

THE AMERICAN IMAGE OF CHINA, 1890-1905

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ABSTRACT

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by Robert F. McClellan Jr.

In the closing years of the nineteenth century the American nation was actively debating how it ought to react to events which were forcing it onto the world stage. Many greeted the new responsibilities with eagerness. Admiral Mahan urged the importance of sea power and the necessity for strategic bases and an interoceanic canal. Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge and others urged the nation to accept its new responsibilities and carry the gospel of progress and freedom to the new peoples whom providence had thrust into its care. President McKinley agreed that we had no choice but to "civilize, Christianize and uplift" those less fortunate than ourselves. Missionaries envisioned the speedy evangelization of the whole world. There were dissenting voices, however, which were concerned about traditional American values of non-entanglement and seclusion from the world. There were many who feared the threat of unregulated immigration and its effect on the American standard. And there was the voice of quiet, solid indifference. There was mental perplexity and a struggling with traditional values as men sorted out the alternatives.

One method of penetrating public thought is through periodical literature. The 1890's were significant years for the growth of periodicals. Both newspapers and low priced books established broad markets, but the most spectacular advances were made by magazines. Their increase in number, circulation, and influence during this period make them a highly useful tool for the examination of public opinion.

The well defined classifications established by Frank L. Mott in A History of American Magazines, 1885-1905 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957) served as a guide to securing an adequate sample of various types of periodicals including weeklies, monthlies, those designed to serve special interests and others that were technical or circulated largely in one geographical section. In this way it was possible to distinguish magazines which reflected popular opinion from those which reflected more specialized opinion. Both types were consulted. All of the relevant material contained in these publications was analysed. Cartoons, illustrations, and format were weighed as well as articles and editorial comment. In some cases the material which was omitted proved more significant than that which was published.

The most striking quality of the views on China published in periodical literature during the period from 1890 to 1905 was their inconsistency. Violent opposition to the

Chinese in the United States paralleled a sympathetic interest in Chinese culture. The campaign for exclusion laws was matched by a plea for the integrity of China. Exciting incidents in China provoked corresponding excitement and interest in the periodical press. But the interest subsided as quickly as it arose.

The keystone of American policy in the Far East was the myth of Chinese inferiority. This myth was developed by Americans to shield themselves from the apparent threat offered by Chinese civilization. The Far Eastern policy of the United States was designed to fit the American image of China, not the actual conditions existing in the Orient. It was formulated in an unreal atmosphere where visions of racial superiority and world leadership protected Americans from the harsher realities of the power struggle in the Far East. The policy which evolved from these circumstances satisfied the demands of the American image of China but not those of the Chinese problem. The policy was based on broad principles which were never elaborated and on internal inconsistencies which were never reconciled. Its essential ingredient was the mythical concept of Chinese inferiority and its chief characteristic was ambivalence.

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By

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PREFACE

Periodical literature was selected as the tool with which to penetrate public thought for a number of reasons. The years from 1890 to 1905 are important ones for the development of magazines. Frank L. Mott in A History of American Magazines, 1885-1905 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957), pages eleven and twelve, describes in detail the rapid growth of periodicals during these years. In 1885 there were approximately 3,300 periodicals being published in the United States. By 1895 the number had increased to 5,100 and in 1905 there were about 6,000 periodicals in publication. Taking into account the number of magazines which were started during this period and those which failed or merged with others, there appear to have been nearly 11,000 different periodicals published during the twenty years after 1885.

The circulation of periodicals showed a similar increase. Mott describes in his History, page sixteen, how the magic number of half a million subscribers was exceeded by the Ladies Home Journal in 1891. The first general illustrated magazine to reach half a million circulation was Munsey's in 1897. By 1905 several magazines had passed that mark including the Saturday Evening Post, and the Ladies Home

Journal claimed over a million subscribers. Circulation figures were often inflated in order to attract advertisers but the trend is clear. In 1885 there were 21 magazines with a circulation in excess of a hundred thousand while in 1905 there were 159.

The advent of the ten-cent magazine was one of the most important causes of the increase in the number and circulation of magazines. The success of the lower priced magazine was due partly to the influence of the depression in driving prices down. It was also due to the development of photoengraving which soon replaced the much more expensive wood engraving. But probably the most important reason was a new approach to magazine publishing. On page five of his History, Mott describes how in 1893 S. S. McClure founded a magazine under his name as a high volume, high quality publication. At fifteen cents a copy it boomed from the first and was comparable to the quality magazines in style though it was more lively. Munsey's magazine quickly dropped its price to ten cents and by 1895 there were a number of ten-cent magazines including Munsey's, Argosy, the Cosmopolitan and McClure's.

The appeal of these magazines was based partly on their sensationalism but this is not the whole explanation for their success. They were filled with well printed illustrations. Their style was journalistic and lively and they

presented many non-fiction subjects in an interesting and attractive manner. Yet they were not lacking in serious treatment of contemporary problems. They showed an interest in new ideas and inventions which was welcome to a people who were interested in progress. Some critics deplored the influence of mass circulation on periodical literature in general. But even though the better ten-cent magazine did not rank as high as the Atlantic in terms of literary quality, their timeliness and responsiveness to public thinking made them welcome in more homes.

Because of its increased coverage of the contemporary scene the periodical attained a wide influence. Newspapers felt the competition keenly, particularly that of the popularly priced weeklies. They retaliated by expanding Sunday supplements and resorting to more sensational means of attracting public attention. The last years of the century saw a rapid increase in newspaper circulation as well. But magazines continued to advance, partly because they employed similar journalistic methods and partly because they offered a more balanced, thoughtful presentation of contemporary problems. It is this combination of timeliness with thoughtfulness, plus the greater variety of appeal to all areas of interest from specialized journals to popular weeklies, which makes the magazine a particularly useful tool for the study of public attitudes during these years.

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Professor Paul A. Varg is so well known for his courtesy and kindness that additional demonstrations of the fact are unnecessary. In addition to guiding the author through the preparation of this thesis his friendship has been an anchor to the wind.

My Mother and Father have offered encouragement and my wife has made the greatest sacrifice. The dedication should read: To Sara, Mary, Karen, Sara and Martha, who loved and endured.

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CHAPTER I

A NEW VIEW OF THE WORLD

Henry Cabot Lodge remarked in 1889 that the foreign policy of the United States was to have no policy. Lodge did not endorse such a policy but his remark is indicative of the prevailing attitude which was to undergo a radical change during the next few years. The new thinking in regard to foreign policy, which developed as a result of the collision of the United States with the outside world, is at the heart of the generalization that the United States emerged as a world power during the years 1890 to 1905. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this period marks the emergence of national attitudes with regard to the United States as a world power. In a diplomatic and commercial sense the nation had been, from its beginning, involved in international affairs. The transition which Mr. Lodge's remark introduces is partly one of newly emerging strength, but it is also one of increased awareness of power already realized and of the responsibilities and opportunities attendant upon the possession of that power. Americans in the past had not been reluctant to apply the terms destiny and mission to their actions on the continent and some were not

now reluctant to apply the same terms to the role of the United States in the larger world.

The exciting events of 1898 seemed to be almost more than Americans could bear. The prospect of fighting an old world power with the realization that victory was almost guaranteed from the beginning was exhilarating. The intoxication increased when the satisfying sweetness of triumphing over evil was added to it. No wonder the victory celebration seems to have begun at about the time of the sinking of the Maine. When Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay between breakfast and lunch, the celebration increased in intensity. But there were some who went home early. One of these was Mr. Dooley who remarked that he thought the excitement a little overdone since only a few months before most people thought of the Philippines as canned goods instead of islands in the Pacific.

The naval victories were exciting and cavalry had been brilliant, but there were second thoughts. These thoughts were voiced by people who simply did not see how possession of the Philippines or Hawaii could ever be reconciled with the principles of the Farewell Address. Few would now deny that it had been the destiny of America to occupy the entire continent. But the occupation and possession of territory which was separated from American traditions as well as from the American continent gave a new

twist to the meaning of manifest destiny. The argument lay between those who felt a burden of responsibility towards the traditional separation of the new world from the old and those who felt an equal responsibility towards the tradition of American world leadership. On one side arose claims of unfaithfulness and on the other side accusations of stagnation and limited vision. In the face of new challenges men sought to apply the old principles, with varying results.

In this battle between the interpreters of American destiny the day was carried, at least for a few years, by those with the larger outlook. The Philippines and Hawaii were annexed and the nation asserted its interest and authority, more usually referred to as mission or responsibility, in the Carribbean as well. Underlying the imperialistic thinking which is represented by these acts are a number of attitudes involving economic, strategic, religious and emotional factors. When men spoke out defining their views, these factors appeared continually in their arguments.

Charles Denby urged in 1899 that "we should neglect no means to hold and retain the trade we have in the far east, and to increase it."¹ As former minister to China and an apostle of America's civilizing mission to the world his position is understandable. Whether or not it represents

¹Charles Denby, "Our Relations with the Far East," Munsey's Magazine, XX (January, 1899), 519.

American business interests in 1899 is not equally certain. Albert J. Beveridge, an unknown Indiana Republican, appeared in the Saturday Evening Post a number of times in 1898 and 1899 to argue for the necessity of establishing overseas trading posts for the distribution of American goods. John Barrett, at one time United States minister to Siam, suggested as early as 1896 that China was on the point of great development and that our commercial interests there were critical.² In June, 1898, Harpers New Monthly Magazine was very much concerned about the future. "The powers of production of the civilized world have outstripped its powers of consumption, and congestion is only averted by the continuous opening up of new markets. . . ."³ So serious did the threat appear to one observer that he felt that "the cry for more trade--more markets--is as imperative as the cry of the human organism for more air when threatened with suffocation."⁴ These examples can be easily multiplied until the picture is one of widespread concern for the extension of markets and for the control of certain portions of the globe in order to assure America's continuing place in those markets.

²John Barrett, "America's Interest in Eastern Asia," North American Review, CLXII (March, 1896), 265.

³"The Situation in China" (editorial), Harpers New Magazine, XCVII (June, 1898), 137.

⁴Ibid.

Such a picture, however, must be subjected to close scrutiny. There is no denying that the American economy developed rapidly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Steel production alone jumped from 389,799 tons in 1875 to 8,932,857 tons in 1898. In 1897 the value of exported manufactured goods exceeded the value of those imported for the first time. It was plain to the American industrialist that American goods could withstand the competition of foreign producers. But it is significant that the same industrialist talked of competition, not colonies, when he referred to the expansion of trade. Prior to 1898 businessmen were opposed to a war with anybody. They came to look more favorably upon the war with Spain only when possibility of its short duration and quick profits became certain.⁵

An analysis of America's trade with China from 1890 to 1905 requires extreme care. Statistics must be used with caution because the marketing situation which existed in China prevented the gathering of complete figures. For example, the figures for Chinese imports compiled by the Chinese Customs Service were based on the point of origin of the shipment not on the place of manufacture. American goods arriving from foreign ports such as England, France, or Germany were credited to these places and not to the United

⁵Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898

States. Furthermore, goods entering Hong Kong were not broken even into the above categories, but were simply listed by the Chinese as imports from Hong Kong. An extensive trade was carried on through this port, yet for the period from 1890 to 1905 only estimates are available. Consequently, because exact calculations cannot be made, generalizations about the trade with the Orient must be used cautiously.

The bulk of the exports to China were made up of a very limited variety of goods. The most important commodity was cotton. If the figures pertaining to the sale of cotton were subtracted from the totals of American exports to China, the trade would appear insignificant. In 1900 American exports to China totaled about fifteen million dollars, over two-thirds of which was attributable to the sale of cotton primarily in the form of drills and sheetings.⁶ The percentage would vary somewhat if another year were chosen for comparison, but the approximate relationship would remain the same. Another commodity which was important was kerosene. In the same year, kerosene imports were four million dollars.⁷ Thus these two products alone accounted for more than ninety per cent of the export trade with China for that year.

⁶"Cotton" (editorial), Chautauquan, XXXIII (September, 1901), 556.

⁷Ibid.

The amount of America's export trade with China fluctuated widely from 1890 to 1905. This is explained largely by fluctuations in the demand for cotton, kerosene, and railway supplies. Toward the end of the 1890's both cotton and railway supplies were finding an increasing market in China. After the turn of the century exports of cotton and particularly railway supplies decreased, though kerosene sales increased. Figures from three years, 1889, 1898 and 1903 indicate the general pattern. In 1889 total exports to China from the United States amounted to about \$18,400,000.⁸ In 1898 exports increased to \$44,600,000 but fell in 1903 to \$22,700,000.⁹ The Boxer disturbances, which occurred mainly in northern China where American cotton found its strongest demand, offer a partial explanation for the decrease. Japanese competition in cotton was also increasing at this time. The trade with China did generally increase, particularly when the figures for the 1890's are examined, but the overall picture is one of uneven gain confined to a few commodities.

The importance of this trade was limited if measured

⁸Worthington C. Ford, "The Commercial Relations of the United States with the Far East," Annals, XIII (May, 1899), 107-130.

⁹"The Dealings of the United States with the Nations of the World" (editorial), National Geographic, XV (April, 1904), 187.

in terms of total foreign trade but it certainly was important to some companies and to some geographical sections. To the Baldwin Locomotive Company the sale of their product in China was important enough for them to begin the training of several young Chinese as machinists in 1897 in order to send them back to China to help in railroad development.¹⁰ In the same year the export of all manufactured cotton from the United States to China amounted to over eight and a half million dollars.¹¹ More than half of all American cotton exports went to China alone.¹² The boycott against American goods in 1904 was called significantly, the cotton boycott. The South was enough concerned about the problem so that it took special pains to treat Chinese visitors in a kindly manner and to encourage similar treatment of them in the rest of the nation. When President Roosevelt spoke in Atlanta on October 20, 1905, he was careful to sympathize with the damage being done to the South's cotton trade by the boycott.¹³ But outside of these areas of concern the trade with China was of minor interest. In 1889 exports to

¹⁰"Chinese Machinist" (editorial), Chautauquan, XXIV (February, 1897), 613.

¹¹Charles S. Campbell, Jr., Special Business Interests and the Open Door Policy (New Haven, 1951), p. 19.

¹²Ibid., p. 20.

¹³Theodore Roosevelt, quoted in, "Cotton and the Chinese Boycott" (editorial), National Geographic Magazine, XVI (November, 1905), 516-517.

China constituted less than two and one-half per cent of total exports.¹⁴ In 1898 the percentage increased to three and one-half per cent, but dropped below two per cent in 1903.¹⁵ The value of American exports to England alone in 1903 was almost twenty-four times that of exports to China, 524 million to 22 million dollars.¹⁶ It seems clear that trade with China was of little practical importance to those engaged in commerce, however much attention it might draw from leading expansionists.

After 1898 it is true that some businessmen turned some of their attention toward markets in South America, Africa and the Pacific. But they acted more as followers than as leaders. The Commercial and Financial Chronicle, a spokesman for the commercial world, never expressed more than passing interest in the Far East at any time between 1890 and 1905. American business was interested in world opportunities, but its role was seldom a dominant one. Many of those who spoke most loudly in behalf of business used this medium only as a means to voice their sentiments in favor of expansion.

¹⁴Worthington C. Ford, "The Commercial Relations of the United States with the Far East," Annals, XIII (May, 1899), 107-130.

¹⁵"The Dealings of the United States with the Nations of the World" (editorial), National Geographic, XV (April, 1904), 187.

¹⁶Ibid.

The influence of economic interest upon imperialism may be cloudy but the influence of Alfred Thayer Mahan is quite clear. Mahan's impact was significant because his statement of the principles of sea power coincided, often with uncanny timeliness, with the interests of others who sought a rational base for their arguments in behalf of the expansion of American influence beyond its continental borders. Mahan became a spokesman for the broader interpretation of traditional principles, for what has come to be called "the large policy." His logic and presentation were clear and powerful.

The essence of international competition, he said, is power. A nation which controls the sources of power controls its destiny. The lesson of history teaches that nations have risen and fallen as their control over the sources of power has increased or diminished. The most important single source of power is the sea. It is a means of access between nations which is never neutral. A nation either exploits the sea or is exploited by it. Mahan is here outlining the old British concept of control of the high seas. But he did it so well that the British never tired of praising him. Mahan was more appreciated in England than he ever was in his own country during his own lifetime.

The concept of the sea as the primary source of power in the dialogue between nations had obvious applications for the proponents of the large policy. If control of the sea is

vital then the means to the accomplishment of this end are self-evident. Mahan held little hope for the establishment of a powerful United States naval force though he never gave up his efforts to encourage the building of armored ships. Actually he devoted more of his time to arguments for the possession of the geographical means which he felt were necessary for control of the sea.

In 1897 The Interest of America in Sea Power (Boston) appeared, containing articles published during the preceding seven years. In 1893 in an article entitled, "Hawaii and Our Future Sea Power," Mahan had argued for the necessity of the possession of the Hawaiian Islands as a vital key to United States naval power in the Pacific. This theme was repeated vigorously in nearly every debate over the acquisition of extra-continental territory. Another article in September of the same year, "The Isthmus and Sea Power," urged the building of an interoceanic canal. In 1897, in an article entitled "Strategic Features of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico," Mahan argued for the possession of coaling harbors in the Caribbean and for the necessity of protecting a future canal as well as our present security in these waters. The line of argument which Mahan developed had its own peculiar influence in imperialistic thinking and was employed in turn by others to support their arguments.

If this were all that Mahan had said he could stand

now as a highly influential and uncomplicated representative of the imperialistic train of thought developing in the United States at the end of the century. But Mahan was more than a naval officer. He was a member of that generation which said it could Christianize the world and bring the benefits of progress and civilization to all the areas of darkness on the globe. He was tempered in the same fires which produced attitudes of missionary zeal, political righteousness and commercial progress. He wrote in 1897, "political creeds . . . can claim no fixity of allegiance except where they express, not the policy of a day, but the unchanging dictates of righteousness."¹⁷ Mahan insisted on the primacy of force but he had a broad definition. "The sentiment of a people," he said, "is the most energetic element in national action."¹⁸ Moral tone constitutes a greater force than material action and when nations wage war they do so effectively only when aroused "by the sense of wrong done, or of right to be vindicated."¹⁹

Mahan insisted on the vital role of conscience.

¹⁷Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Interest of America in Sea Power (Boston, 1897), p. 140.

¹⁸Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Interest of America in International Conditions (Boston, 1810), pp. 167-168.

¹⁹Ibid.

"A state, when it goes to war, should do so not to test the rightfulness of its claims, but because, being convinced in its conscience of that rightfulness, no other means of overcoming evil remains."²⁰ So important is the role of conscience in national life that, "even the material evils of war are less than the moral evil of compliance with wrong."²¹ To comment upon these sentiments might well lead into the realm of historical speculation. We can never hope to probe with certainty the depths of any man's belief. Yet to deny the influence of these views on Mahan's life or to doubt their sincerity is equally precarious. Perhaps it will be enough to remember that when naval men speak of sea power, when businessmen speak of trade, and when politicians speak of protecting a people's integrity, they may be doing no more than using those arguments that appear to be acceptable to the public. Their own motivation may be quite different. When Lodge employed the need for markets as an argument, there is reason to believe that he did so because it was easier to command support by so doing than by explaining the nature of the international power situation.

The religious root of imperialism manifested itself

²⁰Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The Peace Conference and the Moral Aspect of War," North American Review, CLXIX (October, 1899), 436.

²¹Ibid.

most clearly in the missionary effort. Convinced Christians may be willing to recognize the varying quality of the missionary effort but they cannot debate its rationale. Political and historical observers, however, vary widely in their analyses of the effect of missionary activity in the world. Because of the natural sensitivity of the subject more of this variance may be due to personal conviction than is generally admitted. But, in any event, the subject was warmly debated at the turn of the century. Testimonials, statistics and evidence of all kinds were brought into the debate though few emerged with the feeling that any conclusions had been reached.

Yet the impact of religious thinking upon the formation of imperialistic attitudes was very important. The presence of large numbers of American missionaries in China, for example, was a primary factor in drawing attention towards that section of the world. Whether one agreed entirely with the missionary effort or not there was a certain satisfaction in realizing that American ideals and religion were being offered to the world. This sort of thinking fitted well with the concept of America's responsibility to provide backward and uncivilized peoples with the doctrine of progress, civilization and morality. The religious emphasis in imperialism was sincere with many people while others encouraged it because it provided a sort of moral tone to what

could sometimes be a rather messy business. Despite the criticism which was directed towards the missionaries themselves and the actions of their church organizations, most people felt that the United States had a special claim to Divine Guidance. Consequently, a religious emphasis was evident in much of the discussion about America's new role in the world.

The missionary endeavor in China had grown steadily since the American Board of Foreign Missions began work there in 1830.²² By 1890 there were eighteen American Missionary Societies in China representing every major denomination. The work which had been accomplished was not insignificant. By 1900 there were 1,296 foreign missionaries, 500 of whom were American, and 522 churches with a population of 27,287 Christian communicants.²³ The next ten years were to see a much more rapid growth. By 1900 the number of American missionaries had increased to over 700 out of a total of 2,013 protestant missionaries in China.²⁴ Fifteen additional missionary societies began work in China after 1890 and by 1900 the total number of converts reached 112,808.²⁵

²²Harlan P. Beach, A Geography and Atlas of Protestant Missions, II (New York, 1903), p. 23.

²³J. W. Davis, "Statistics of Protestant Missions in China," Missionary Herald, LXXXVII (February 21, 1891), 72.

²⁴Harlan P. Beach, loc. cit.

²⁵Ibid., p. 24.

