was a Republican or a Democrat, because he had always been a Republican or a Democrat, not because he personally believed in the qualifications and platform of a particular candidate. In "Corn-Pone Opinions," Twain described politics both sixty years ago and today:

> . . . we know . . . why Republicans are Republicans and Democrats, Democrats. We know it is a matter of association and sympathy, not reasoning and examination; that hardly a man in the world has an opinion upon morals, politics, or religion which he got otherwise than through his associations and sympathies.[395]

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[394]Clemens, The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, p. 567.

[395]Clemens, The Portable Mark Twain, p. 576.

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