The increased tempo was the result of a search by religious bodies in the United States for new outlets to satisfy a quickened religious interest. A revival was stirring many churches to a greater realization of the power of Christian teaching when applied to the human condition. Josiah Strong, Dwight Moody, and Washington Gladden are only a few of the leaders in the 1880's and 1890's who sought to find new fields for Christian endeavor. Such books as James S. Dennis' Christian Missions and Social Progress (New York, 1899) led the Church to consider anew its responsibility to the heathen in foreign lands. The events in China which drew attention to the vast opportunities there for mission work reminded the Churches of their Lord's command to "Go and teach all nations." In order to sustain the enthusiasm new opportunities had to be found for the propagation of Christian teaching. China offered such an opportunity.

The best example of the aroused religious spirit of the 1890's and the method utilized for sustaining it is the founding of the Student Volunteer Movement. In July of 1886, 250 students gathered at Mount Hermon in Massachusetts to participate in several weeks of bible study classes led by Dwight Moody.²⁶ Twenty of these men came to the meeting dedicated to service in overseas mission work and to the hope

²⁶John R. Mott, The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, I (New York, 1946), pp. 5-7.

of converting other students to the same goal. Subjected to several weeks of burning speeches by missionaries and native Christians from the field, to prayer meetings, and to long contemplative walks the original number grew to an even hundred men dedicated to foreign service. From this nucleus enthusiasm grew for the idea of serving the Lord in a foreign land until the movement developed a well planned organization extending to college communities throughout the East and mid-West. The Student Volunteer Movement was a product of the spreading spirit of revival and it served in turn to stimulate the same spirit among young men in eastern and mid-western states.

In 1894 the report of the Executive Committee to the Second International Convention at Detroit indicated that thus far 630 missionaries had sailed for foreign mission fields.²⁷ Four years later at the Third International Convention in Cleveland the Executive Committee reported that over 4,000 young men had volunteered for service and that 1,173 had actually gone into the field since the Movement had begun.²⁸ By 1905, 2,953 men and women were serving in overseas mission fields with 826 in China alone.²⁹ Bible classes and mission study classes had been widely carried on

²⁷Ibid., p. 45.

²⁸Ibid., p. 60.

²⁹Ibid., p. 98.

at colleges and seminaries and the increase in the number of ministers selecting overseas duty was thought to be due largely to this effort.

The same method employed by the Student Volunteer Movement to maintain the pitch of enthusiasm was utilized by church denominations. In order to capitalize on the new interest in religion it was necessary to channel it into productive areas. Foreign missionary work was ready at hand for this use. The opportunity in China provided not only a chance to spread the Gospel, but the possibility of strengthening domestic churches by giving to their efforts the added importance of evangelizing heathen peoples. Looked at in this light, church attendance and sacrifices of time and money become more meaningful. The more that America's church congregations thought about the idea of being a part of a world movement for bringing the fruits of Christian enlightenment to backward peoples, the more willing some of them were to support their home church. Church membership took on an aura of soldiering in a vast army whose heroic efforts would change the world and heap glory on its battallions.

The image which religious people developed of China under these circumstances was directly related to their own needs as participants in the world-wide movement of evangelization. In the 1880's and early 1890's the Chinese were looked upon as simple heathens who needed to learn of Jesus Christ in order that their souls might be won away from

paganism. According to the needs of this view the Chinese were pictured as depraved barbarians, devoid of any inherent moral stature. Gradually, as the impact of the slogan calling for the "Evangelization of the World in this Generation" was felt, however, the possibilities presented by China expanded. Instead of concentrating on the impact of Christianity on the individual Chinese, the emphasis shifted to a concentration on the importance of converting all of China to Christianity. The shift in emphasis fitted much better with the vision of introducing the entire world to Christianity. The image of China altered to fit the change and the Chinese, while still no better liked, were admitted to possess the attributes which made redemption by western religion possible.

The American image of China, particularly as it was shaped by religious thinking from 1890 to 1905, underwent a subtle but very important change. The original image of the Chinese as inferior had been necessitated by the need to view them in a state of moral depravity which required the remedial efforts of Christian missionaries. As American church members began to be cast in a more vital role in response to their revived desire to become soldiers for Christ, the image of China shifted. According to the needs now prevailing, the Chinese were looked upon as a people capable of Christian salvation and destined to occupy a place in the world's future. This image of the Chinese fitted much

more satisfactorily with the social emphasis present in the evangelizing movement of the 1890's and early 1900's.

The emotional root of imperialism is the most difficult to isolate. At the end of the nineteenth century some Americans were reappraising the forces which had brought about the development of an economically oriented society. The popularity of Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward attests to the introspective tendency of Americans before and after the turn of the century. Henry George was honored not because the single tax would solve the nation's disparity between poverty and wealth but because he had the courage to take a hard look at American life. Henry Adams described his experience in trying to adjust old values to new worlds. A host of other writers including Ignatius Donnelly and Finley Peter Dunne commented on the passing scene in an effort to sort out what was valuable.

One of the things which bothered thoughtful Americans was the new emphasis on material values and an apparent decline in the vigor which had marked American individuality. The passing of the frontier seemed symbolic of a basic re-orientation in the nation's societal structure. Brooks Adams was bothered by the change and in searching for an answer he turned to history. In The Law of Civilization and Decay he presented his theory that within human communities there was present a certain quantity of energy, "Cosmic Energy" as he called it. All human societies utilize this energy on the

basis of attitudes of fear and greed. The attitude of fear produces an imaginative society in which religious and militaristic minds exercise control. The attitude of greed causes economic interest to predominate and money to become the source of power. In a society where money rules, imagination is overcome, centralization takes place and the society ceases to move forward. The result is stagnation.

The present state of society, thought Brooks Adams, was the result of the action of historical forces. Human society tended to move from a position of decentralization, or barbarism, to one of centralization, or civilization. Motivation by fear gave way to motivation by greed. Gradually the source of energy was used up until man in his most civilized state lost his desire to improve himself and sought only to protect his position. The progress of civilization from vitality to stagnation was controlled by the forces of history which were akin to natural laws. Brooks Adams saw a grim future ahead for western civilization and the United States. America had stopped moving and what energy remained was concentrated on preserving the present level of attainment.

This gloomy view of American society was supported by events occurring in the 1890's. According to some observers the social conflict between the antagonistic forces of those who controlled wealth and those who sought it threatened to shake the foundations of society. The bitterness

and violence of the strikes and the depression in 1893 reminded men that force, combativeness, and even brutality are still basic elements of human life. Labor had made tentative moves toward asserting its demands for a larger share of the wealth and had been beaten back. The influence of Darwin was widespread and the apostles of Social Darwinism recognized the need to struggle for a place in society. The conclusion was drawn by many that man must fight to live, that such was the proper method of existence.

The pessimism of Brooks Adams was not shared by one group of men who reacted to the changing patterns in American life at the end of the nineteenth century in a quite different way. The positive viewpoint was developed by such men as Theodore Roosevelt who felt that while Brooks Adams' analysis might have merit, the solution called for vigor not despair. Roosevelt became the best known advocate of the cult of the strenuous life. The energy of American civilization could be revived, he felt, and he set out to provide the country with a personal example.

The principle of the strenuous life, the revival of religious enthusiasm and the concept of Anglo-Saxon superiority were inextricably woven together in the 1890's. Darwin had proved conclusively, according to many thoughtful people, that some races were inherently superior to others. The Anglo-Saxon race was obviously a superior race and consequently had a special obligation to the inferior races. The Anglo-

Saxon race was destined to provide the leadership for backward peoples across the globe which would enable them to rise to greater heights of achievement. John Fiske defined America's destiny clearly in an article entitled "Manifest Destiny" which appeared in Harpers Magazine in March, 1885. He predicted that the Anglo-Saxon race would occupy every area of the earth's surface not already occupied by an ancient civilization. Josiah Strong expounded similar ideas in Our Country. In one chapter entitled "The Anglo-Saxon and the World's Future" he described how God and the Anglo-Saxon race would shape the future of the world. The followers of Mahan, the religious enthusiasts, and the advocates of the strenuous life had an important influence over a nation already excited by events which signaled an increase in America's world importance.

Against this background of an increasing world consciousness phrased largely in the terms of imperialism the American image of China comes into focus. American attitudes regarding China are examples of the attitudes which the nation at large developed between 1890 and 1905 towards the world and its role in it. There are peculiarities about the Chinese situation but in every case they are illustrative of the larger pattern.

The chief characteristic of the emerging image was inconsistency. The nation was challenged by the Chinese in several ways, some of which it found distressing. When the

Chinese came to the United States, Americans had much to learn about themselves as well as their guests. When Americans traveled in China they interpreted their experiences in a way which reinforced already unfavorable attitudes. China's new role in Asia and the world required further adjustments. In the early 1890's anti-Chinese sentiment was strong. Towards the end of the decade the hostility moderated somewhat and after the turn of the century interest in China strengthened. At any one time, however, the elements of the image were diverse and often in conflict. Widespread dislike was paralleled by scattered feelings of sincere appreciation. Consequently, the image which developed during these years was in constant flux with many inconsistencies.

Many Americans got their first impression of China from contact with Chinese laborers. For the most part their impression was unfavorable. Workingmen on the West coast became antagonistic towards the Chinese because they felt that their jobs were being usurped by the Chinese workman who hired out at lower wages. This feeling was encouraged and exploited by Western politicians who sought to utilize the labor vote. Others came into contact with the Chinese in their occupation as domestic servants and laundrymen. In these capacities the Chinese did not offer any threat to their employers nor did they particularly recommend themselves except for their reliability in the performance of

what were considered to be menial tasks. Occasional visitors of high rank, diplomats, students, and some merchants complete the possibilities for acquaintance with representatives of the Chinese people. On the whole Americans saw little need to understand these visitors and tolerated them only when they proved their usefulness.

Americans who went to China formed their impressions under a different set of circumstances. Some men came as representatives of the government. They lived in foreign compounds, utilized all the advantages which western progress could provide in technologically backward surroundings and thrived on an atmosphere of western superiority. Their attitudes ranged from contempt to paternalism. Businessmen in China were of small number and were allied with the diplomats by necessity as well as by preference and reflected similar views. Missionaries saw quite a different side of Chinese life because many of them lived in the interior away from the Europeanized settlements in the port cities, and entered far more deeply into Chinese life. Their viewpoint also needs qualification but by and large it reflects an experience which is closer to the heart of China. Travelers to China served as an important means of educating Americans at home. They were usually under no responsibility except to interpret their experiences as they saw them. Consequently the increasing volume of accounts of travels in China vary considerably in value and for the most part reflect as much

about the traveler as they do about China.

Two wars, a series of land grabs by European powers and a revolution, all within the space of a dozen years, forced Americans to consider the prospect of China as a factor which could affect the future of the United States. The image of China which emerges after 1898 is not as clear cut as it was prior to this date. The general lack of sympathy, ranging from dislike to tolerance, is present but other attitudes are developing. The concept of an open door in China was firmed into an Open Door policy. There were few who did not hail this as the key to the China question and probably an equal number who actually believed in the preservation of China's integrity.

Those who spoke most often on the subject of China seemed to say that China was important because it was an opportunity for American endeavor. Missionaries emphasized the need for converting the Chinese and thereby justified their efforts. Politicians referred to the need to protect China's integrity, thereby justifying American claims as the harbinger of democracy and freedom. Men in business emphasized the advantages of industrial development as China's only hope for salvation from Europe and thereby took their place among the fittest, who by their survival had won the right of leadership. Voices of caution were raised warning of the peril inherent in an aroused Asia. Benevolence and contempt, sincere concern and opportunism, and fear, these

are some of the attitudes which constitute the American image of China by 1905.

The most consistent aspect of the image, consequently, was its inconsistency. Americans viewed China in ways which were often conflicting. Because of the basic ambivalence of the American image of China, the policy of the United States in the Far East emphasized divergent facets of the Chinese problem. Americans condemned the Chinese in the United States and in China as inferior barbarians on the one hand while on the other they spoke of the greatness of Chinese civilization and the responsibility of America to preserve China's integrity. The Far Eastern policy of the United States was supposed to be based in part on the principle of the preservation of China's integrity, but Americans seemed just as willing to share in any benefits resulting from China's exploitation as were the European powers. The Open Door policy was predicated on the principles of integrity for China and equal rights for foreigners, two concepts which are not entirely compatible.

China was spoken of by the followers of Mahan and by such men as Albert Beveridge, senator from Indiana, and Charles Denby, United States minister to China, as the great opportunity for American trade. In 1898 figures could be cited which showed a rapid increase in exports to China since 1890. On the basis of such evidence China was hailed as an unlimited market for American goods. After 1900 when

exports to China showed a marked decrease these prophets continued to speak of a Chinese market, though now primarily in terms of the unlimited future potential of such a market. Indeed, the figures were disappointing. American businessmen cared almost not at all for the China trade. American consuls in China constantly complained about the apathy of American business. The consuls cited the failure to provide credit, the failure to establish warehouses, the failure to design goods to fit Chinese tastes, and the failure of business to establish a shipping line. In terms of total exports the trade with China was insignificant. The Open Door policy was designed to protect a trade which was practically non-existent.

Religious leaders spoke of the responsibility of Christian churches to minister to the Chinese. China was viewed as an example of the need for American religious leadership in the world. Spokesmen for Anglo-Saxon superiority such as Strong, Mahan, and Roosevelt pointed to China as proof that Americans were of a superior race and destined to play a leading role in elevating the backward areas of the world. Yet in the face of such assurance China was feared. The Asiatic hordes of Kaiser Wilhelms "Yellow Peril" were a phantom, but the fear of them was not nor was the threat of an industrialized China. "Asia for the Asiatics" was a slogan which aroused concern in the hearts of many Americans.

A consistent, carefully thought out attitude toward China did not exist in the 1890's and early 1900's. Because Americans never examined their real feelings toward the Chinese, the actual problems in China could not be dealt with. In the early and mid-1890's strong language was often used to describe the Chinese. They were abused verbally and physically by Americans at home and abroad. After 1898 such behavior became inconsistent with the picture that expansionists and others imbued with the idea of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority were painting. Open abuse of the Chinese diminished to be replaced by descriptions of America's paternal responsibility toward China. The Chinese were still viewed with contempt, though now the superiority of America was expressed in more sophisticated ways which accorded better with the view of the United States as a nation with world wide responsibilities. Foreign policy in regard to China was based on the quicksand of hidden attitudes and unrecognized fears.

The wellspring of these hidden feelings was insecurity. The American environment was undergoing significant change. Traditional values were being subjected to the stress of a new emphasis on the acquisition of wealth in American society. Would the old way of life be changed so much that it would no longer be recognizable as characteristically American? The question was asked by many. America's position in the world was also changing. A growing

realization of the nation's relationship to other nations and civilizations stimulated claims of America's destiny in the world, but it also raised questions as to the real significance and value of the American way of life. Would the claim of American uniqueness and individuality stand the test of a face to face comparison with China? Americans emphasized the bad aspects of Chinese civilization because it was too threatening to do otherwise. The policy of the United States in the Far East grew out of the image of China formed during the 1890's. It could not hope to be any more consistent or forthright than the image on which it was based.

CHAPTER II

THE HEATHEN CHINEE

Many Americans formed their first and deepest impression of China from contacts with Chinese immigrants who came to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. These Chinese came as laborers to take advantage of the high wages and plentiful supply of work stimulated by railroad construction, farming, and mining. When the demand for labor in California slackened in the 1870's the qualities which had made the Chinese desirable as laborers in the first place made them feared and hated by other workers. The uneasiness of California workmen at the presence of Chinese cheap labor was exploited by politicians. Anti-Chinese agitation showed a marked increase immediately preceding every presidential election in the 1870's and 1880's. California was usually a doubtful state and the closeness of the political contests during those years vaulted the issue of the Chinese into one of national importance.¹

¹See Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, The Anti-Chinese Movement in California (Urbana, 1939).

The anti-Chinese attitude of the West Coast soon spread to the rest of the nation. Because the Chinese laborers were from the coolie class in China it was easy to emphasize their undesirable characteristics. Most of what was said about the crowded filthy conditions in Chinatown was probably true. Opium smoking was fairly widespread among Chinese laborers and a strong criminal element was also present. But the important fact about these unfavorable descriptions is that the many attractive qualities of the Chinese were almost completely ignored. What Americans said about the Chinese was true, but it was only one part of the truth. The undesirable aspects of Chinese life were emphasized because of the widespread and antagonism toward the Chinese in the United States.

It was not just the laborer in California who resented and feared the presence of the Chinese. The anti-Chinese feeling was spread across the nation permeating every level of American society. Literary magazines such as Scribners, Century, and the Atlantic Monthly carried articles describing the low character of the Chinese. Journals with a reputation for honest reporting and unbiased comment on the contemporary scene, such as the Outlook and the Independent, shared in the anti-Chinese sentiment. The Arena, a liberal reform magazine in the 1890's and usually in the lead on progressive issues, also supported Chinese exclusion. Professional journals such as the Engineering Magazine, American

Architect, and Political Science Quarterly carried articles written from the anti-Chinese viewpoint. Religious magazines, including missionary publications, popular weeklies, and monthly reviews such as the Review of Reviews and Forum all spoke from an attitude hostile to the Chinese. The anti-Chinese feeling was shared by writers across the nation and was essentially a national attitude.

When the first Chinese began to arrive in San Francisco many of them were met at the dock and conducted to their places of employment. In 1853 only forty-two came but two years later the number increased to 3,526.² In 1858, 7,183 Chinese arrived in the United States and the number of yearly immigrants from China remained at about that level for the next fourteen years. Then in 1874, 13,776 Chinese arrived and two years later increased to 22,781. The yearly level remained fairly high until 1882 when under the impetus of the exclusion law of that year 39,579 Chinese entered, the vast majority by way of California. The leaders of the anti-Chinese movement in California, Denis Kearny among them, estimated the Chinese population in their state at 200,000 in 1876 with 75,000 in San Francisco alone.³ In October of that year, however, a joint committee

²"Our Immigration During 1904," National Geographic Magazine, XVI (January, 1905), 16.

³Sunyowe Pang, "The Chinese in America," Forum, XXXII (January, 1902), 598-607.

of Congress after examination of the problem placed the figure at 117,331 for the entire state while the census of 1880 indicated a Chinese population for the nation of 105,448.⁴ It seems likely that a figure slightly in excess of 100,000 would probably indicate correctly the Chinese population at the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Why did they come? The answer is clear when we know who met them as they came off the boat. They were quickly identified and gathered into their respective groups on the wharf and then hurried into the wagons which would carry them all the way to their destination or at least as far as the waiting flatcars and boxcars. The Chinese had been invited to come by the railroads. They were needed as construction workers to help accomplish the vast project of connecting the West Coast with Chicago and points East. Railroad agents had gone to China to describe the need for laborers, the high wages and plentiful work, and to arrange for passage. Other agents met them in San Francisco and hurried them to the scene of construction where the shortage of white laborers made their presence so desirable. Some Chinese also came to work in the mines, to help develop the barren regions of the West, and to pick the fruit.

⁴Ibid.

The Chinese had been told that they were needed, they came, and then in a few years they were told to leave. For twenty years the Chinese worked alongside men from Europe and native Americans. They marched in the Fourth of July parades and the Chinese display was usually the most elaborate and vigorously applauded. In 1868 the Chinese merchants of San Francisco were present at a banquet honoring their contributions to the life and well being of that city.⁵ Occasionally instances of persecution of the Chinese by members of other minorities were observed but only of a minor sort. In the same year when the Chinese merchants were banqueted at San Francisco the Burlingame Treaty was applauded in that city as the keystone of a new era of prosperity based on Chinese immigration. In 1869 the Central Pacific met the Union Pacific in Utah. Nine years later the Nevada mines collapsed. In between these dates the presence of the Chinese had changed from a blessing to a curse in the minds of most Californians.

Adjacent to the city hall in San Francisco was a large sandy lot, a natural place for the overflow crowd who had come to participate in the anti-Chinese mass meeting, to congregate. Dennis Kearny addressed them in excited tones reminding them of the threat posed by Chinese labor to their

⁵John Bonner, "Labor Question on the Pacific Coast," Current Literature, X (May, 1892), 50-54.

own employment and the security of their homes. These "sand-lotters" became the nucleus for the agitation which culminated in the first exclusion act of 1882. In the presidential campaign of 1879-1880 California and Oregon were doubtful states. The Republicans jumped the gun by sending a commission to China to "investigate" the immigration problem and discuss changes in the treaty of 1868.⁶ The instructions to the commissioners were vague though China made all the concessions which were asked of her. California and Oregon voted Republican in the election and in 1881 the terms of the Burlingame Treaty were modified with the consent of China. The following year a restrictive act suspended immigration from China for ten years. In 1888 a new treaty was drawn up and presented to China which strengthened the restrictions on Chinese immigration. China debated "too slowly" however and Congress rushed through a new exclusion act, the Scott Act, which even barred Chinese presently on leave from the country.⁷

The people who lived on the West Coast, particularly in California, were the first to come into contact with the Chinese in America and their attitude had a formative influence on the rest of the nation. "Only John!" concluded

⁶Chester Holcombe, "The Restriction of Chinese Immigration," The Outlook, LXXVI (April 23, 1904), 971-977.

⁷F. J. Masters, "Our Treaties with China," The Californian, IV (June, 1893), 24-32.

one author on the West Coast in 1896, "yet in a few years he has overrun the coast."⁸ Many Californians were hardly aware of the presence of the Chinese at first because they were employed in mining and railroad construction which took them away from the centers of population. But by the 1870's a sizeable number had congregated in San Francisco and almost every California town had a small community of at least one or two Chinese inhabitants. The most vocal opponents of the Chinese were the labor unions and it was the newspapers which were most faithful in giving voice to anti-Chinese sentiments.

The San Francisco Call remarked in 1892 that, "it ought to be understood at Washington by Republicans that a failure upon the part of the Senate to assist in the passage of an effective restriction law will deeply affect the future prospects of that party upon this coast. Our citizens are so deeply imbued with the idea that the Chinese are injurious to our civilization that they will sacrifice party obligations to get rid of them."⁹ This is as succinct a summary of the California attitude towards the Chinese problem and the methods by which they hoped to remedy it as we could hope for. California labor resented the Chinese because, while

⁸J. Torrey Conner, "Only John," Land of Sunshine, IV (February, 1896), 111.

⁹San Francisco Call (April 10, 1892), quoted in "Chinese Exclusion" (editorial), The Literary Digest, IV (April 23, 1892), 695.

white men went unemployed, Chinese could find work. It was claimed that the Chinese would work for lower wages and that white labor could not compete against him. The problem was certainly not so simple as that, but California workmen believed that it was. Politician and laborer formed a happy alliance, therefore, the Chinese question in California became inextricably bound up with politics.

The rest of the country usually followed the lead of Californians in their attitudes towards the Chinese. The Review of Reviews concluded in 1892 that "the Pacific Coast understands the Chinese question better than the rest of the country."¹⁰ The magazine felt that the Pacific Coast viewpoint had won acceptance in the East because it was the right view. Several years later Francis G. Newlands, senator from Nevada and author of the Newlands Irrigation Bill, described the process in California whereby educated people who had at first thought that the anti-Chinese feeling was based on ignorant prejudice came to realize the validity of the charges against Chinese competition.¹¹ He reached the conclusion that thinking men in California and elsewhere had now come to realize that the Chinese ought to be excluded.

¹⁰"The Chinese Question" (anon. rev.), Review of Reviews, V (June, 1892), 526.

¹¹Francis G. Newlands, "How Japan is Invading America," Illustrated American, XXII (July 31, 1897), 138-141.

There were some magazines that found fault with the radical views expressed by the so-called "sand-lot orators." But even then most people seemed to be willing to accept the lead of California, particularly in the early 1890's, because it was felt that Californians had had the most experience with the Chinese.

The open dislike manifested towards the Chinese in the 1870's and 1880's continued as a strong undercurrent into the early years of the twentieth century. There is no more typical expression of this feeling than Bret Harte's "The Heathen Chinee," a short poem which was written hastily in 1870 when Harte was editor of the Overland Monthly. The editor found himself with a vacant space to fill shortly before press time and "The Heathen Chinee" was the result. Three lines in the first stanza are possibly the most often quoted lines in all of the literature pertaining to the Chinese in America during these years.

Which I wish to remark . . .
 And my language is plain . . .
 That for ways that are dark,
 And for tricks that are vain,
 The heathen Chinee is peculiar.
 . . . :

Ah Sin was his name;
 And I shall not deny
 In regard to the same
 What that name might imply.¹²

¹²Bret Harte, "The Heathen Chinee," Overland Monthly, XL (September, 1902), 234-237.

With the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 due to expire Thomas J. Geary submitted a bill to the House reaffirming the provisions of the old act and adding a few new ones. The Geary Act of 1892 provoked a debate which marks a high point for Chinese exclusion agitation in the 1890's. Briefly, the feature of the Geary Act which was most different from the Act of 1882, was the requirement that all Chinese in the country had to register and submit to identification procedures, including photographing, upon penalty of imprisonment and deportation. While there was an outcry against this provision, there was never any serious doubt about the passage of the bill.

In his defense of the bill Geary, a representative from California, argued that the nation had a right as well as a duty to protect itself from the evils of "Asiatic slavery."¹³ American labor did not have to suffer the consequences of competition from "degrading" Chinese labor. Sentiment, or human rights, he said, had no application in government because the first duty of a government is to protect its citizens. He frankly described the Chinese as undesirable, accusing them of working for as little as five dollars a month and living on six cents a day. The Chinese will degrade our civilization. A Chinese laborer does not bring any wife or children with him; he does not set up a

¹³Thomas J. Geary, "Should the Chinese be Excluded," North American Review, CLVII (July, 1893), 52-67.

family but acts only in his own interest. If the American laborer is forced to compete with the Chinese then American labor will be reduced to the level of Chinese labor. Nothing should stand in the way of exclusion. "American interests in the far West, the maintenance of American civilization and the just protection of American labor from Chinese competition is of more consequence than the profits of the Chinese trade, or the maintenance of missionary stations in China."¹⁴

There was significant public support for the position which Geary espoused. The San Francisco Call and the Examiner, understandably, were entirely in favor of the bill. These newspapers had been leaders in the exclusion agitation and their chief concern seemed to be that the new provisions might not be strong enough. The Bulletin and the Argonaut, both San Francisco papers, also supported this view. The Eastern magazines did not follow the lead of the California newspapers unreservedly but there was a good measure of support. Harpers Weekly suggested in 1891 that the exclusion of the Chinese had been successful in ridding the country of an undesirable element and should be continued.¹⁵

¹⁴Thomas J. Geary, "The Law and the Chinaman," Californian Illustrated, IV (July, 1893), 313.

¹⁵"Immigration" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXV (May 16, 1891), 358.

In fact, said the editor, the same methods used against the Chinese might be employed with profit in behalf of the criminal element among European immigrants.

One of the most interesting aspects of the circumstances surrounding the Geary Act was the Chinese reaction to it. The Chinese in America had their own system for maintaining order within their communities. An organization called the "Six Companies" with headquarters in San Francisco had considerable influence among the Chinese. When the Geary Bill became law, the "Six Companies" organized a campaign to test the constitutionality of the Act. Every Chinaman in America was encouraged to contribute two dollars to provide money for legal fees. The "Six Companies" announced that any Chinese who refused to register under the Geary Act would be provided with legal counsel. Pressure was applied to persuade Chinese not to register in order to make a massive protest against the law. The estimated two hundred thousand dollars which was collected was used to guide test cases through the courts. One of these finally reached the Supreme Court which reversed a state court decision and pronounced the law constitutional.

The popular reaction to the legal campaign of the "Six Companies" was largely unfavorable. The Overland Monthly in California published an article describing the Chinese attitude towards the law and the pressures placed

upon them to prevent their compliance.¹⁶ The author explained how notices were posted in San Francisco's Chinatown threatening violence to any Chinese who registered. Threats of torture and death were made against the few who did comply so that over ninety per cent of the Chinese failed to register. Those few who did register often produced "hired witnesses" who swore that the Chinese in question was a merchant and not a laborer and therefore entitled to leave the country and return if he wished. Such actions by the Chinese the author found to be representative of their natural dishonesty and immorality. Eastern opinion according to a well known writer on popular science subjects held a similar view of the method employed by the "Six Companies" and thought it characteristic as well as despicable that the Chinese should be allowed to circumvent American laws.¹⁷ The Review of Reviews viewed the Act as "one of the best of the late congress," and felt that the Chinese had been ill advised not to obey it.¹⁸

The exclusion act of 1892 was limited to a duration

¹⁶Elizabeth S. Bates, "The Chinese Through an Official Window," Overland Monthly, XXII (August, 1893), 138-147.

¹⁷Charles F. Holder, "The Chinaman in American Politics," North American Review, CLXVI (February, 1898), 226-233.

¹⁸"The Chinese and the Geary Bill" (editorial), Review of Reviews, VII (April, 1893), 265.

of ten years; therefore, in 1901 the debate was reopened though on a greatly reduced scale. A minister from Rockford, Illinois summed up public opinion when he said, "There is little doubt that the Chinese exclusion law will be re-enacted. Organized labor demands it almost to a man, legislators of both political parties favor it, and in doing so express the sentiment of their constituents."¹⁹ James D. Phelan, Mayor of San Francisco, reported that a convention of 3,000 delegates from county boards, municipal bodies, labor unions and commercial and civil associations had voted unanimously to ask Congress to reenact the Geary exclusion act.²⁰ A writer in the Arena, a liberal reform magazine, thought that exclusion was a domestic concern only and ought to be decided strictly on the basis of American interests.²¹ Several articles in 1904 summed up the whole problem of exclusion and concluded that the law had been effective as well as justified and might well be extended to other immigrants. Dr. Allen McLaughlin of the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, with many years experience in immigration matters on the East Coast, said that the

¹⁹R. C. Bryant, "Chinese Exclusion," Arena, XXVII (March, 1902), 260.

²⁰James D. Phelan, "The Case Against the Chinaman," Saturday Evening Post, CLXXIV (December 21, 1901), 4.

²¹John Chetwood, "The Problem of Immigration," Arena, XXVII (March, 1902), 254-260.

exclusion act had worked fairly well and had confined the problem to the West Coast.²² "Mongolian trickery" has found many ways to evade the act, but without it the "mass of yellow coolies" would have swept into "Illinois, Pennsylvania and every other state in the Union."²³

The Chinese themselves, being the objects of the exclusion laws, could have little sympathy with them. It is interesting to observe which features of the law they objected to most. In 1904 Wong Kai Kah, vice-commissioner to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, said that the Chinese objected most to the abuses of personal dignity which were inherent in the procedures of the exclusion law.²⁴ Rule six stipulated that the Chinese immigrant could not communicate with friends or obtain legal advice while being held for investigation. Rule seven allowed witnesses to be designated only by the officials, and rule eight allowed the defendant only two days to appeal a decision. Several years earlier, the Chinese Consul-General to the Port of San Francisco, Ho Yow, a long time and respected resident in the

²²Allen McLaughlin, "Chinese and Japanese Immigration," Popular Science Monthly, LXVI (December, 1904), 117.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Wong Kai Kah, "A Menace to America's Oriental Trade," North American Review, LXXVIII (March, 1904), 369-378.

United States, summarized the charges against the Chinese.²⁵ In his defense he answered quickly the economic accusations of cheap labor and sending money home. But he was much more careful in answering the moral charges against the Chinese and indicated that these were the most serious. The Chinese deeply resented the attacks on their moral character. It seems from these foregoing examples that the Chinese objected less to the fact of exclusion than to the attitude of American superiority which characterized its enforcement.

The agitation for exclusion legislation and the several public debates at varying stages in its enactment were based on a solid rationale for the exclusion of the Chinese which had been developed over a number of years. Much of what was accepted as fact is seen today as fanciful. Testimonials of strange and devious behavior observed by those who circulated among the Chinese were given wide credence. Some of this distortion was probably due to honest misunderstanding, but most of it seems to have been caused by strong prejudices against the Chinese. Since prejudice is seldom required to be either logical or factual no qualms were felt about holding divergent views simultaneously.

At the center of the antagonism directed towards the Chinese was the accusation of cheap labor. The story was

²⁵Ho Yow, "The Chinese Question," Overland Monthly, XXXVIII (October, 1901), 228-231.

told about an American who had some wood to cut. He set out to hire a laborer to do the work and found an Irishman who would do it for seventy-five cents and a Chinaman who would charge fifty cents. The Irishman was hired. He in turn let the work out to the Chinaman and pocketed twenty-five cents.²⁶ Perhaps this tells as much about the Irish as it does about the Chinese, but it illustrates the accusation that the Chinese would work cheaply, so cheaply that even an Irishman could make money by hiring them.

The specifically economic charge against Chinese labor was that the Chinese worked for little and lived on less. Those who claimed that many Chinese were well paid were angrily rebutted by labor's spokesmen who pointed to the manufacturing concerns in California where Chinese labor had supplanted white girls and women. The Chinese had spread widely in agriculture where they were employed as harvesters of many crops, particularly fruit, in preference to white, Irish or Italian labor. The Chautauquan carried an article in 1897 by the author of several articles and a book on China describing the ruthless methods of the Chinese in driving out competition.²⁷ Two Chinese opened a factory for making women's and children's shoes. Their location was

²⁶Yung Kiung Yen, "A Chinaman on our Treatment of China," Forum, XIV (September, 1892), 85.

²⁷G. H. Fitch, "Races and the Labor Problem in California," Chautauquan, XXIV (January, 1897), 427-432.

in an alley where they lived and worked. By cutting prices they captured all the local business and then opened a fancy store on the street. No white man could compete with the Chinese who slept only one or two hours a day. Mining also attracted the Chinese because they could make a good living working the tailings, the discarded rock from mining operations which white men ignored.

The Chinese were best known, however, for their activities as laundrymen. The explanations offered for their monopoly of this work vary, in practice it was probably due to the lack of women available for the work particularly in California. Many observers felt, however, that it was the sort of work for which "John Chinaman" was best suited. The patrons of Chinese laundries usually evidenced a sort of paternal concern for the Chinese who ran them and one of the topics of daily conversation was a discussion of the merits and mysteries of the Chinese laundry. But for the most part the Chinese laundry was the subject of innumerable cartoons, which depicted the absurdity of the Chinese way of doing things. An illustration of a Chinese laundryman at work was captioned, "His Sprinkler."²⁸ A Chinese was shown moistening clothes about to be ironed by expectorating water from his mouth.

²⁸"How It Is Done" (anon. article), Land of Sunshine, VI (December, 1896), 58.

Labor's attitude towards the Chinese was devoid of all such humor. The Chinese crowded out white workers from cigar, clothing, shoe and shirt factories, from agricultural work and from surface mining. Terence V. Powderly was serving as Commissioner-General of Immigration when he made the following statement in 1901. "No graver danger has ever menaced the working men of America than that which faces them when the possibility of lowering the bars at our sea-ports and border-lines to the Chinese is presented."²⁹ This opinion from the noted labor leader received support four years later from President Roosevelt in a speech at Atlanta. His words occurred in the context of a political speech and were designed for the ears of labor. In the same speech the President also discussed our responsibility towards the nonlaboring Chinese in order to appease southern concern over the cotton boycott in China protesting American treatment of Chinese immigrants. "It is our clear duty, in the interest of our own wage-workers, to forbid all Chinese of the coolie class . . . from coming here. I am convinced that the well-being of our wage-workers demands the exclusion of the Chinese. . . ."³⁰

²⁹Terence V. Powderly, "Exclude Anarchist and Chinaman," Colliers Weekly, XXVIII (December 14, 1901), 7.

³⁰Theodore Roosevelt, "Cotton and the Chinese Boycott," National Geographic Magazine, XVI (November, 1905), 516.

The complaint of the California wage-workers against the economics of Chinese competition was the initial reason given for Chinese exclusion. But a far more fertile field for supplying material with which to attack the Chinese was that of moral character. One view maintained that it was unsafe for white people, particularly women, to come into contact with Chinese lest they be "corrupted." For a few years a minor controversy progressed over whether or not white girls should be allowed to teach the Chinese in the missionary Sunday Schools organized in some American cities. It was reported that in some instances these girls had married Chinese "students."³¹ Many people felt that it was not worth the "corruption" of white girls in order to save the soul of a "Heathen." There was considerable doubt that the Chinese could be converted by anybody, so degraded was their moral condition. Frederick J. Masters, a missionary among the Chinese in California, commented that they were "irredeemably and irretrievably bad and vile, as a rule, and all efforts to Christianize them only makes them greater hypocrites than ever."³² Century magazine for November, 1896 contained a carefully written article by a mission worker in

³¹"Teaching the Chinese" (editorial), Public Opinion, XII (February 20, 1892), 504.

³²Frederick J. Masters, "Can a Chinaman Become a Christian?" Californian, II (October, 1892), 622.

in New York comparing the qualities of immigrants in New York. One conclusion was that, "popular opinion, when considering our foreign immigrants, has given the lowest rank among them to the Chinese."³³ Even fertile imaginations sometimes failed to supply the necessary terms of approbation. One writer despaired of finding the appropriate term when he concluded that "morally and ethnically they are in a fourth dimension."³⁴

It was common to attribute much of the Chinese success in business affairs to his ruthless, dishonest methods. Countless stories were told which centered around the theme of the Chinese who hoodwinked competitors by a great variety of means all of which were either outrightly dishonest or so disreputable that no white man would attempt them. One Chinese was reputed to have bought a tract of land in Mexico, and then sold stock in a fictitious company to pay for it. Another story was told of a Chinese landlord who crowded his Chinese tenants into worse quarters than the previous American owner had done. The Chinese took over the importation of coolies into San Francisco and controlled the female slave trade. It was admitted that much of his success was due to his industry and business acumen, but the implication was

³³Helen F. Clark, "The Chinese of New York," Century, LIII (November, 1896), 104.

³⁴"The Chinaman in New York" (editorial), Leslies Weekly, LXXXIX (November 11, 1899), 378.

that no decent man would work as hard as the Chinese did. The image was summarized by such statements as this made by a real estate broker in San Francisco, "By his industry, suavity, and apparent child-like innocence, seconded by unequalled patience and the keenest business ability, the Chinaman is always the winner. Let white men set over him whatever guards they may, he can surpass them in treading the by-ways of tortuousness."³⁵

Interestingly enough, despite their industry and sharp business methods, the Chinese were described as a servile race. Their natural propensity for serving in menial capacities and outright slavery was testified to a large number of observers. Most people were aware of the Chinese in America only in their capacity as "coolies," laundry workers, or house servants. They generalized upon this fact to prove that the Chinese as a race were fitted only for the lowest kind of labor. Chinese submissiveness under the exclusion laws was offered as proof that the Chinese had no backbone. However, this view was contested sometimes by others who also attacked Chinese character but who wished to paint a picture of active rather than passive evil. Accordingly, the Chinatown visitor who came away with an impression of the "meek inoffensive, non-resistant Chinaman," was being

³⁵Thomas Magee, "China's Menace to the World," Forum, X (October, 1890), 202-203.

mislead.³⁶ Far from being meek, the Mongolian was a fatal-ist, with a ferocious fighting instinct and total lack of concern for human life.

The vocabulary which became identified with descriptions of the Chinese is instructive. The most characteristic word in use was "Chinaman." It carried the meaning of "one of them," or someone from "that place," meaning, of course, China. The use of the word "man" in combination with "China" had a similar connotation to the use of "boy" for negroes. The name "John" was often used in combination with "Chinaman." "John Chinaman" was simply a strengthening of the sense of anonymity, implied by the term man, which it was felt a servile and inferior race deserved. It was a term which expressed more intensely the same connotation represented by "hey, you."³⁷ Chinese domestic servants were often called "boy" though the term was really part of "house-boy" which was applied to other than Chinese.

More descriptive, if less pleasant, phrases were also used such as "moon-eyed lepers." The term combines two characteristics which were used as the basis for many similar terms. "Yellow lepers" is an example of the use of color, sometimes in reference to natural skin color and other times

³⁶J. Torrey Connor, "A Western View of the Chinese in the United States," Chautauquan, XXXII (January, 1901), 374.

³⁷The term "Chinaman," and other such terms, is used in this paper only to express the viewpoints of the period.

in reference to the symptoms of leprosy. "Yellow" as a word by itself was used regularly to describe a variety of things pertaining to the Chinese. Most often the term was used to identify the Chinese rather than the Japanese but it was also used for both. The Sino-Japanese war was called the "yellow war" by some magazines. "Almond eyed" was a variation which had a slightly less derogatory connotation, and "slant-eyed" was also occasionally used. The term "Chinese" was used occasionally, with the connotation of something foreign, backward, strange and a little immoral. Harsh tactics employed during a tariff debate in the senate were referred to as "Chinese" in character.³⁸ The title of the article in Harpers Weekly which referred to the debate was "Chinese Warfare."

Other words and phrases which seemed to recur frequently were terms with unpleasant connotations. The most frequent of these were variations on the idea of darkness. From descriptions of Chinatown to discussions of the interior of a Chinaman's soul the image was one of absence of light.³⁹ Words which implied a large number of people crowded into close company were frequent. "Swarm," "mass," "hordes," and other such words were employed, sometimes with

³⁸"Chinese Warfare" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXIV (September 27, 1890), 751.

³⁹Adriana Spadoni, "Devils, White and Yellow," Overland Monthly, XLIV (July, 1904), 80-84.

accuracy, but more often to convey the impression of animal-like inferiority, or, possibly, aggressiveness.⁴⁰ A great range of words were used to describe the backward, primitive character of the Chinese. In fact, almost any word with a negative meaning, applying to filth, disease, deterioration, rot, or degradation can be found in descriptions of the Chinese. In some instances ridicule was the method employed and the attitude conveyed, one of contempt.

In addition to economic and moral objections many Americans voiced a distaste for the social characteristics of the Chinese. Most prominent attention was given to the supposed threat to health posed by the Chinese. The San Francisco Board of Health published several reports over the years exposing the danger to the city inherent in the filthy conditions in Chinatown.⁴¹ Forum magazine, in 1893, urged the establishment of a nation wide quarantine against the entrance of infected Chinese immigrants.⁴² Several years later in an article on leprosy appearing during the time of a leprosy scare in New York city, a doctor in New York observed that, "our Chinese immigration laws, imperfectly as they meet the requirements, have at least delayed the

⁴⁰Eleanor Gates, "A Yellow Man and a White," Scribners, XXXVII (June, 1905), 40-43.

⁴¹James D. Phelan, "The Case Against the Chinese," Saturday Evening Post, CLXXIV (December 21, 1901), 4.

⁴²Edward O. Shakespeare, "Necessity for a National Quarantine," Forum, XIV (January, 1893), 582.

invasion, and mitigated the extent of leprosy."⁴³ Two articles in the North American Review in 1897 and 1898, both by medical doctors, reminded Americans that annexation of Hawaii would mean exposure to leprosy, a disease introduced by the Chinese. Whenever the subject of leprosy was brought up, the Chinese were mentioned as prime carriers.

Considerable weight was given to the statement that the introduction of a single Chinese into a town was enough to demoralize it. "The mere advent of a Chinaman in a community is an almost certain sign of impending moral degradation. He carries shame and ruin and unspeakable disease wherever he goes."⁴⁴ The author of this statement offered supporting evidence from one of the new social sciences. "Sociologists have observed with wonder that apparently the mere presence of the Chinaman seems to work for demoralization in a community. Children and women, when subjected to the influence of the Mongol, develop viciousness of striking intensity."⁴⁵

The most prominent feature of Chinese societal life in the United States during these years was Chinatown. The

⁴³E. C. Spitzka, "Another Word on the Contagiousness of Leprosy," Illustrated American, XXII (November 13, 1897), 628.

⁴⁴"A Plague of Men" (anon. article), Illustrated American, XIV (October 7, 1893), 427.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 428.

word itself showed an interesting development. There was a tendency earlier in the century to use several words to describe the collections of Chinese in the cities on the West Coast. "Chinese community" was a familiar term as well as "Chinese quarter." Quickly, however, the single word "Chinatown" gained predominance. In order for a Chinese community in a city to qualify for this designation it had to consist of a fairly large Chinese population occupying its own quarters. At first only New York and San Francisco could meet these requirements, and for the purist, only in San Francisco could one find a true "Chinatown." By the 1890's other cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago were considered to have small "Chinatowns." Quotation marks were sometimes supplied with the word but these disappeared and by the end of the century the designation, Chinatown, was accepted in its own right.

Because of his demoralizing effect upon the community he was considered a threat to American civilization. Lyman Abbott, who was a liberal clergyman and editor of the Outlook, in commenting upon the exclusion act in 1902, remarked that Chinese immigrants were, "of a persistently servile and alien population, whose presence is injurious to the standards alike of American labor and American citizenship."⁴⁶

⁴⁶"The New Chinese Exclusion Act" (editorial), Outlook, LXX (January 18, 1902), 153.

In the same year an article in Forum by Truxton Beale, the former United States Minister to Persia, author, and extensive traveler in the Orient, suggested that the presence of the Chinese threatened the American way of life because they threatened American prosperity.⁴⁷ The difficulty of documenting such generalizations did not prevent them from being given wide circulation. An article in the Baptist Quarterly Review in 1890 by a protestant minister concluded that the Chinese should be excluded for a number of reasons, but most of all because they represented a moral peril to our civilization.⁴⁸ It was not only his moral character that threatened American civilization, it was his unwillingness to assimilate. Harpers Weekly thought that the Chinese were the most "undesirable of immigrants, because, with all their useful qualities, they cannot assimilate socially or politically or morally with Americans."⁴⁹ The Chinese were disliked because they formed separate communities, ignored American customs for the most part, and sent money back to China.

⁴⁷Truxton Beale, "Why the Chinese Should be Excluded," Forum, XXXIII (March, 1902), 53-58.

⁴⁸Addison Parker, "The Exclusion of the Chinese," Baptist Quarterly Review, XII (October, 1890), 460-473.

⁴⁹"The Chinese Exclusion Bill" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXVI (April 16, 1892), 362.

Among people who had no use for the Chinese in any respect, attitudes towards Chinatown varied from bad to indescribable. The Californian published a descriptive article in 1893 which is quite typical.⁵⁰ The author a free-lance writer and traveler brought away from a visit to San Francisco Chinatown observations of an "agglomeration of Oriental paganism," with "reeking sidewalks, foul with unknown trash; the nauseous odors vomited from black cellars; the wilderness of alleys; . . . sphinx-eyed, crafty-faced yellow men who glide along the narrow pavements," and many other disturbing sights.⁵¹ Two years later another visitor to the same place described similar impressions gained from a tour of a boarding house. "In this (central) yard, in spite of all sanitary laws, all the offal and refuse collected in and about the establishment was deposited, so that the very potent 'celestial odor,' offal and opium combined, caused us to cut our visit to this establishment as short as possible."⁵² When the visitor left, his tour led him into other sections of the Chinese community. "We went by way of some narrow, dark, and evil-smelling entries--past numerous

⁵⁰Elodie Hogan, "Hills and Corners of San Francisco," Californian, V (December, 1893), 63-71.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 67.

⁵²W. H. Gleadell, "Night Scenes in Chinatown, San Francisco," Eclectic Magazine, LXII (September, 1895), 381.

closed doors, in the center panels of which were narrow slits through which came cautious hisses to attract our attention."⁵³ The "tour," by the way, was conducted by a detective from the San Francisco police department.

Chinatown had a fascination for global travelers. From reading the articles on travel to the orient it appears that many began their trip in San Francisco's Chinatown. One female tourist, a rarity in 1890, found the air "thick with oriental odors of unknown origin."⁵⁴ She observed workers in small cellar workshops laboring steadily on well past midnight. She climbed "rickety, greasy stairs" past rooms where "human bundles lay on shelves, overcome by poppy fumes," past "greasy hot kitchens" and "cackling cooks" preparing "midnight meals."⁵⁵ Julian Ralph, who was a regular contributor on Chinese subjects, thought that most seasoned travelers who visited Chinatown, particularly in San Francisco would find their worst expectations realized.⁵⁶

The Chinese theater was a steady attraction for visitors. Frederick J. Masters, a missionary among the

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Elizabeth Bisland, "A Flying Trip Around the World," Cosmopolitan, IX (May, 1890), 54.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 55.

⁵⁶Julian Ralph, "San Francisco Through Eastern Eyes," Harpers Weekly, XXXVI (February 6, 1892), 135.

Chinese in San Francisco, characterized its physical appearance, overlooking the "reeking filth" of the market, reached by steep stairs and consisting of a long dirty auditorium destitute of ornamentation or stage props.⁵⁷ The trampling, pushing, jabbering crowd and the terrible noise made it impossible to concentrate on the performance. "The fiddles screech, trumpets blare, battles rage, drums and tom-toms crash, pandemonium breaks loose, and the visitor rushes out into the night to cool his throbbing brain."⁵⁸ Other visitors could not comprehend why the plays had to be of such length, from several hours to several days, or could not understand what was going on in the absence of any but the barest scenery. Those who could understand Chinese fared little better because even though they could understand the dialogue they were unable to endure the noise of the accompanying musicians. Almost all who came to see went more convinced than before of the barbaric nature of Chinese drama.

The strangeness of Chinatown was a theme emphasized by many visitors. The clothing which the Chinese wore appeared very peculiar by Western standards. Bright colors that did not seem to harmonize very well and pants for the women seemed quite foreign. The written language was odd

⁵⁷Frederick J. Masters, "The Chinese Drama," Chautauquan, XXI (July, 1895), 436.

⁵⁸Ibid., 442.

enough but even when translated it made little sense. Signs outside shops carried outlandish names in poetical phrases bearing no relationship to the actual business of the owner. The local apothecary with its, "beetles, snake bones, lizards, toadsblood, and other tonics" highly amused Americans who were used to more sophisticated medical treatments. One author, a naval officer on tour in the Far East, noted that the medicine which the Chinese needed worst was unavailable; fresh air and sunlight.⁵⁹ Funerals were a source of curiosity and amusement as were the local religious temples or joss houses. The idols and incense of these latter places, plus the corpulent resident priest and the joss sticks which revealed a man's fortune strengthened the impression of the Chinese as heathens.

San Francisco's Chinatown was the source of much of America's acquaintance with Chinese communities but the examples from other cities were similar. Denver's Chinatown was described by a local minister as, "shabby, squalid, vile old Chinatown! It was the foulest, filthiest, most cheerless spot in all Denver."⁶⁰ New York's Chinese quarter was found swarming with humanity, where all men and women look alike

⁵⁹W. A. Rogers, "A Chinese Prescription," Harpers Weekly, XLIII (December 9, 1899), 1239.

⁶⁰J. L. Harbour, "A Funeral in Chinatown," Christian Union, XLV (June 18, 1892), 1195.

and where ignorance, superstition and wretchedness characterize "this unwholesome side of New York life."⁶¹ Mott Street in New York could not compare to San Francisco's Chinese settlement but it was a local center for all the Chinese in the area. Furthermore, its inhabitants were the same because, "the wearer of a cue can never be other, to the popular eye than a 'heathen.'"⁶² The same article found the character of the New York Chinese to be the same as Chinamen everywhere. Their "utter failure to appreciate the virtue of cleanliness," the squalor of their environment and their personal immorality were no different in New York than elsewhere. The last word on Chinatown, in so far as some people were concerned, may have been uttered by the mayor of San Francisco who suggested that, "there is no remedy for the evils of Chinatown apart from its utter demolition."⁶³

In addition to the impressions gained from an appraisal of Chinese communities, many Americans formed their opinions from activities which were considered characteristic of the Chinese in the United States. One of these was

⁶¹Arthur Hoeber, "New York's Foreign Quarters," Illustrated American, XXI (January 16, 1897), 111.

⁶²Warren Taylor, "The Chinese Quarter of New York," Munsey's Magazine, VI (March, 1892), 681.

⁶³James D. Phelan, "The Case Against the Chinaman," Saturday Evening Post, CLXXIV (December 21, 1901), 4.

fishing on the California coast. Those who had any reason to be aware of the fisheries industry in California were highly indignant at the illegal practices of the Chinese who were destroying the industry because of their practice of taking small fish and shrimp at all seasons. "It is generally agreed," commented a local fish and game official in one California magazine, "that the Chinese fishermen have little regard for the law (if they can evade it) and absolutely no consideration for the preservation of young fish from destruction."⁶⁴ In the same article testimony was offered by the head of the fish and game department in San Francisco as to the illegal apparatus and methods employed by the Chinese. Chinese fish camps were noted for their pungent odors and their dirty, rickety shacks. Even the beauty of Monterey Bay could not redeem a Chinese fish camp, according to one author.

Illegal fishing practices paled, however, in comparison with the criminal practices of the "Highbinders." This term originated in 1806 when it was used to describe Irish banditti who were responsible for a series of riots.⁶⁵ It was later applied to a secret Chinese society in San Francisco which had evolved from the Triad Society in China.

⁶⁴R. F. Walsh, "Chinese and the Fisheries," Californian Illustrated, IV (November, 1893), 834.

⁶⁵F. J. Masters, "Among the Highbinders," Californian, I (January, 1892), 62.

This was a private organization patterned along the lines of the Chinese clan system and was similar to the Italian Mafia. Highbinders were considered to be the controlling force in the Chinese underworld and at their door all the crimes attributable to the Chinese were laid. The headquarters of the society was Spofford Alley in San Francisco where initiations were performed and matters of highest importance discussed. Distinction should be made between the Chinese Six Companies and the Highbinders though this was not generally done at that time. The Chinese consulate and leaders in the Chinese community including the heads of the Six Companies agreed that the Highbinders Society was nothing more than a band of assassins, blackmailers, and terrorists who made their influence felt in every Chinese community they could reach.

The undeniably criminal character of the Highbinders was often offered as evidence that the Chinese were of an excessively criminal nature. Statistics were developed which were supposed to prove that the Chinese population contributed a disproportionate share to the criminal population. One table based on the 1890 census showed that while the Chinese and Japanese made up less than a quarter of one per cent of the foreign population they were responsible for more than one and one-quarter per cent of homicides in the

United States.⁶⁶ An earlier survey based on the census for 1880 demonstrated that while the Chinese made up only two-tenths of one per cent of the foreign population they constituted almost one per cent of the prison population.⁶⁷ Such statistics as these convinced many people that the Chinese were a criminal threat to the communities where they lived.

The methods employed by the Highbinders to establish their influence received wide notoriety. The men who were dispatched on the society's errands were called "salaried soldiers." One such "soldier" was captured in Victoria, B. C., and instructions were found on his person which detailed the procedures to be followed in the event that his mission failed.⁶⁸ If he was slain in the discharge of his duty his family was paid five hundred dollars. If he was wounded he got free medical help and ten dollars a month or if he was captured his family was paid one hundred dollars a year until his sentence expired. The cold blooded nature of the instructions chilled many a reader and helped encourage the outcry against the Chinese. It was admitted that ordinary court procedure was helpless before such unprincipled men who

⁶⁶Sydney G. Fisher, "Immigration and Crime," Popular Science Monthly, XLIX (September, 1896), 625-630.

⁶⁷W. M. F. Rand, "Immigration and Crime," Journal of Social Science, XXVI (February, 1890), 66-78.

⁶⁸Frederick J. Masters, "Highbinders," Chautauquan, XIV (February, 1892), 554-558.

feared neither pain nor death so long as their families might benefit. One author spoke for many people when he concluded that, "their vicious propensities are so marked that it were better, I believe, if the first one had never been allowed to land."⁶⁹

Opium smoking was considered a prime example of Chinese criminality and debasement. Descriptions of opium dens were as frequent as they were gruesome. A typical visit was described in an anonymous article. "A bed furnished with only a mattress nearly filled the room. On it lay a woman smoking opium with a fierce eagerness. The sallow, swollen face told the tale of drink and opium. Her lips were pressed tight against the mouthpiece of the pipe . . . ; the veins of her forehead thickened, her cheeks flushed . . . she floated away. . . ."⁷⁰ Descriptions of scenes like this and worse were common to every popular magazine in the 1890's. Detailed drawings of the equipment necessary for pursuing the habit as well as prices and places where the drug might be purchased were published. Some people feared that the habit would spread in the United States and others testified to having seen large numbers of white women frequenting opium dens. The percentage of the Chinese population which used

⁶⁹Broughton Brandenburg, "Our Imported Criminals," Colliers, XXXIV (February 4, 1905), 13.

⁷⁰"The Opium Case" (anon. article), Illustrated American, IV (November 29, 1890), 551-552.

the drug was variously estimated from less than ten per cent to a majority of all Chinese. Whatever the truth of the matter was the "foul curse" of opium smoking was a bountiful source for anti-Chinese material.

No less horrible, but a little difficult to describe in a more victorian age, was the female slave traffic. It might be possible to literally penetrate the depths of an opium den in order to expose its evil but a similar course in a Chinese brothel was a more delicate matter. Yet one could speak in generalities and still convey the impression of a malevolent evil. The described procedure, according to an author who was highly respected for his articles on popular science, was for an agent in China to persuade a Chinese girl to come to the United States as a bride for a prospective husband. The Chinese custom of purchasing women for marriage made this easy enough and once the girl had made it through the immigration barrier she was conducted to the "Queens Room" in Chinatown where she was displayed for purchase.⁷¹ The price was usually around six hundred dollars but might range above two thousand in some circumstances. Details such as these and more were available for any subscriber of a number of magazines including the North American Review. The moral of it all was that such activity

⁷¹Charles F. Holder, "Chinese Slavery in America," North American Review, CLXV (September, 1897), 288-294.

was merely another example of the peculiarly debauched character of the Chinese.

The steady trickle of Chinese into the United States in spite of the exclusion laws was a running sore for those who wanted all Chinese excluded. As Commissioner-General of Immigration, Terence Powderly thought that smuggling was widespread. "Chinese laborers cross our border-line between the United States and Canada disguised as clergymen, as nuns, as Quakers and as Indians; they come over the line by rail, boxed in barrels, covered top and bottom by potatoes; they come over sandwiched between bales of hay; they come in freight cars, buried under corn, wheat and oats;" ⁷² Even such ingenuity as this failed to provoke any sympathy for the Chinese. One of the prime areas of operation for undercover activities was in the North-west portion of the United States. The Chinese landed in Canada by paying the head tax and were then brought from Victoria to landing points in northern Washington. Some slipped across the border between Washington and Canada at the many unguarded points in that wilderness area. The Mexican border was another location where the scrutiny of immigration officials could sometimes be escaped.

⁷²Terence V. Powderly, "Exclude Anarchist and Chinaman," Colliers Weekly, XXVIII (December 14, 1901), 7.

More irritating than these methods, however, were the legal subterfuges which the Chinese employed to evade the exclusion laws. Chinese who had been born in the United States could re-enter if they could offer proof of their status as a native American. The proof usually consisted of the testimony of two Chinese witnesses who were willing to swear to the place of birth of the defendant. In most cases this would be in San Francisco's Chinatown. Naturally a number of abuses occurred under this provision so that one Federal Judge estimated that, "if the story told in the courts were true, every Chinese woman who was in the United States twenty-five years ago must have had at least five hundred children."⁷³ The Judge's estimate does not seem so exaggerated when the number of women estimated to be in San Francisco's Chinatown as late as 1897 was estimated at only a few hundred.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it was clear to many people that the Chinese were utilizing American laws in an illegal way in order to expedite their entry into the United States.

One of the more obvious examples of the attitude towards the Chinese was the rough treatment which they received. Though it was not reported until 1891, in 1887 thirty-four

⁷³Allen McLaughlin, "Chinese and Japanese Immigration," Popular Science Monthly, LXVI (December, 1904), 118.

⁷⁴Charles F. Holder, "Chinese Slavery in America," North American Review, CLXV (September, 1897), 288-294.

Chinese who were placer mining for gold on the Snake River were murdered and robbed. The killers, though known, were never apprehended. At Vallejo, California the Chinese settlement was burned by hoodlums resulting in the death of one child. Many other California towns were scenes of the worst sort of brutality as well as general harrassment. One Chinese prisoner was released to the Indians in order to save the cost of a trial. He was cut to pieces a short distance outside town. The reaction to Chinese who sought to establish residence in the smaller Western towns was sometimes violent. In Great Falls, Montana a Chinaman who attempted to start a laundry was run out of town in twenty-four hours. The Tribune concluded that, "there is no room for the almond-eyed sons of China in this city, . . . no pig-tailed saffron will be allowed to call this city his home."⁷⁵

Throwing rocks at the Chinaman was such a widespread form of entertainment that it deserves special mention. A childhood memory of one author contained fond thoughts of "Oriental steamer day" when Chinese immigrants were hauled by express wagon to Chinatown and "knots of boys and young men gathered on the street corners to revile the newcomers with oaths, while they compelled the wagons to run a gauntlet

⁷⁵"Chinese" (editorial), Nation, LVI (April 6, 1893), 248.

of flying missiles."⁷⁶ Paul Carus, an editor dedicated to the honest pursuit of ideas noted that in Chicago a fourteen year old girl was jailed for throwing a rock at a Chinaman and missing. She broke a window and while pelting the Chinaman was considered "playful," breaking the window was "malicious mischief."⁷⁷ In San Francisco a minister was preaching a eulogy for a young boy who had died suddenly. He recalled that "it was only last Tuesday that I saw this blessed bud of promise, out on Sacramento Street, a-heaving rocks at a Chinaman."⁷⁸ The Chinaman was considered fair game by ruffians and boys out for adventure.

The Chinese theme received frequent attention in fiction during these years. One of the most popular plots was the story of the Chinese girl held in slavery who escaped to the city mission house. The sordid aspects of a life in slavery were heavily emphasized. Another plot centered around life in a small western town where the local Chinaman was caricatured in a variety of ways all of them uncomplimentary. Fictional Chinese held several attributes in common; among these were their deviousness, immorality and strange uncivilized ways. In a number of instances the

⁷⁶ Doremus Scudder, "Chinese Citizenship in Hawaii," Outlook, LXXXI (December 23, 1905), 987.

⁷⁷ "Chinese Persecution" (editorial), Open Court, V (December 10, 1891), 3061.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Chinaman was pictured as "not quite human." One fiction writer suggested in her story that, "Wong Ning was developed from an altogether different and inferior ape."⁷⁹ A Chinese girl was characterized as one who, "walks on pegs, doesn't she? Soaks her pigtail in grease over night, and selects her clothes blindfolded from the ribbon counter."⁸⁰ All Chinese were expected to speak Pigeon English.

For some Americans their closest contacts with the Chinese came through missionary work in California. The general attitude of the religious worker among the Chinese in California was that the Chinaman, while in a serious state of heathenism, could be restored by a vigorous application of Christianity. While there are strong elements of paternalism and appreciation in such an approach, nevertheless, it is clear that the Chinaman was held in rather low regard by many. A letter from the Congregational mission in Santa Cruz described a fire in Chinatown. "Of course I feel very sorry for our mission brethren, but I am glad Chinatown is in ashes. We were all getting sick from the impure air . . . (and) the filth surrounding our mission rooms, and I believe it was the Lord's will that it should

⁷⁹Ella Sterling Cummins, "An Honest Heathen," Lippincotts Magazine, L (December, 1892), 784.

⁸⁰Olive Dibert, "The Chinese Lily," Overland Monthly, XLII (September, 1903), 184.

burn."⁸¹ Many missionaries in such situations probably sustained themselves in a hard and discouraging work by their thoughts of the extreme degradation of the Chinaman's life and the resulting gains which might come through their efforts.

The possibility of annexing Hawaii created the specter of citizenship being extended to the Chinese. The thought provoked some articulate comment. The Chinese in Hawaii were characterized in the same way that they had been in the United States. An interesting comparison between the Japanese and the Chinese was made by a native islander. "There's no harm in the Japanese. He dresses like a Christian, eats like a Christian, speaks plain English like a Christian, and gets drunk like a Christian, but as for these Chinamen, they live on nothing, work day and night, save money, make secret societies; in fact, they are devils."⁸² The motley, detested, and dangerous Asiatic should never be granted the same privileges as native Americans.

The American image of China was founded on a widespread hostility toward the Chinese. The antagonism which marked the first prolonged contact between Americans and

⁸¹W. C. Pond, "The Chinese," American Missionary, XLVIII (July, 1894), 269.

⁸²Alenui Hau, "Business Opportunities in Hawaii," Engineering Magazine, I (June, 1891), 284.

Chinese remained a permanent part of America's attitude toward China. Because of the depth and extent of this feeling the policy of the United States in the Far East was formed under its influence. The attitude of men such as Hay and Rockhill, who were responsible for developing the Open Door policy, was an attitude shared by most Americans, one of patronizing contempt. Politicians might speak of the importance of preserving China's integrity, but real support for such a policy was difficult to generate in an environment permeated by anti-Chinese sentiment.

CHAPTER III

USEFUL ALIENS

During the debate over the Geary Bill in 1892 anti-Chinese feeling increased in intensity, yet beneath the heightened expressions of hostility a more sympathetic note was audible. When interest in exclusion subsided after 1892 a more favorable attitude toward the Chinese became increasingly evident. It was not a new note. The Chinese had been described appreciatively by a small group of Americans in earlier years as well. In the 1890's this favorable attitude continued to find expression. Placed against the background of a declining interest in exclusion the growth of a more appreciative analysis of Chinese culture made it appear as though the American attitude toward China was changing. Actually, however, even though favorable comments were increasing, the basic attitude of contempt for an inferior people did not change. While the sympathetic attitude was at times readily apparent, it never became more than a minor note.

Naturally there was a wide variety of emphasis in the more favorable viewpoint. At one extreme were a few who felt so strongly about principles of justice and equality that they argued for the extension of these principles to

the Chinese, even to the extent of opposing exclusion in any form. At the other end were those who really did not care for the Chinese at all but who would grudgingly admit to their occasional utility. These viewpoints were revealed not only by what was written but by what was not. The diminishing interest in exclusion and the tendency to accept the Chinese as a part of the American scene illustrate this point of view. As articles exploiting the sensational and unattractive side of the Chinese tapered off somewhat a few articles appeared which attempted to understand and appreciate him. While the extent of the acceptance of the Chinese should not be exaggerated, it is necessary to balance the unfavorable view of him with this more appreciative one.

One of the most important objections to the Chinese exclusion laws grew out of a concern for relations with China. Lyman Abbott, editor of the Outlook and a Christian minister with a liberal point of view, thought that, "America must either abandon all hope of developing commerce with China or treat the Chinamen with respect."¹ For politicians it might come down to a choice between the labor vote and the commercial vote. It is significant to note that Mr. Abbott's prophecy was for future years, because in the years up to 1905 it was the desires of labor which were represented in

¹"The Chinese Immigration Laws" (editorial), Outlook, LXXX (July 8, 1905), 614.

legislation, at least in so far as the Chinese in America were concerned. Some felt that if we had treated any other nation as we had treated China we would have had a war on our hands. Chinese viewpoints on exclusion were circulated and readers were told to hearken to opinions such as were expressed by a Chinese commercial house doing business in New York city. A spokesman for the firm remarked that China's foreign trade was developing rapidly but that the share of the United States in the new trade was not increasing. Lyman Abbott commented that, "it is therefore, in our judgement, of great importance that our commerce with China be not restricted by any unnecessary measures against the Chinese people."²

The Independent was a regular spokesman against the injustices of the exclusion laws. In 1890 it wrote that the suggested legislation, "goes beyond the bounds of decency and humanity, and must seem intolerable to anyone not afflicted with the craze against the Chinese which began with the sand-lot orators of California and has got possession somehow of most of the politicians."³ The editor excoriated the bill because it made it a crime for a Chinese to be found on the soil of the United States unless he registered. In

²"A Chinese View" (editorial), Outlook, LXX (January 18, 1902), 153.

³"A Crime to Breathe the American Atmosphere" (editorial), Independent, XLII (April 10, 1890), 10.

1892, the editor of the Christian Union, which came under the leadership of Lyman Abbott as the Outlook a year later, thought that the Geary Bill, which had just been signed by the President, was a disgrace to the nation.⁴ It was an insult to China and it would not be at all surprising if the Chinese retaliated, the editor added somewhat hopefully. Religious feeling in some quarters was incensed when President Cleveland signed the bill. Thomas C. Edwards, educator, author, and Presbyterian clergyman voiced a reaction typical of religious assemblies across the nation when he said, "It is a political question, and that is why our noble senators and most unimpeachable President complete the iniquitous proceedings."⁵

Many people pointed out how the exclusion laws violated our treaty agreements with China. The editor of the Nation explained how Senator Sherman's fight against the bill had been in vain, "for the majority of both parties seem to believe that it is right to 'trample upon a treaty,' so long as it is a treaty with Chinamen."⁶ The Review of Reviews disliked the thought of breaking our pledge with

⁴"The Outlook" (editorial), Christian Union, XLV (May 14, 1892), 922.

⁵"Chinese Question" (editorial), Nation, LIV (May 12, 1892), 347.

⁶Ibid.

China which we had solemnly proffered through our treaties with her.⁷ The specific conflict was with the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 in which the United States had promised never to exclude Chinese immigration though it might limit or restrict it. Not everyone agreed that the treaty had been violated by the exclusion laws but a number of people felt that the act of 1892 was disgraceful and unfaithful.

A far larger segment of American opinion approved of the exclusion laws in principle but objected to the unfairness of their provisions. The editor of Leslie's Weekly believed that indiscriminate immigration was obviously undesirable but that restriction ought to be consistent with our past treaties. It might even be preferable, he said, to let the Chinese come if the alternative was the weakening of the nation's good name.⁸ "Undoubtedly this nation must throw some limitations on immigration to its shores," editorialized the American Missionary in a similar vein.⁹ But this did not mean that the nation should pass a bill which discriminated against races, violated a treaty obligation,

⁷"Chinese Exclusion" (editorial), Review of Reviews, VIII (July, 1893), 71.

⁸"The Anti-Chinese Legislation" (editorial), Leslie's Weekly, LXIX (April 19), 1890, 231.

⁹"The Chinese Exclusion Bill" (editorial), American Missionary, XLVI (May, 1892), 143.

crippled trade, and might cause retaliation. Exclusion was rude to the Chinese, a crime against human brotherhood, and discriminatory in nature.

In California, observed a protestant clergyman of the state, interest in exclusion was abating. An article entitled "Social Changes in California," concluded that "the Chinese problem, so called, has but little vitality, although it is still a fruitful subject for newspaper editorials and sensational space-writing. The masses of Californians appear to think that the present laws are reasonably well enforced."¹⁰ Orchard and vineyard owners were in favor of Chinese labor because they could not get reliable labor from other sources. The agricultural interests, therefore, formed a sort of pro-Chinese party in resistance to the labor unions. The next year a California magazine summarized the Chinese feeling in its state. "It is an old story now that the politicians have far outrun the desires of the people of the Pacific Coast in their anti-Sinitic fervors."¹¹ Naturally it was hard for Congress to realize this as long as California newspapers continued to publish their extreme views, ". . . yet even newspapers do not always feel the public pulse, especially in a matter where the advocates of one

¹⁰C. H. Shinn, "Social Changes in California," Popular Science Monthly, XXXVIII (April, 1891), 801.

¹¹"Chinese" (editorial), Overland Monthly, XIX (May, 1892), 557.

side are very much in earnest, and the opponents, though a majority do not care much about it."¹²

In the same article the author wondered that politicians had not been able to read the signs of a decrease in anti-Chinese feeling from the election in 1887. "It ought to have been evident enough how hollow it had become, from the absolute indifference of the Coast during the last presidential campaign to Mr. Harrison's record on the Chinese question. When it was discovered that he had voted against the Exclusion Act, it was thought by most politicians here that it would be simply impossible to nominate him."¹³ The politicians had been wrong then and so were a lot of editors and congressmen now when they described the anti-Chinese feeling in California. The Democrats had paid little attention to the tariff in 1887 and had campaigned on anti-Chinese propaganda. As it turned out the voters cared nothing at all about Mr. Harrison's vote on the Chinese matter.

Joaquin Miller, poet, amateur philosopher and naturalist, and California booster, claimed to speak for California when he said, "Californians, the real Californians, desire this act modified, if not entirely abrogated."¹⁴ The

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Joaquin Miller, "The Chinese Exclusion Act," Arena, XXXII (October, 1904), 352.

context of his remark was the debate over exclusion in 1904. Miller was enthusiastic in his portrayal of the favorable side of California opinion regarding the Chinese. "The real Californian who bears the burthen of state hardly took note of what was being done till too late; but now he wants the whole thing undone."¹⁵ He claimed to be speaking for the real West when he said that property owners had never wanted to discriminate against the Chinese. He laid the blame for the agitation on the head of the labor agitator who was nothing but a "beggar and a bully." The real laboring man simply wanted to work and never feared Chinese competition.

Miller's viewpoint was not widely supported, however, and an opinion which lies closer to the center was that of a minister in Portland, Oregon. "The majority of quiet and order-loving citizens are glad the agitation ceased when it did, and that without the rupture of friendly relations with China the influx of an undesirable element into our population was brought to an end."¹⁶ A similar note was sounded by the editor of Public Opinion in commenting on the inauguration of a Chinese daily paper in San Francisco's Chinatown. "It is worthy of repetition that the apotheosis of 'sand-lot' intolerance finds its fitting fruitage in this

¹⁵Ibid., p. 354.

¹⁶A. J. Hanson, "The Chinese in America," Methodist Review, LII (September, 1892), 714.

most remarkable newspaper."¹⁷ The diminishing interest in exclusion was the result of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the exclusion laws. A somewhat more favorable attitude toward the Chinese began to develop only when their threat in California had been eliminated.

The slackening of interest in the Chinese in California was a trend which continued across the nation. As early as 1892 a resident of the West Coast remarked that in the nation as well as in California, "the question of Chinese immigration ceased to be one of absorbing popular interest."¹⁸ When the exclusion laws were due for renewal in 1902 the Literary Digest commented that, "At no time during the progress of the Chinese exclusion measure through Congress has there been enough opposition to it to make it an 'issue.'" When a Chinese boycott was mounted in China against American goods the reaction seemed to be that while Americans still didn't like the Chinese they would have to learn to live with China if they expected to trade with her. While difficult to document, the diminishing interest in the subject of exclusion was quite evident in all periodicals.

The disappearance of the Chinese question as a domestic issue was due primarily to the disappearance of the image

¹⁷"A Chinese Daily Paper" (editorial), Public Opinion, XXVII (December 21, 1899), 791.

¹⁸A. J. Hanson, "The Chinese in America," Methodist Review, LII (September, 1892), 713.

of the Chinese as a threat to American life. Shortly before the onslaught of anti-Chinese recriminations in the debate over the Geary Bill in 1892, Public Opinion magazine observed that, "Outside of the labor unions and the hoodlums, nobody objects to the Chinese. They are preferred to Irish servant girls. . . . They work side by side with white workmen in factories, in orchards, and on farms, and fights are of rare occurrence."¹⁹ The Chinese had been painted in livid colors but they had not lived up to their reputation. The Chinese were no more criminally inclined than other races. Chinatown instead of being the filthiest place in the city had often proved to have a superior health rate. All the Chinese wanted was to be allowed to travel and work in the United States without being molested. They had no evil designs on the American way of life or on American prosperity. Such a picture of the Chinese was much less threatening.

The charge of cheap labor levelled against the Chinese was denounced as false. The Yale Review for February, 1896, carried an article by a professor in social science at the University of California entitled "Labor in California" in which the whole question of Chinese labor was examined.²⁰

¹⁹"The Chinese in California" (editorial), Public Opinion, XI (July 25, 1891), 379.

²⁰Carl C. Plehn, "Labor in California," Yale Review, IV (February, 1896), 409-425.

The popular theory for the reduction of wages in California after 1870, explained the author, was the competition of Chinese labor. Because the Chinese would work for less, wages were driven down to a lower level. While this might be true in a few areas, it was never more than a temporary development because as soon as the Chinese had mastered a skill they charged all they could get. An illustration of this was in Chinatown, San Francisco, where a Chinese clothing contractor was replacing his Chinese help with white girls. In Sonoma County vineyards Chinese were being replaced with Portuguese because the Chinese demanded higher pay through their worker's associations. The Chinese in California may have aggravated the decline in wages but they did not cause it.

A similar story was told about the Chinese in New York. The public has cried out against "Chinese cheap labor," noted a mission worker in New York's Chinatown, but such is not the case.²¹ Chinese laundries charge higher prices than domestic laundries and Chinese laundrymen get higher wages than laundresses of other nationalities. The Chinese laundryman earns on the average from eight to fifteen dollars per week when other workers earn from four to ten dollars. Chinese cooks who work in American homes are paid at least

²¹Helen F. Clark, "The Chinese in New York," Century LIII (November, 1896), 104-113.

forty dollars a month and oftentimes much more. The truth about Chinese labor is that the Chinaman works for less when he has to, but as soon as he can command more he will do so.

One reason for the lessening of anti-Chinese agitation was the feeling expressed in many magazines that the Chinese were no worse than the other immigrants who were coming to our shores from Europe. One writer even suggested that there was a worse class of immigrant than the Chinese. "Most men, if asked what class of immigrants they considered the least desirable, would answer, the Russian Jews."²² But wherever the Chinese were placed on the scale they did not seem to deserve special attention. A former member of the American legation in Peking felt that, "there is no wise or just reason or ground for the existing discrimination against the Chinese."²³ It should not be a question of Chinese immigration but of immigration from any country. Race is an inadequate basis on which to establish restriction of exclusion since all races have good as well as bad qualities in approximately equal proportions.

The Chinese problem was also modified by the emergence of a new "question." The new concern arose because of

²²Ida M. Van Etten, "Russian Jews as Desirable Immigrants," Forum, XV (March, 1893), 172.

²³Chester Holcombe, "The Restriction of Chinese Immigration," Outlook, LXXVII (April 23, 1904), 977.

the increase of Japanese immigration at the turn of the century. In 1898 and 1899 slightly over two thousand Japanese arrived each year.²⁴ In 1900 the number jumped to 12,635 and by 1903 reached 19,968. The arrival of the Japanese immigrants constituted a new threat. The Japanese population in 1904 based on immigration figures published since 1853 was estimated at 78,577.²⁵ Unofficial estimates ran much higher, however, and the Japanese were described as increasing at an alarming rate or "pouring in like a flood," so that they, "must number well over one hundred thousand."²⁶

Equally as alarming as the increased number of Japanese, according to several writers, was their inferior quality. A physician attached to a United States Public Health Service Hospital on the East Coast felt that, "the Japanese coolie labor is (according to some observers who have made a special study of them) more undesirable than the Chinese."²⁷ The doctor based his statement in part upon his observation that the Japanese brought, "more cases,

²⁴Allen McLaughlin, "Chinese and Japanese Immigration," Popular Science Monthly, LXVI (December, 1904), 117-121.

²⁵"Our Immigration During 1904" (anon. article), National Geographic Magazine, XVI (January, 1905), 16.

²⁶"California's Chinese Missions" (editorial), American Missionary, LIX (December, 1905), 311.

²⁷Allen McLaughlin, "Chinese and Japanese Immigration," Popular Science Monthly, LXVI (December, 1904), 119.

absolutely and relatively, of contagious diseases than any other nationality coming here."²⁸ He noted that in 1903 one Japanese out of every thirty-seven who arrived was deported with a "loathsome or dangerous contagious disease."²⁹ Compared to such a threat as this the Chinese seemed almost desirable.

The economic threat posed by Japanese labor was felt to be even more serious than that of the Chinese had been. The banner of Japanese cheap labor was quickly taken up by familiar hands. Senator Perkins of California began to emphasize the terrible danger to the wage-earners in his state posed by Japanese immigration.³⁰ The San Francisco Chronicle was quoted in a familiar pose as it announced to its subscribers the seriousness of the Japanese threat.³¹ Senator Perkins and John Young, editor of the Chronicle, had both been leading figures in the agitation for the exclusion of the Chinese. The chief point raised against the Japanese was their willingness to work for lower wages. The low wages paid in Japan where farm labor received less than

²⁸Ibid., p. 121.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰George C. Perkins, "The Competition of Japan," Overland Monthly, XXVIII (October, 1896), 393-403.

³¹John P. Young, "The Question of Japanese Competition" (quoted in), Overland Monthly, XXVIII (July, 1896), 82-93.

a dollar and a half a month seemed terribly threatening. The Chinese were forgotten in the midst of such dangers.

The anti-Chinese viewpoint was also moderated in a more positive way through the active acceptance of the Chinese into American life. A few appreciative accounts appeared in the magazines describing a particular type of employment or situation in which the Chinese had proved very helpful. "It is very gratifying to the tired farmer's wife," wrote one woman in an article on Chinese house servants, "to see her husband come driving up with a celestial, who presently having deposited his bed and valise in the place indicated, comes into the kitchen, places his little clock on the shelf, ties on his apron, and proceeds to investigate his premises."³² The Chinaman was always courteous, very fond of the children and took to heart the interests of the family for whom he worked. Two women who went to southern California for their health described their experiences with Spanish house servants and concluded that the Chinese were much to be preferred. In this capacity the Chinaman was still considered a barbarian and a heathen, albeit a useful one.

The Chinese were welcomed not only as domestic servants but as general laborers. Strange though it may seem

³²Marie A. Kimball, "Chinese House Servants," Chautauquan, XVII (May, 1893), 207.

there were Americans who argued that the need for the Chinese was so great that seventy thousand ought to be admitted at once into California.³³ Others thought that five thousand annually would assure a steady supply.³⁴ The Chinese were needed to perform the menial labor which Americans shunned and for reclamation of arid land and development of mines and natural resources. Robert Ingersoll argued as early as 1893 that Chinese labor was of excellent quality and ought to be admitted freely. True, they were not without fault, "some of them smoke opium, but the opium-smoker does not beat his wife."³⁵ But whether they were wife-beaters or not, he thought that the Chinese were needed to help build the nation.

The usefulness of the Chinese became even more apparent to those who contemplated the problems involved in the annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines. An article in the American Historical Review by Frederick Williams, son of Samuel Wells Williams, and lecturer in Oriental history at Yale, surveyed the status of the Chinese immigrant in the Pacific and concluded that ". . . we must dismiss old

³³Jee Gam, "Chinese Exclusion," American Missionary, LVI (February, 1902), 99-108.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Robert G. Ingersoll, "Should the Chinese be Excluded?" North American Review, CLVII (July, 1893), 54.

prejudices and learn to consider the Chinaman in our Eastern dependencies as an indispensable means to their economic development. . . . His nearness to the Philippine Islands and his ability and willingness to work in their tropical climate render us at once unable to exclude him from those shores and almost helpless without his steady industry to exploit them."³⁶ The feeling that the Chinese were indispensable for the development of these areas was widely held. The Literary Digest estimated that at least a hundred thousand Chinese would be needed for the industrial development of the Philippines alone.³⁷

The outlook for Hawaii was similar. The suggestion was frequently made that the Chinese in Hawaii were of a different sort from those in San Francisco's Chinatown. In Hawaii they were an integral part of the population and their loss would be a serious material disadvantage to the Islands. The Chinese were responsible for reclaiming swamp lands which could now be rented for twenty dollars an acre. They were the backbone of rice production and the sugar industry. No other laborer could endure the hard conditions which these jobs required. They were peaceful, orderly, obedient to law, industrious, healthy and they lived in comfortable

³⁶Frederick W. Williams, "The Chinese Immigrant in Further Asia," AHR, V (April, 1900), 503.

³⁷"Chinese Needed in the Philippines" (editorial), Literary Digest, XXV (November 1, 1902), 548.

houses. It seems almost that the Chinese in Hawaii were everything that they were reputed not to be in the United States. Nevertheless, the ability to appreciate them even from a distance represented a modification of earlier attitudes.

The Chinese were increasingly accepted as a normal part of California life. The change is indicated more by a change in emphasis than by anything which was said explicitly. Visitors to Chinatown began to bring back stories of a normal life there without any mention of the dark and twisting stairways where one encountered Chinamen with the same characteristics. It became possible to write an article describing the criminal element among the Chinese without concluding that all Chinese were of such a nature. A visitor from the East to southern California was reported as saying, "You have no distinctly foreign element, except the Chinese, and only a few of them."³⁸ This remark was overheard in 1894 when some Californians thought that the number of Chinese in the state was alarming.

California magazines such as the Land of Sunshine, Overland Monthly, and Sunset Magazine published fewer articles on the Chinese during the 1890's than might have been expected if California feeling had been judged according to

³⁸"The Right Kind of People" (editorial), Land of Sunshine, II (December, 1894), 10.

its newspapers. The Overland Monthly began to use decorative material which was Chinese in design. The space at the end of the article was sometimes filled with a sketch of artistically arranged Chinese coins. Chinese proverbs were used in a way which reflected credit upon the Chinese. The absence of editorial comment was startling, particularly in such years as 1892 and 1902. Chinese fishermen were mentioned in an offhanded way which implied the familiarity of their presence. The same was true for domestic servants, field workers, and laundrymen. One conclusion to draw from these examples is that the exclusion laws had solved the problem. They were working relatively well, despite the adverse comments, and people were generally satisfied with them. A large number of Chinese remained in California and it is clear that these became absorbed to a large degree in the normal routine of everyday life.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the life of the rest of the nation. Boston is an example of a city where the Chinese rather quickly established themselves. The Journal of American Folklore published an article on the Chinese in Boston in 1892.³⁹ They were described as good tenants, generous and helpful towards each other and with few bad habits. The lower class among them smoked

³⁹Mary Chapman, "Notes on the Chinese in Boston," Journal of American Folklore, V (October, 1892), 321-324.

opium, but not more than one-third had the habit. The upper class included several very wealthy Chinese who lived as well as many of the people in Boston. Their faults had been greatly exaggerated. They sent little money home and while some did gamble they never did so to any great extent. The Bostonian, a magazine devoted to the interests of that city, had little to say about the Chinese though it was evident that they were considered as a normal part of city life.

There is also evidence from outside of Boston. In 1899 Harper's Weekly introduced a regular feature entitled "Chinese Proverbs" which treated its subject with seriousness and respect.⁴⁰ The number of Chinese students increased markedly after 1900. In 1901 the "Chinese Students Alliance" was organized at the University of California with eighteen members.⁴¹ This was a self-help organization of Chinese students in the United States. By 1905 membership had increased to a hundred. In that year there were forty-six students in universities, the largest number at the University of California with Columbia, Cornell, Yale and some others having a few. These examples do not necessarily imply that the Chinese were accepted on an equal basis, but

⁴⁰"Chinese Proverbs" (anon. feature), Harpers Weekly, XLIII (July 15, 1899), 697.

⁴¹"Chinese Students in America" (editorial), American Missionary, LIX (March, 1905), 72-75.

at least they were permitted to occupy a more normal position in the nation's daily life.

In the previous chapter it was noted how the Chinese were fictionalized as undesirable characters. Gradually, however, a new image began to emerge. One author noted how Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinees" had started a flood of burlesque sketches which lasted for some time. But the Chinese were too solid to submit easily to caricature the author thought. "We have long recognized Chinese picturesqueness and we have regarded with curiosity Chinese character and customs, but we are only just beginning to understand them and their relation to the West. They have become a recognized factor in American life, consequently a fit subject for American artists."⁴² The writer, an art student in San Francisco, was quite enthusiastic about the Chinese, even to the extent of being attracted by their heathenism. She admired the role they had played in developing the unique character of California life. However, her attitude was not typical of most Californians.

The themes of fictional writing with a Chinese motif improved as the Chinaman's human characteristics were emphasized. It became increasingly apparent that for some writers the Chinaman's bad qualities could be accepted along with his

⁴²Mary Bell, "The Chinese Motif in Current Art," Overland Monthly, XXXI (March, 1898), 239.

good ones because he was, after all, a member of the human as well as the oriental race. "At the core, all human nature is the same, and present incongruities and absurdities in our attitude toward the Chinese will fade away when we realize what true elements of picturesqueness, beauty, and variety, these beings from the farthest East have grafted upon . . . life in California. . . ." ⁴³

The difference between acceptance and appreciation is not always very distinct though the latter implies a more favorable view than the former. Unfortunately, appreciation of the Chinese by Americans was so flavored with feelings of benevolence that the distinction is even less clear. Yet it is only fair to record that some opinion in the United States during the period in question was sufficiently favorable towards the Chinese that the attitude of tolerance which is implied in the term acceptance does not describe it. There were some Americans, though they were the exception, who seemed almost able to escape from a paternalistic feeling towards the Chinese into one of sincere appreciation.

Evidence exists that Chinese customs began to be appreciated for their intrinsic value whether or not they might profit the American way of life. Chinese medical practices were usually caricatured as quite strange and grotesque.

⁴³Ibid., p. 242.

But Lippincotts magazine produced a commentator on Chinese affairs, who was convinced that the herbal system of medicine practiced by the Chinese medical men was in some ways more effective than that practiced by American physicians.⁴⁴ He reported several instances where patients of Eastern doctors had been ordered to California in a last desperate search for health only to be cured in a short time by Chinese medicine. Most white men could not patronize Chinese doctors because of their high fees. Descriptions of the Chinese method of preparing and eating foods suggested an attitude of interest and appreciation. In Oroville, California, interestingly enough, a Chinese banquet honoring local citizens was appreciatively described by one of the townspeople.⁴⁵ Instead of emphasizing birds-nest soup and shark's fins the author noted the dignity and graciousness of the affair.

The director of the Museum of Archaeology and Palaeontology at the University of Pennsylvania supplied a number of articles on Chinese customs. He occasionally criticized his readers for failing to appreciate the genius of the Chinese people.⁴⁶ American prejudice has had a field day

⁴⁴William M. Tisdale, "Chinese Physicians in California," Lippincotts Magazine, LXIII (March, 1899), 411-416.

⁴⁵J. P. Bocock, "A Chinese Banquet," Frank Leslies Popular Monthly, XL (July, 1895), 91-94.

⁴⁶Stewart Culin, "Customs of the Chinese in America," Journal of American Folklore, III (July, 1890), 191.

with the Chinese, he said, and has supposed them to speak "Pigeon English" when most speak English very well. Americans in general have failed to appreciate the quality of the Chinese intellect. In particular, Mr. Culin described a Chinese friend of his who had attained substantial success in the difficult and complicated business of running a Chinese lottery. "In addition to his literary education, meager enough from a Chinese point of view, although in advance of any of his countrymen with whom I am acquainted, and ample and amazing to the western scholar, he possessed a vivid imagination and a refined and cultivated mind."⁴⁷ There is a quality of sincere appreciation in these remarks.

It seems improbable that Chinatown was ever looked upon as anything more than an evil curiosity during the years after 1890, but some writers did make the attempt. One visitor to the West Coast thought that the inhabitants of San Francisco failed to appreciate the treasure within their midst.⁴⁸ It ought to be called a beauty spot instead of a plague spot, she said, because here were collected the treasures and citizens of an ancient civilization. If the smell was bad and the living conditions crowded this was due to

⁴⁷ Stewart Culin, "Tsz' Fa or 'Word Blossoming,'" Overland Monthly, XXIV (September, 1894), 250.

⁴⁸ Mabel C. Craft, "Some Days and Nights in Little China," National Magazine, VII (November, 1897), 99-109.

the restrictions imposed by any city on its inhabitants. Illustrations of Chinatown improved considerably to adjust to the new emphasis. The Chinese were pictured as well dressed men and women inhabiting clean and orderly houses adjacent to well swept streets. Photographs of opium dens sometimes appeared with no more comment than that occasioned by an illustration of the corner saloon.

It was pointed out by some writers that the Chinese lived in crowded quarters because they were not allowed to expand into adjacent housing but they did their best to make their living quarters as attractive as possible. They decorated their houses in bright colors, particularly red and green, and put them into as good a repair as their means permitted. The balconies in particular were made attractive with lanterns and flowers, adding to the undeniable beauty of Chinatown. Comments on family life, complete with an illustration of a very attractive young girl entitled, "A Chinese Flower," were sometimes highly favorable.⁴⁹ Perhaps it was still true that the Chinese had something to learn from us, concluded one writer, "but have we not something to learn from them."⁵⁰

⁴⁹H. B. McDowell, "A New Light on the Chinese," Harpers New Monthly, LXXXVI (December, 1892), 3-17.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 17.

Americans occasionally felt called upon to take up the defence of the Chinaman. An effort was made through some articles to counterbalance the darker picture drawn of Chinese character by a description of his high moral qualities. The tradition of social responsibility which made the Chinese responsible for each other in a way unfamiliar to Americans drew high praise. The Chinese placed no burden on the city for poor relief, noted some Americans, and there were very few destitute Chinese because when a man was in financial straits or sick his relatives looked after him. The Chinaman had his vices as did all men, but, unfortunately for the Chinese, even their virtues were counted against them. Chinese industry was famed everywhere as were his patience and endurance, but these were not counted as attributes by those who feared his competition. "John" is abused because he is competent, complained one author, and "this is the real rub."⁵¹

The incidents of abuse which occurred from time to time seldom received much attention, but occasionally they were condemned. The Rock Springs massacre occurred earlier in 1885 but it was such a gruesome affair that for several years afterward it was mentioned as a great stain on the

⁵¹"The Chinaman Abroad" (editorial), Public Opinion, XVII (November 1, 1894), 747.

American flag.⁵² Probably the last major incident took place in Oregon in 1894 when the murder of ten Chinese in an ambush prompted the observation that if the Chinese were barbarous, Americans could hardly be considered as less.⁵³ The Literary Digest explored the same thought and concluded that "we are as black as the Chinese."⁵⁴ These comments reveal as much concern for America's good name as they do for the Chinese, but there was an undeniable concern on occasion for the safety of the Chinaman.

Among those who had the closest contacts with the Chinese were some who expressed feelings which conveyed a deep sympathy for the Chinese. A minister in San Francisco who wrote frequently on Chinese topics described the curious procedures followed in a Chinese "joss house" and then concluded, "but amidst the smoke of sandalwood and wax candles, the kowtowing and tom-toming and jargon of Sanscrit litanies one can discover something good--a reverence for the brave, the wise and the good, and the expression of that universal truth, however grossly symbolized, that the grave is not the goal of human greatness; that wise words and noble deeds can

⁵²"The Point of View" (editorial), Nation, LXI (August 22, 1895), 128.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴"Outrages on Foreigners in China and in America," Literary Digest, XI (August 31, 1895), 516.

never die."⁵⁵ Admittedly this quotation illustrates the religious faith of its author and yet it also has strong overtones of the sentiments which are the basis for human brotherhood. However, this viewpoint was an exception. The great gulf between East and West had not been bridged.

The most important reason for the decrease in anti-Chinese feeling and the increase in expressions of sympathy for the Chinese was the effectiveness of the exclusion legislation. West Coast agitators had pictured the Chinese as a horde poised on the further shores of the Pacific waiting for a signal to advance across the ocean and sweep civilization from the North American continent. The rest of the nation adopted this viewpoint as its own. With the passage of the Geary Bill which improved upon the exclusion legislation of 1882 most Americans were satisfied that the nation had successfully defended itself from the Chinese threat. Once the threat of a Mongolian horde had been removed from their minds some observers were able to adopt a more magnanimous attitude toward the Chinese. The increase in articles which favored China was partly due to the marked decrease in the anxiety caused by the supposed threat of Chinese immigration.

⁵⁵Frederick J. Masters, "Pagan Temples in San Francisco," Californian, II (November, 1892), 741.

Some Americans moderated their open expressions of hostility toward the Chinese because of feelings of embarrassment and even shame at the treatment accorded Chinese immigrants. Lyman Abbott, editor of the Outlook and a liberal clergyman, was a staunch supporter of exclusion as necessary for the preservation of the American way of life. But he deplored the excessive brutality and abuse with which the Chinese were often greeted by immigration officials. When the boycott against American cotton was raised in China in 1905 the chief objection was directed against the personal indignities which the Chinese seeking admittance to the United States were forced to endure. The viewpoint of President Roosevelt was indicative of the opinion of many Americans. Roosevelt said that exclusion was necessary but should be conducted in a manner which supported the nation's reputation of just treatment for the people of all races. Religious leaders and diplomats pointed out that America had a right to exclude the Chinese but not a right to abuse them.

The arrival of Japanese laborers on the West Coast in increasingly large numbers toward the end of the 1890's also helps to explain the increase in pro-Chinese feeling. The same criticisms which had been made of the Chinese were now directed against the Japanese. They were accused of being an economic threat as well as a moral one. The Japanese supplanted the Chinese as the embodiment of the concept of a threatening Asiatic horde. Gradually the Chinese

threat began to appear less formidable and some Americans were led even to comparing the Chinese favorably with other classes of immigrants. The growing place of the Chinese in domestic employment, the familiarity of Chinese laundries, and the development of Chinatown as a tourist attraction tended to moderate hostile feelings by establishing the Chinese as an accepted feature of American life. In this hospitable climate sympathetic appreciation of China increased.

The more favorable comments on the Chinese in America, however, do not indicate a basic change in national attitudes. These opinions represent for the most part the better educated and more cosmopolitan elements of the society speaking out. Steward Culin, director of the Museum of Archaeology and Palaeontology at the University of Pennsylvania, and Frederick W. Williams, lecturer in Oriental history at Yale were men who spoke from the scholarly viewpoint. They had a professional interest in the Chinese rather than a personal one. The journals which published many of the more favorable articles were also professional magazines such as the American Historical Review, the Yale Review, and the Journal of American Folklore. Lyman Abbott Joaquin Miller, and Chester Holcombe, minister, poet and diplomat were careful observers of American affairs who sought to present a more sensitive analysis of the Chinese issue. Their efforts were supported by magazines with a

similar interest such as the Arena, Outlook, Independent, and National Magazine. In some cases these writers may have had a personal appreciation for the Chinese, but in most instances the favorable opinion resulted from a technical or a paternal interest in the subject. Among the overwhelming majority of Americans whether a Chinaman was loathed, tolerated, or appreciated, he yet remained--a Chinaman.

CHAPTER IV

A STRANGE BARBARIC PEOPLE

The unfavorable opinion of the Chinese in the United States had as its counterpart an unfavorable attitude towards the Chinese in their homeland. The attitude towards China was not always expressed by the same people who had agitated for Chinese exclusion. The labor unions in California did not feel as vitally concerned about the Chinese in China as they had about the Chinese in their own state. But the same undercurrent of hostility which had stimulated anti-Chinese feeling in California also influenced the attitude towards the Chinese in China. The bitterness which had characterized the attitude of labor on the West Coast was not so apparent now, but a new emphasis could be detected which caused the dislike of China to reach a peak of great intensity.

Americans disliked the Chinese primarily because they were not Americans. At the heart of this feeling was fear. The United States was becoming aware of the world. It had tended to forget that there were other nations and races inhabiting the same earth on which it lived. Now it was experiencing a feeling similar to the person who thinking he was alone in a dark room suddenly discovers the

presence of another. At first there is the shock of discovery then the question of identity. It was not Europe that threatened; wasn't the new world the capstone of the old, wasn't the son the product of the father even if superior to him? There were inter-family quarrels, of course, but no basic threat to the identity of family members.

China was a newly discovered race. If the United States sat at the peak of civilization where was China's place on the mountain? Did China occupy an adjacent peak, heretofore hidden in the clouds, and if so, how would this affect America's position? To escape the threat Americans reasoned that China was on the same mound of earth and therefore inferior. Vigorously they set out to establish the relationship.

The Chinese are an inferior race, a strange and barbaric people. Americans who often got their first impression of the Chinese on a ship headed for the Orient, substantiated this statement repeatedly. There is no escaping the repugnance with which travelers described their contacts with Chinese traveling first-class. ". . . nothing can prevent their bringing on their own greasy and malodorous foods, which they strew over rich carpets, curtains, and couches as unconcernedly as on a yamin's stone floor."¹ The Chinese

¹E. R. Scidmore, "The River of Tea," Century, LVIII (August, 1899), 548.

official who lounged about on the upper decks while his wife and family herded below in "the crowded promiscuity of the steerage," was deplored.² Travelers felt that it was more than a want of money which made the Chinese, sometimes of higher rank, huddle in the crowded quarters of the steerage.

Reference to the animal-like tendencies of the Chinese was implied in remarks characterizing their racial qualities in general. A traveler in China described her observations of Chinese tailors, stripped to the waist, at work in their shops. "When well fattened, their uncovered bodies suggest the animals which Americans enclose in a sty. The more like a well-fed porker a Chinaman becomes, the prouder is he of his looks, for a corpulent man is regarded by his almond-eyed brethren as a high type of humanity."³ Chinese at work in the fields, on the river boats at Canton, or in the crowded city of Peking were described in terms which drew heavily upon images from the world of animals. The filth, lack of clothing, meager diet, and primitive living conditions recorded by travelers were utilized to support the contention that an animal and a Chinaman were very close in identity.

²Ibid., p. 547.

³Dora E. W. Spratt, "Earning a Living in China," Lippincott's Magazine, LIX (May, 1897), 674.

The immorality of the Chinese as a race was also maintained. The former United States Vice-Consul General at Hong Kong, Edwin Wildman, attributed China's difficulties as a result of the Boxer uprising to a lack of moral strength. "The moral turpitude of the race itself, its ignorance and superstition, its decadent educational institutions and rotten throne, are the vitiating influences that have brought about China's terrible misfortunes."⁴ The Chinese treatment of women, their attitude toward children, and their secret clan system constituted undeniable evidence, according to many Americans, that the Chinese were in a depraved state which was little better than that of the animals. The Chinese talent for misunderstanding and reviling foreigners was noteworthy. The conclusion reached was that China's general lack of moral qualities had lead to decadence and the result was a "nation of monkeys," a "boneless giant."⁵

Specifically, attention was drawn to the terrible cruelty of the Chinese. The reader of the 1890's and early twentieth century was spared few details in the effort of authors to describe the qualities of Chinese punishment. The description of the trial of a Chinaman who had broken

⁴Edwin Wildman, "The Passing of Li Hung Chang," Munsey's Magazine, XXV (August, 1901), 663.

⁵"Religion and Poverty in China" (editorial), Missionary Review, LV (January, 1895), 141-142.

into a grave in order to rob its contents is illustrative.⁶ The desecration of graves is probably the most serious crime that can be committed in China by the average Chinaman. If the criminal has some money he may be able to buy a "pardon" which entitles him to the privilege of crucifixion instead of dismemberment, the advantage being that he will join his ancestors with his body intact. If he has a substantial amount of money available he can hire a "substitute" who will take his place by confessing to the crime and submitting to the punishment.

Jefferson Davis, a Congregational minister to Japan visiting in China, pointed out that dismembering was not preferred by either the magistrates or the would-be spectators because it was too easy to bribe the executioner to select a knife designated for a vital spot such as the head or the heart.⁷ The knives were stored in a basket, handles up, and the executioner was supposed to reach into the basket and without looking select a knife. Each knife was identified with a mark designating a particular part of the body, such as hands or feet, and must be used for its designated purpose only.

⁶J. A. Davis, "A Chinese Crucifixion," Independent, XLVII (October 24, 1895), 1424.

⁷Ibid.

An officer in the United States Army felt that any sympathy for the Chinese as a result of the war with Japan was totally misplaced because "the Chinaman is cruel from the cradle."⁸ His earliest environment bred this feeling in him. "To torture animals, to attend and to gloat over executions, and to gaze on human suffering in any form, afford the keenest delight to the Chinese youth."⁹ The Chinese system of law enforcement breeds abuse because a man cannot be condemned until he has confessed. If the accused cannot pay he is tortured until he confesses. The varieties of torture were described by the author who confessed, however, that "nothing but the strongest spirit of inquiry, supported by an iron resolution, carried me through the horrors of those days, and for weeks afterward I suffered from perpetual nightmares."¹⁰

Lest the reader fail to experience the same horrors that had moved the writer, generalities were well supported with fact. Methods of torture came in different grades of intensity and ingenuity. The selection was influenced by the mood of the inquisitor as well as by the enormity of the

⁸A. H. Lee, "Chinese Cruelty," Harpers Weekly, XXXIX (February 23, 1895), 182.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

crime to be confessed. The victims ankle might be pulverized with a club or he could be forced to kneel on a chain mat studded with sharp points. Beating with the bamboo, judicious use of water or a cord slowly tightened around the head might produce the desired result. "For certain offenders . . . the penalty is the 'Ling-chee,' or a 'thousand cuts.' This is too ghastly for detailed description, but suffice it to say that the victim is first crucified to a low cross, and then slowly sliced to pieces with a knife."¹¹ However, more detail was supplied and readers were advised of the executioners skill in prolonging the agony without inflicting a vital wound and of the crowds delight at such exquisite entertainment. A photograph had been included with the copy but the editors noted that "the picture is so horrible that it cannot be published in the weekly."¹²

According to eye-witnesses the behavior of Chinese troops during the Sino-Japanese war was thoroughly barbarous. China was not a signatory of the Treaty of Geneva with its provisions for the humane treatment of prisoners of war and for the employment of the Red Cross. The editor of Harpers Weekly capitalized on the fact to conclude that Chinese civilization had not reached the point where it

¹¹Ibid., p. 183.

¹²Ibid.

could appreciate and recognize the humanity of the Red Cross.¹³ Consequently, humanity was shown only on one side during the war, the Japanese, while inhumanity ran riot on the other.

A. B. de Guerville was a well known correspondent whose accounts of the Sino-Japanese war were widely published in the United States. He wrote of the battle at Pen Yang when many Japanese lay on the field under murderous cross fire. "With the advent of night the Chinese scouted far and near and cut off the head and hands of every wounded foeman they could find."¹⁴ A few days later on September 16, 1894 when Japanese troops entered the Chinese forts, ". . . they found in several of them the frightfully mutilated bodies of their friends who had been made prisoners. Hands and heads were missing, others had been scalped, others lay with their eyes plucked out and ears slashed away."¹⁵ The correspondent was convinced that the Chinese officials approved of the slaughter and mutilation of prisoners. In the papers which the Chinese General left behind him as he fled were found circulars containing promises of rewards for "Japanese heads or parts of a head."¹⁶ There is no doubt of

¹³"Red Cross in Japan" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXIX (January 12, 1895), 31.

¹⁴A. B. de Guerville, "The Red Cross in the Far East," Munsey's Magazine, XIV (October, 1895), 48.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 49.

the sort of impression which a receptive reader might form based upon these accounts.

The cruelty of the Chinese, both civilian and military, appeared particularly despicable in combination with the alleged cowardice of the soldier. Innumerable references were made to incidents in battle where the Chinese had fled from the conflict in abject terror throwing guns, ammunition and clothing heedlessly aside. Leslies Weekly accompanied an article on the Sino-Japanese war with a full-page illustration of Chinese soldiers in frantic retreat before the Japanese.¹⁷ A United States naval officer described how Chinese seamen would wait until the battle was fully engaged and then take advantage of the excitement to try and escape from their ship. Chinese naval ships seldom carried lifeboats for fear that they would be utilized by a mutinous crew.¹⁸

The quality of the Chinese soldier was generally poor. Julian Ralph, who wrote frequently on Chinese topics, offered a typical view of a Chinaman in the army. "As we know, a Chinese soldier is the meanest creature in the empire--a tramp, a poor devil who soldiers because he cannot

¹⁷"Chinese Soldiers" (illustration), Leslies Weekly, LXXX (January 31, 1895), 78.

¹⁸Eustace B. Rogers, "The War in Korea," Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (August 11, 1894), 750.

get anything else to do."¹⁹ In the same vein was the comment of another correspondent for Harpers Weekly who noted that ". . . as a rule, only the scum of the population is used for the army."²⁰ The method of induction into the Army was scarcely designed to build the morale of the troops. An illustration of Chinese citizens on their way to become soldiers portrayed a motley group of peasants, criminals wearing the "cangue" and emaciated men who appeared to be beggars all roped to each other and guarded by an equal number of cavalry. A soldiery made up of men such as these was not likely to strike fear into the hearts of their foemen.

It was believed during these years that the ineffectiveness of the army in China was a product of the basic lack of aggressiveness on the part of the Chinese. Chinese society paid honor to the scholar but not to the soldier. Everything about their way of life was thought to make the Chinese unfit for military duty. The inability of the Chinese to drill was supposed to be due to their having to walk single-file in crowded city streets. Because the language relied heavily upon word accents it was not suitable for uttering sharp, clear commands. The antiquated weapons, from infantry through artillery, were better suited for

¹⁹Julian Ralph, "Side Notes from the Asiatic War," Harpers Weekly, XXXIX (May 11, 1895), 448.

²⁰W. E. Griffis, "China as a Military Power," Harpers Weekly, XXXVII (August 25, 1894), 809.

museum-display. In 1895 an illustration of soldiers armed with bows and arrows appeared in Leslies Weekly.²¹ One of the tests to determine qualification for officer's rank consisted of shooting a cross-bow from a galloping horse.

Contrasting somewhat strangely with the claim of Chinese cowardice and military ineffectiveness was the belief that the Chinaman had a peculiar ability to endure pain and hardship. This attitude was expressed in several ways, one of which was that the Chinese had a less highly developed nervous system than white men. One would suppose that such a circumstance would make him a more effective fighting man and there were some who argued along this line. But most people simply took it as an example of the Chinaman's lower place on the scale of civilization in general and proof that he had not developed as far from his animal origins as had the Anglo-Saxon.

Several accounts of the exploits of Chinese wounded men on the operating tables of front-line hospitals were recorded by amazed doctors. "Every one was amazed at the phlegm of the wounded Chinese. They made excellent patients; indeed each one was patience personified."²² The author of these remarks was not imputing any particular heroic

²¹"Chinese Army" (illustration), Leslies Weekly, LXXX (February 7, 1895), 91.

²²Julian Ralph, "Side Notes from the Asiatic War," Harpers Weekly. XXXIX (May 11, 1895), 448.

qualities to the Chinese; rather, he was noting their desirability as model patients because their needs for the relief of pain were so minor. Chinese endurance of pain was frequently put to the test when chloroform was either unavailable or dangerous. The performance of the Chinese under these circumstances was remarkable. One physician concluded that these examples of a high tolerance for pain, "support the conclusion that the Chinese nervous system is less highly developed than that of the Westerner."²³

Other medical researchers may have had similar ideas about the low level of Chinese physical development when they compared the brain of a Chinaman with measurements of brains from white men and a chimpanzee. While no conclusions were drawn as to relative intelligence the comparisons were interesting. The Chinese brain weighed less than the "normal average brain" of the adult male and its convolutions were less complex.²⁴ The ratio of cerebral hemispheres to the cerebellum was eight and a half to one in the average man, five and three-quarters to one in the chimpanzee and five to one in the Chinese. Unfortunately for scientific purposes little explanation was offered to supplement the bare details, but the implication was clear enough.

²³"Surgery in China" (editorial), Public Opinion, XVI (December 7, 1893), 222.

²⁴"A Chinese Brain" (anon. article), Nature, L (May 31, 1894), 111.

The ability of the Chinese to adapt to difficult situations was cited as evidence for their low level of physical development. Because of their lack of nerves, lower level of sensitivity to their surroundings, and lesser intelligence they were able to endure in circumstances which would cause the debilitation of a westerner. One author observed that they had no sensitivity to being cramped, never felt distress at monotonous, tiring work, and were indifferent to normal comforts.²⁵ Chinese babies were noticed to lie impassively without wiggling as the Chinese had no need for exercise. The Chinese, driven by overpopulation, had succeeded in adapting themselves to a variety of areas from the tropics to the arctic. A traveler waiting for his train watched a Chinaman pull himself up to a sitting position on the sharp edge of an open barrel, prop his feet on the opposite edge, and promptly fall asleep. These incidents were commonly noted as proof of the Chinaman's lower stage of development.

Another racial characteristic which was felt to be inherently Chinese was their suspiciousness and dishonesty. Henry Cabot Lodge criticized the actions of Secretary of State Walter Q. Gresham in authorizing the release of two Japanese students who had sought asylum in the American

²⁵"The Chinaman at Home" (editorial), Critic, XXV (December 29, 1894), 442.

legation in Peking. Despite assurances of safe conduct the Chinese had executed the young men as spies. Lodge felt that Gresham "ought to have known, what every intelligent schoolboy understands, that Asiatic standards of truth and honor, and Asiatic diplomacy, are utterly different from those of Europe and America, and that promises such as he accepted are of no binding force with an oriental."²⁶ An article in Forum by a respected San Francisco Businessman quoted a passage from Samuel Wells Williams, The Middle Kingdom (New York, 1882), which it felt summarized the Chinese attitude towards honesty. "There is nothing which tries one so much, when living among them, as their disregard of truth;"²⁷ The tradition of social responsibility had its bad effects according to one writer. "Every one knows that suspicion is second nature to all Oriental peoples; but in China it has been so aggravated and intensified by this law of responsibility as to be almost first nature with the entire nation."²⁸ He noted how a Chinese woman had been left to drown, presumably because the men standing by were afraid to help lest they be accused of

²⁶Henry Cabot Lodge, "Our Blundering Foreign Policy," Forum, XIX (March, 1895), 11.

²⁷Thomas Magee, "China's Menace to the World," Forum, X (October, 1890), 203.

²⁸C. M. Cady, "Responsibility Among the Chinese," Century Magazine, LI (January, 1896), 344.

trying to harm her.

One of the words most frequently used in describing the Chinese was the term "barbarian." For the people who used it, and there were a large number of them, it represented as forceful a word as could be applied to the Chinese in polite company. It had more overtones of savagery, depravity, backwardness and inferiority than any other term with the possible exception of "heathen." The latter word and one similar to it, "pagan," were too closely connected with religious interpretations to have as broad an impact. The editor of Harpers Weekly, commenting on the Sino-Japanese war, said that, "the demoralization of defeat in war is now being felt and manifested by the Chinese, and although reserve and self-restraint are supposed to be Chinese virtues, it is very clear that they are superficial, and that the barbarism that is at the foundation of the Chinese character has again broken loose."²⁹ A few months earlier the same editor had characterized the Chinese as barbarians who had become gentle because they feared the power of Europe.³⁰ In these examples the word has been used to imply mainly the concept of unprincipled and unrestrained aggressiveness.

²⁹"A Chance for Jingoes" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXIX (August 31, 1895), 817.

³⁰"The War in Asia" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (October 13, 1894), 963.

The word was used in a similar way in connection with the massacre of missionaries and other abuses of foreigners in China. The Ku Cheng massacre resulted in the death of eleven missionaries in the summer of 1895. Many of the reports of this event emphasized the brutal and barbaric nature possessed by a people capable of such acts. The Chautauquan noted that while the Chinese lacked the courage to fight effectively in the army they were capable of murdering people in their sleep. Such acts were a "barbarous blot on nineteenth century civilization."³¹ Several years earlier Public Opinion editorialized that the best course to follow in regard to China would be to rebuild the wall so as to keep the Chinese in and the foreigners out. The Chinese were nothing more than crude barbarians and by keeping the foreigner out their "orgies of cruelty committed on foreign missionaries" could be prevented.³²

The term barbarian was often used to imply a sense of inferiority, backwardness and coarseness. The Chinese were thought to belong to an earlier race which had not been in touch with the world's civilizations and was therefore "unfitted for the advancement which is now about to mark the

³¹"The Massacre of Missionaries in China" (editorial), Chautauquan, XXI (September, 1895), 765.

³²"The Rebellion in China" (editorial), Public Opinion, XII (December 5, 1891), 196.

world's history."³³ It is interesting that in 1895 some Americans were meeting the threat which they felt in the presence of an entirely different civilization by relegating that civilization to a remote period of time and implying that it had reached its peak so long ago as to make it incapable of recapturing its vigor in the new age.

In less than ten years a different line of argument was developed which viewed China as an opportunity for the fulfillment of America's destiny as a world leader in the march toward progress. Far from being unfitted for advancement, China, according to the new line of thought, would be the recipient of American largess. American superiority was no longer based on China's hopeless inferiority but on China's need for instruction. America's claim as evangelizer for the gospel of progress was thereby justified.

The fundamental element in the American attitude toward China during this period was superiority. Whenever the Chinese were encountered, in the United States or in China, Americans were unable to give them equal consideration. This feeling is apparent in almost every article written about China. In some instances it was revealed through innuendo, but in most cases the words chosen to describe the Chinese had obvious connotations of inferiority. The

³³"The War in the Far East" (editorial), Chautauquan, XX (January, 1895), 491.

experiences of travelers in China told a great deal about the American attitude towards China.

One traveler through the interior described his method of making himself comfortable at the local hostelry. If he felt there was not enough air in his room, he said, "my custom was to examine the window frames, and if I thought there was not enough air space I made as much more as I thought fit by poking holes in the paper with my walking stick."³⁴ He did not feel that the owner objected to this procedure because paper for windows was very cheap. The author may have been correct in his facts but his attitude is quite clear. An article written for those with equestrian interests described cross-country horseback riding in China. The author found the sport exhilarating because of the dangers involved in riding at a fast pace over rough ground and in eluding the anger of the peasants who resented the foreigners galloping through young crops and leaping over the mounds where their ancestors sought peaceful repose.³⁵

A young American who was employed as a bank teller in one of the port cities described the manner in which he traveled the streets outside the compound. "If a Chinaman

³⁴"Chinese Hostelrys" (anon. article), Current Literature, XXV (March, 1899), 35.

³⁵C. Smith, "Cross Country in China," Harpers Weekly, XL (October 3, 1896), 981.

does not at once make room for me in the street I would strike him forcibly with my cane in the face."³⁶ When questioned as to whether that sort of an act would go unpunished, the young man replied, "Should I break his nose or kill him, the worst that can happen would be that he or his people would make complaints to the Consul, who might impose the fine of a dollar for the misdemeanor, but I could always prove that I had just cause to beat him."³⁷ Usually the attitude of superiority towards the Chinese did not lead to the use of force, but stories expressing the same attitude, if somewhat less starkly, were widely published. Most travelers referred to the Chinese as "boy" and seldom gave any thought to treating them as other than inferior people.

One further illustration from the many which could be offered will suffice. Albert J. Beveridge conducted an inspection tour of Manchuria for the Senate in 1901. He was quite taken with the vigor and ability of the Russians who were building the Trans-Siberian railroad. His descriptions of the towns built by the Russians to facilitate construction of the road emphasized the order, loveliness, and cleanliness of these places. Chinese towns, on the other hand, were,

³⁶Paul Carus, "The Chinese Problem," Open Court, XV (October, 1901), 608.

³⁷Ibid.

"aggregations of corruption, disease and disorder."³⁸ He praised the Russian towns because there you could buy ". . . bread made from American flour, American sugar-cured ham, American canned fruits from the Pacific Coast, and so forth. . . . American salmon from the Columbia, American canned meats from the central West, and American condensed milk and cream from Illinois."³⁹ In Chinese towns all that you could find were strange, unappetizing and inedible foods. The standard by which the Senator judged other peoples was utilized by many Americans in the Far East.

The inherent barbarousness of the Chinese race was felt by observers to manifest itself in the social crudity of daily life. The living accommodations which were utilized by the native population as well as those which were available for travelers drew unfavorable comment. Henry Lansdell was touted as a "noted" traveler and observer by Nature magazine. "This was my first experience of a Chinese inn," he said, "and it made my flesh creep."⁴⁰ He described the central courtyard where animals, foul straw and manure made an unpleasant sight. His room was on the ground floor

³⁸Albert J. Beveridge, "The White Invasion of China," Saturday Evening Post, CLXXIV (November 23, 1901), 1-2.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Henry Lansdell, "Chinese Central Asia," Nature, XLIX (January 25, 1894), 309.

partly occupied by coal stored for the winter and besieged by intrusive crowds at the door and window. "This went on all day, what with the stench of manure, distracting noises, windows unglazed, and inquisitive visitors, my lodging proved to be the worst I had ever had."⁴¹ His experience was typical of many who traveled through the interior of China.

The houses in which the Chinese lived were also described. The huts of the peasants were sometimes presented as picturesque but even then they were considered to be thoroughly primitive in design, construction, and interior appointment. Poor city dwellers lived many to a room and since no foreigner would dare to visit them there were no descriptions of these places except from the outside of the buildings which housed these "cells." The houses of wealthy Chinese were described in detail, from the placement of doors in other than a straight line, so as to prevent the direct passage of evil spirits through the house, to the uncomfortable, hard beds. For the most part Americans found these houses strange, sometimes attractive, and even beautiful, but always indicative of an inferior understanding of architectural principles.

Travelers frequently emphasized the filth, poverty, and generally disgusting living conditions found in the

⁴¹Ibid., p. 310.

cities. The American Architect often commented in an editorial way upon conditions in foreign cities. "China, however, stands first for the incredible foulness of its cities and their inhabitants. The Consul at Chefoo, Mr. Fowler, writes that in the center of the two cities reputed to be the cleanest in China he had himself seen cholera corpses decomposing, dogs eating the bodies of babies, and snakes crawling about among the masses of filth of every kind."⁴² A visitor to Canton who had allowed one day for his exploration of the city thought that "the rabble are a horrible nuisance to the sightseer in Canton, because, though they may not assault or insult the foreigner, they jostle against you disgustingly (from such a dirty people)."⁴³

A visitor to Shanghai was quite interested in the design and operation of the oriental sewage disposal system. He described an early-morning encounter with men bearing uncovered buckets upon the ends of a carrying-stick through the narrow streets where agility was required to avoid being splattered. These men carried their burdens to a waiting scow which when filled was towed away to provide fertilizer

⁴²"China" (editorial), American Architect, LXVI (December 30, 1899), 106.

⁴³Douglas Sladen, "The Oddest City in the World," Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, XXV (March, 1893), 343.

for Chinese fields. As the buckets were dumped some of the contents occasionally spilled into the river where townspeople were filling water containers. "Small-pox, at the time of my visit was epidemic in the town, and I brushed past men in the narrow alleys who were covered with eruptions; everywhere the ground was slimy with filth, and the state of the town was indescribable."⁴⁴

The belief that rats were a major staple in the Chinese diet was widely circulated. The strength of this feeling may be better appreciated when the childhood experience of a protestant minister in Pittsburgh writing in 1898 is recalled. The author described his presence at a Sunday School program where lantern slides were being used to illustrate a talk on foreign missions.

It (the picture) represented a Chinaman reposing on a couch, when suddenly there emerged from the gloom a monster rat, whereupon the Chinaman opened his capacious jaws, and the rat aforesaid made a wild plunge down his throat. Soon another rat appeared and disappeared in like manner, and another, and still another. We youngsters screamed with delight, and kept encoring the performance, so that the 'professor' was obliged to curtail the Biblical features of the programme in order that we might feast our eyes on the rat-eating Chinaman.⁴⁵

The author could not exactly recall what relevance the Chinaman had to the missionary program but his first impression of

⁴⁴Edward S. Morse, "Latrines of the East," American Architect, XXXIX (March 18, 1893), 171.

⁴⁵E. R. Donehoo, "John Chinaman," Charities Review, VII (January, 1898), 914.

the Chinese had never faded.

When a plague in China brought death to thousands in 1894 it was thought that the habit of eating rats was largely responsible. In an article on Chinese eating habits a lawyer in New Jersey who was interested in China noted the Chinese belief that the consumption of rats made the hair grow, produced "warmth" in the body, and was generally good for the constitution.⁴⁶ The subject was the occasion for a number of cartoons. One of these consisted of two sequences. In the first one a Chinaman was shown standing before his tea cart on which the sign "Star Tea" was mounted. In the second picture the Chinaman was shown returning to his cart after a short absence during which the letters on the sign had been reversed to read "Eat Rats."⁴⁷ References to the rat-eating Chinese and other similar terms were in frequent use among some people.

The innate backwardness of China and the inability of her people to even consider an idea which did not accord with her traditions was proof enough for many people that the day of hope for Chinese civilization had already passed. The editor of Harpers Weekly concluded that ". . . we see in the Chinese Empire a conglomeration of heterogeneous popular

⁴⁶E. H. Parker, "Food Eaten in China," Current Literature, XXI (June, 1897), 532.

⁴⁷"The Chinaman" (cartoon), Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (November 10, 1894), 1076.

elements, . . . governed through a decrepit bureaucracy moving in the ruts of an antiquated routine, . . . nowhere a trace of national feeling or aspiration, everywhere stupid fear of change, and a stubborn repugnance to the progressive influences of the world abroad."⁴⁸ The emphasis upon China as a people instead of a nation was made partly in order to illustrate the decline of her civilization. China might have been more of a connected whole at one time but now because she was in the advanced stages of decline her civilization could never hope to attain the status of nationhood familiar to the West.

China's resistance to new ideas was taken as proof that she would never become more than a collection of people. "Thousands of years ago," wrote John Altgeld shortly before he became governor of Illinois, "the cry, 'China for the Chinese,' prevailed and became a law in one of the richest quarters of the globe, among a people that had already a high civilization. From that time their faces have been turned backward, and they have simply been worshipping the shades of their fathers;"⁴⁹ His remark was uttered in support of his contention that a similar sort of backwardness was manifest among some politicians in America, but the

⁴⁸"Japan and the Powers" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXIX (May 11, 1895), 432.

⁴⁹John P. Altgeld, "The Immigrants Answer," Forum, VIII (February, 1890), 696.

use of China as an illustration of backwardness is instructive. China's primitiveness was so widespread that her people had lost their vitality. The literati were interested only in preserving antiquated ideas and nowhere in China could one find a really progressive leader, with the possible exception of Li Hung Chang. Because of her worship of the past China would never be able to play an important role in the modern world and her ability even to continue her existence was in serious doubt.

The attitudes and customs which characterized Chinese society were thought to support the picture of China as a strange and barbaric people. An interesting side light in this regard is the attitude toward Chinese art which prevailed in the United States. The conclusion of one art critic was that no true art could come out of China any more.⁵⁰ Once, perhaps, China might be said to have produced art objects, but today what passes for art in China is merely the duplication of ancient works and methods. So called art objects from China are more correctly called curios and are really fit only for display in a museum. The viewpoint of this critic was not the exception. Travelers to the orient and those who were specially interested in China spoke of collecting snuff boxes or jewelled swords just as one might collect stamps. There was almost no

⁵⁰W. A. Cornaby, "Chinese Art an Index to the National Character," Literary Digest, VII (October 28, 1893), 635.

indication during the earlier years of the 1890's that Chinese art was judged on the basis of creativity. The implication was that Chinese civilization had lost its power to create, and could only produce bizarre and picturesque objects which were prized for their novelty.

The status of women in China was a never ending source of amusement, amazement, and indignation. American women were naturally disturbed at the position which Chinese women occupied. A feminine traveler in the Orient wrote of the heavy burden placed upon Chinese women due to the necessity of observing a multitude of details pertaining to matters of custom. Chinese women were taught to "fear a mistake in custom as you fear a thief."⁵¹ The housewife was told that if she did not act according to custom her neighbors would laugh and speak ill of her. A gruesome picture was drawn of the cruel treatment meted out to the daughter in the family which was continued by her mother-in-law. Not until a woman had become a mother-in-law herself could she hope for any respite in her cheerless life.

The practice of infanticide was described in detail complete with an occasional illustration of places where the bodies of infant girls were left at the age of a few days. Many writers claimed to be disgusted and shocked at the

⁵¹Harriet Linn Beebe, "Phases of Woman's Life in Nanking," Chautauquan, XV (August, 1892), 620.

attitude toward life which such a practice represented. Infanticide was discussed at length in a few articles and mentioned in many more. It was one of the aspects of Chinese life that could always be counted upon to send a chill through a reader. Images of day old infants left on the rubbish heaps in filthy alleyways, deposited one upon another in small stone shelters, or thrown into the river assured the writer of the attention of his audience. An occasional brave observer attempted to deny the extent of infanticide, but readers did not want to be told about the good qualities of the Chinese. They needed to think of the Chinaman as a heathen and welcomed only those descriptions which supported this view.

The custom of foot-binding received a great deal of attention. Readers were amply informed as to the methods employed to reduce a foot of normal length to the minimum of five inches for ordinary girls and three inches for girls of high birth. Between the ages of four and twelve the foot was tightly bandaged so as to bring all the smaller toes underneath the foot, making the ball of the heel almost disappear by forcing it forward and creating a deep cleft in the sole of the foot.⁵² The bandages were tightened regularly until the desired result had been accomplished.

⁵²"The Chinese Woman's Small Foot," Literary Digest, XV (November 27, 1897), 925.

The pain was so intense that the legs were often allowed to hang downward over the edge of a board reducing the circulation and thus numbing the pain. Mothers slept beside their children, according to some accounts, and beat them with bamboo when they cried at night lest they awaken the household.⁵³ Two to five years were required to bring the distortion to "Celestial Perfection" and when it was completed it was considered to be the mark of womanhood.⁵⁴

A number of observations were made about the custom none of which reflected favorably upon the Chinese. The editor of Public Opinion magazine thought that the lack of vigor in China's defense against the Japanese could be traced to the enervating effects of foot-binding.⁵⁵ The extreme pain which accompanied the practice plus its crippling effect tended to produce weakened debilitated women incapable of fostering strong sons. Many women suffered pain through their entire lives and it was thought that a large number died from complications resulting from the practice. The crippled feet often bled when stood upon for any length of time and it was unusual, according to a physician in China,

⁵³"The True Cause of China's Decay" (editorial), Public Opinion, XX (February 20, 1896), 245-246.

⁵⁴"Foot Distortion in China" (editorial), Public Opinion, XVII (June 14, 1894), 68.

⁵⁵"The True Cause of China's Decay" (editorial), Public Opinion, XX (February 20, 1896), 245-246.

to find a foot without at least one toe decayed away.⁵⁶

Americans seem to have been most dismayed by the pride which the Chinese women took in their small feet. The only explanation for it, they felt, was the barbarous nature of the people.

American readers absorbed descriptions of Chinese customs which strengthened their impression of China's strangeness. An article in St. Nicholas magazine which was aimed at the juvenile set characterized China as a place where city walls kept the people in, boys wore queer little shirts, and the women were kept busy at home making birds nest soup.⁵⁷ Marriage customs were described as not only strange but almost tragic in the extent to which they denied the possibility of a life of mutual understanding and respect. One traveler described this custom which required so much of the wife and so little of the husband and concluded that ". . . balancing the probabilities of jealousy, inward suffering, and outward quarreling one turns away sick with disgust from this picture."⁵⁸ Descriptions of funerals emphasized the curious pagan practices which were so carefully

⁵⁶"The Chinese Woman's Small Foot" (editorial), Literary Digest, XXVII (November 27, 1897), 925.

⁵⁷Ruth Dana Draper, "The Chinese Giant," St. Nicholas, XVII (April, 1890), 484-489.

⁵⁸Harriet L. Beebe, "Marriage in Nanking," Chautauquan, XV (July, 1892), 473.

observed, from the small bits of paper scattered in the street after the funeral procession to help the spirit find its way, to the method of selecting a grave site.

The Chinese method of writing with its curious little characters seemed quite peculiar. Chinese music was known for its harsh and unmelodic sounds. It was thought to be "crude, barbaric, and noisy."⁵⁹ The dress and eating habits of the Chinese were different than any that Americans had ever known. Their habit of allowing their fingernails to grow to a great length made them seem grotesque. An illustration of the hand of a highly born Chinaman with its fingernails from eight to ten inches in length was given a prominent place in an issue of the Literary Digest.⁶⁰ At almost every angle from which the Chinese were observed they seemed totally foreign to the habits of western civilization.

American medical men who went to China either as travelers or more usually as medical missionaries attached to the hospitals in the larger cities sent back accounts of their contacts with Chinese medical practice. A conversation with a successful Chinese doctor revealed that the Chinese were aware of veins and arteries but did not know their

⁵⁹H. E. Krenbiel, "Chinese Music," Century Magazine, XLI (January, 1891), 449.

⁶⁰"A Chinaman's Hand" (illustration), Literary Digest, XIII (September 26, 1896), 698.

exact location.⁶¹ They seemed to know nothing of hygiene and sanitation though they were familiar with joints and knew how to treat dislocations. They were familiar with the theory of germs but thought of them as a cross between worms and snakes which hatched out in the body. In general, Chinese physicians were highly superstitious, revering the ancient practices of their fathers who had taught them medicine, and having very limited mental horizons though not lacking in quickness.

The people of China who trusted these men to supply them with medical aid naturally reflected a view of medicine which was highly superstitious. When a cold wave struck in a part of China where temperatures never dropped below freezing, the people gathered the ice from the trees and brought it into Hong Kong to sell for medicine.⁶² The Chinese appeared to have fantastic ideas about the healing properties of some substances. Americans would use tigers' bones for fertilizers but the Chinese used them instead for medicine.⁶³ Pills the size of pigeon eggs, oil rubbed on the temples as a cure for cholera, and dozens of other strange prescriptions

⁶¹William E. S. Faas, "A Chinese Physician," Current Literature, XXX (June, 1901), 739-740.

⁶²"News" (editorial), Nature, XLVII (March 30, 1893), 516.

⁶³"Chinese White Wax" (anon. article), Scientific American Supplement, XXXIII (February 20, 1892), 13461.

seemed to indicate that Chinese medicine was hopelessly inferior to the West.

Dishonesty was believed to be a racial characteristic of the Chinese, therefore, Americans were not surprised to find examples of widespread dishonesty in their society. A naval officer writing about the war in Korea noted that China is ". . . eaten up with corruption with that winked-at 'squeezing' by which some of the silver sticks to the palm of every hand through which it passes."⁶⁴ Incidents of the "squeeze" were so commonly referred to that hardly a single article on China published between 1890 and 1898 omitted a reference to it. Julian Ralph, a well known traveler in China, thought that out of thousands of bargains struck in China not more than twenty were concluded without an attempted "squeeze."⁶⁵ Foreign travelers were constantly exposed to it. Whether they desired to hire a Chinaman to pose for a picture or to hire some chairbearers the original price agreed upon was never allowed to stand, more was always demanded. Americans thought that bargaining in this form was simply bribery.

Will Clemens described the greed of the Chinaman which touched every aspect of his life. "Ch'ien, ch'ien,

⁶⁴Eustace B. Rogers, "The War in Korea," Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (August 11, 1894), 750.

⁶⁵Julian Ralph, "On the China Plain," Harpers Weekly, XXXIX (January 12, 1895), 38.

ch'ien--money, money, money, is the real Chinese god."⁶⁶

Rarely do the Chinese rise above the greed for gold. It is not that they are a race of misers, he explained, but that they are buyers and sellers and gamblers. "You may pursue his soul but you cannot distract his mind from his one object in life--the pursuit of ch'ien."⁶⁷ Because of their inherent dishonesty no Chinaman can be trusted in places of responsibility and this is why China places her customs service in the hands of foreigners, concluded one writer.⁶⁸ Orientals are so radically different from westerners, so thoroughly untruthful by western standards that it is hopeless to expect to establish communications with them, thought Henry Cabot Lodge in 1895.⁶⁹

Americans noted how sharply the Chinese attitude toward death contrasted with the attitude of western civilization. "The common people of China are notoriously indifferent to death," noted a geologist and science professor at the University of Pennsylvania, "not because they hope for another and blessed life, but because the national

⁶⁶Will Clemens, "Chinese Shops," Lippincotts Magazine, LIV (August, 1894), 282.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Eustace B. Rogers, "The War in Korea," Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (August 11, 1894), 750.

⁶⁹Henry Cabot Lodge, "Our Blundering Foreign Policy," Forum, XIX (March, 1895), 8-17.

ancestor worship has set the eyes of the whole race backward."⁷⁰ Examples of this attitude were plentiful. Women who took their own lives so that their spirit might join the spirit of a dead lover or husband were called "noble" in China, remarked an editor who was shocked by such a casual attitude towards suicide.⁷¹ The widespread practice of infanticide, the practice of substitution for a condemned man, the committing of suicide in the house of an enemy in order to burden him with the cost of a funeral, and the exposure in the street of old people near death could only be the acts of barbarians.

There was strong resentment over the treatment meted out to foreigners by the Chinese. Numerous anti-foreign riots and massacres occurred during the 1890's culminating in the Boxer uprising in 1900. The missionaries were almost unanimous in feeling that the majority of Chinese accepted foreigners and that the attacks were due to a small group of trouble makers. One minister attributed the attacks on mission personnel and property in part to a book by Chou Han of Hunan published in 1888.⁷² It contained thirty-two pictures

⁷⁰J. P. Lesley, "The Idea of Life After Death," Forum, X (October, 1890), 214.

⁷¹"Suicide Applauded" (editorial), Missionary Herald, LXXXVI (May, 1890), 206.

⁷²S. F. Woodin, "Cause of the Riots in Yangtse Valley," Independent, XLIV (June 16, 1892), 18.

of a disgustingly blasphemous character describing the Christians as hog worshipers, killers of infants, and immoral and lewd persons. Diplomatic personnel placed the blame on the secret societies who were stirring up anti-foreign sentiment in order to establish support for their own political goals.

For the most part Americans were unwilling to recognize the irritation caused by their actions toward the Chinese in the United States and in China. By casting their explanation of the situation in China in a way which placed the Chinese in the wrong for resenting the presence of foreigners, Americans were able to continue looking upon themselves as representatives of the superior civilization. According to this view the Chinese were guilty of failing to appreciate the West and of failing to give way in the face of a more advanced civilization. In order to preserve the interpretation of China as a decadent race and thereby maintain America's identity it was necessary to avoid the suggestion that Chinese resentment of westerners was as justifiable as western resentment of the Chinese.

The term barbarian has been used to characterize the attitude of most Americans towards China. A particular segment of the population, the religious part, employed in addition the word "heathen" in order to describe fully what they believed to be the moral depravity of the Chinese. The attitude of the missionaries towards the people among whom

they labored was at its heart paradoxical. The first principle of evangelization must always be the need of non-believers to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The greater the need of these so-called pagans the more aggressive and widespread must be the effort to convert them. Human nature being what it is, the reverse also follows. If the sacrifices of a particular mission field were great, as in China, then the evangelizers invariably comforted themselves with the thought that the need for these sacrifices must be even greater. The other side of the paradox is that the grace of God is irresistible, therefore, no heathen no matter how depraved can resist the Gospel. But the emphasis at the first, particularly in view of the difficulty in finding money and men enough to mount a serious evangelistic effort in a nation of several hundred million people, was placed on the need of the Chinese for conversion.

One missionary in China described the moral condition of the Chinese and concluded that the picture was so black that it could not be overdrawn.⁷³ In order to convey a sense of the depth of the blackness he called upon the words of Samuel Wells Williams' Middle Kingdom published ten years previously and now considered to be a classic analysis of Chinese character. According to Mr. Williams the Chinese

⁷³John R. Hykes, "The Importance of Winning China for Christ," Missionary Review, V (February, 1892), 82-91.

" . . . are vile and polluted in a shocking degree; their conversation is full of filthy expressions, and their lives of impure acts . . . the universal practice of lying and dishonest dealings; the unblushing lewdness of old and young; harsh cruelty towards prisoners by officers . . . all form a full unchecked torrent of human depravity (and) . . . moral degradation of which an excessive statement can scarcely be made. . . ." ⁷⁴

The Chinaman's heathenish character was clearly revealed by the forms of religion and ancestor worship in China. The root of China's moral debasement was thought to lie in the traditional practice of ancestor worship. While there is merit in honoring one's family, carrying that honor to the excess of worship tended to deny the possibility of worshiping a god outside of the family relationship. Missionaries discussed at length the terrible conflicts with their families faced by all converts in China. Unless the family was sympathetic toward the new belief, which it usually was not, the Christian Chinaman had to struggle against the full weight of family tradition. Incidents where converts had defied family traditions such as the annual pilgrimage to a local temple or a traditional pagan celebration, at great threat to their own safety, were

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 83.

widely told. Chinese religious practice was very imperfectly understood. The presence of three distinct systems seemed to utterly confuse all observers including the missionaries. A rare article might discuss Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism separately, but their relationship with each other was unclear. It was easier just to classify the Chinese as heathens.

The Missionary Herald had been published for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions since 1805. The attitude toward the Chinese revealed in its pages is representative of other such publications. The Chinaman was looked upon as a heathen in desperate need of conversion. Because he had strayed from the path, most missionaries were unable to appreciate either the Chinaman personally or his civilization. Stories of missionary exploits emphasized continually his superstitious beliefs, strange customs, abnormal vices and immorality. He could be and was converted, and the missionaries were intensely loyal to their converts, but that is the other side of the paradox. Meanwhile the missionary did his best to describe the depths of China's heathenism and thus helped to solidify the attitude towards the Chinese as a strange and barbarous people.

In retrospect it seems clear that most writers were highly selective in their descriptions of Chinese life. Their choice of topics led to distortion and to an unfavorable view of China. By emphasizing the cruelty, the strange

customs surrounding the life of women, and the crowded cities, they reinforced the western sense of superiority. Much of what they said was based upon actual conditions in China. There was a strong element of violence in Chinese tradition. Many female and also male children were allowed to die because their families could not feed them. Living conditions in the cities were often hopelessly crowded and sanitary facilities of a limited nature. By selecting only these and similar aspects of Chinese life it was possible to place China in a very unfavorable light.

The problems which China faced in her efforts to provide for her citizens were seldom noticed. The political problem was little understood or at least seldom commented on. The relationship between the ruling Manchus and the Chinese was rarely explained. The transportation problem was largely ignored by observers who could not comprehend the vastness of China's territory and the inaccessible nature of many regions. When Chinese died by the thousands in time of famine the government was called heartless because it did not transport food to stricken areas. The basic social institutions of Chinese life such as the clan system were misunderstood and unappreciated. The problem of keeping order in a country where in some regions the central government was only a name could not or would not be appreciated. Chinese ethical values went unmentioned by writers who saw only the unfavorable side of China. What

these writers said about China was true, but because it was only a partial description, ignoring other basic factors, its effect tended toward distortion.

The question arises as to why China was described in such an unfavorable manner by travelers and other writers. Part of the answer lies in the expectations of the majority of the American reading public. The great gulf separating the two civilizations was too extensive to be bridged by the limited contacts which most Americans had with the Chinese. Many were familiar with coolie laborers, laundrymen, and had perhaps visited Chinatown, but rare was the American who had stayed in a Chinese home for even a few hours. The strangeness of Chinese culture was overwhelming. Readers could scarcely draw their eyes away from the descriptions of unusual adventures and the wierd tales of Chinese life which appeared in all the popular magazines. Because of their unfamiliarity with the total character of Chinese society, most Americans could see only those aspects which seemed most striking in contrast with their own environment.

Commentators on Chinese affairs aimed their accounts at precisely this level of understanding. Most readers were convinced that China was a mysterious land with a culture which was barbarous by American standards and the majority of writers seemed little inclined to disabuse their readers of this impression. It was only natural that readers with this attitude should welcome descriptions of China which emphasized

the undesirable aspects of its daily life. In the popular magazines it was especially true that writers seemed to want to entertain their readers rather than to inform them. Travelers and others who wrote about China largely shared the attitudes of their readers and authors seemed almost to vie with each other in trying to paint the blackest picture. Americans absorbed these accounts eagerly because they supported their preconceived notions about the strange and grotesque nature of Chinese culture.

The standards which were used to measure the Chinese were impossibly unrealistic. Not only was it unrealistic to apply American measures to a wholly different civilization, but the measures which were selected represented the brighter aspects of American society. The evils present in their own society almost always escaped the attention of these western observers while they readily perceived the features of Chinese life that seemed brutal. Most Americans were thoroughly absorbed in the concept of American superiority and were unable to appreciate a civilization which lay almost totally outside of western experience. Given their lack of understanding and their ethnocentrism it was inevitable that Americans should judge China by the ideals of their own society.

When Americans were first introduced to China they were startled. China looked threatening. Here was a civilization with ancient lineage, with a claim to a longer and

perhaps more profound acquaintance with the world. The beginnings of a solution to the dilemma posed by a disappearing frontier were just being suggested in 1886 by Josiah Strong who wrote that America had a destiny not just on the North American continent, but on the entire globe. Then suddenly, there loomed China with its claim to prior greatness. What destiny could there be for America in the Far East with China there? The United States claimed to have a peculiar mission to perform in the world. This claim could not be justified unless China was found to be in need of the American gospel.

The details of the solution were not fully developed until 1898. It was only in that year and the years following that the exciting events in Cuba and the Pacific served to establish firmly the broadened concept of an American destiny in the world. In the early 1890's the country was still suffering from acute feelings of insecurity. There were glimmerings of a possible future for the United States as an evangelist of progress in China but for the most part China simply appeared as a threat to American uniqueness. In order to meet the threat China was described as a racially inferior, morally debased, and socially backward people. The threat was removed by claiming that there was no threat. If the Chinese were inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race then they could never develop threatening proportions. In 1898 and

after the threat of China was removed by the more sophisticated method of emphasizing the responsibility of the superior race for the inferior. But most Americans in the early 1890's contented themselves with a simple denunciation of the Chinese as an uncivilized people.

Americans misunderstood the Chinese because they needed to. Anything approximating an unbiased description of China was apparently too threatening to the image of America held by most Americans even to be considered. Those people in the United States who thought about the nations enlarging environment seemed unable to face the possibility of China being a great civilization and a possible power in the Far East, because it would require a reevaluation of basic values. As a result, the descriptions of Chinese life by American observers were designed to gratify their need to see the Chinese in an unfavorable light. The Chinese did not have to be described in this fashion. The journal of the Royal Asiatic Society published dozens of articles between 1890 and 1905 which dealt objectively with China. In 1891 one article offered a favorable description of the Buddhist clergy in China and another an explanation of a Chinese game called, Wei-Ch'i, which was thought to be far superior to European chess.⁷⁵ In later years similar

⁷⁵Royal Asiatic Journal, XXVI (1891-1892).

articles appeared on philosophy, agriculture, transportation, and politics all of which sought to understand the attributes as well as the problems of Chinese society.⁷⁶ Most Americans misunderstood the Chinese because they were unable to view oriental culture from any viewpoint other than their own. China was placed in an unfavorable light not primarily as a result of malice aforethought, but as a result of a deep seated sense of American superiority.

⁷⁶See, e.g., Ibid., XXXI (1896-1897), XXXIII (1900-1901), XXXVI (1905).

CHAPTER V

AN ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

Not every American looked upon the Chinese as barbarians and utterly devoid of merit. A small group of men in the United States and in China argued for a more objective treatment of the Chinese. These men were identified by their scholarly interest in China as well as by their professional qualifications. Many of them were pioneers in their respective fields and noted for their ability and honesty. They expressed their views all through the 1890's and their opinions formed the exception in the midst of widespread hostility toward China. In the late 1890's their voices were joined with those of others who began to look upon China as an opportunity to demonstrate the validity of the concept of America as a missionary of progress in the world. But they were heard at all times in the 1880's and 1890's and constitute a minority report to the unfavorable descriptions in China.

The more favorable view of China was in some respects a transitional attitude leading from complete unwillingness to consider the Chinese as anything but inferior, to the attitude that under western leadership China's civilization might be redeemed. By redemption was meant the development

of China along the lines of western technology. According to this line of thought, America would share with China the secrets of progress and western civilization. Businessmen would see in China a great opportunity not only for trade but for extension of the principles of the supremacy of wealth. By 1905 many Americans seem to have considered China as an example of the opportunity and responsibility which faced the nation in its new relationship to the world, though there was a minority report about the "yellow peril." These ideas are not fully developed in the mid-1890's by any means, nor does the antagonism towards China ever disappear, it only alters its form. The sympathetic viewpoint of China expressed all through the 1890's was influential in helping some Americans in 1898 to express their anti-Chinese feelings in the broader terms of America's responsibility toward an inferior race.

An American engineer who spent two years in China as director of a survey for the Hankow to Canton railway introduced a more favorable attitude towards Chinese civilization. "We are want to consider them as uncivilized; and so they are if measured scrupulously by our peculiar standards. But, on the other hand, they might say with some justice that we are not civilized according to the standards that they have set for themselves, founded on an experience

of four thousand years."¹ The suggestion that it was only fair to judge China by her own ancient standard instead of by more recent western standards was made by several writers. One writer who was in China with the United States Navy stated that, "in our ethnological classifications we have these countries as half civilized, because we judge them by our own standards alone, but it may well be questioned if the fraction of culture we concede them may not be, after all, superior to the half which we retain in excess."² The willingness to judge China by her own standards indicated a definite modification in the judgement of her as uncivilized.

With varying purposes in mind some writers sought to make the point that whatever we might say about China today her civilization had ancient roots and had once been very highly developed. A minor controversy was carried on about whether or not Chinese civilization had its origin in Babylon. According to one scholar the similarity between Accadian and Chinese was so pronounced that it could only be concluded that the Chinese language had its roots in Babylon.³ Some argued that the Chinese had discovered the

¹W. B. Parsons, "Chinese Commerce," Popular Science Monthly, LVIII (December, 1900), 201.

²Eustace B. Rogers, "The War in Korea," Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (August 11, 1894), 750.

³R. K. Douglas, "The Origin of Chinese Culture and Civilization," Literary Digest, I (June 28, 1890), 260-261.

North American continent before Columbus and others described how the Chinese had developed and used the mariner's compass centuries before westerners. Because the Chinese had reached a high level of development many years ago they no longer sought to improve themselves. Lyman Abbott noted that "The Chinaman's characteristic is not despair, which is hopeless aspiration; nor contentment, which is restrained aspiration; but self-satisfaction, which is absence of aspiration."⁴ While this is a qualified view of Chinese civilization it is a more sympathetic one than was generally current during the mid-1890's.

The excellence of Chinese civilization was thought to exhibit itself in the attitude toward learning in China. One of the chief examples of this attitude was the manner in which literary examinations served as the selection process for government officials of all levels. The examinations were described in detail in a number of articles in the 1890's. The first step for a candidate who aspired to high office was to pass the local examination where he might earn the equivalent of his B.A. degree. If he successfully passed this obstacle he then presented himself for the second degree or provincial examination. If he was among the 120 successful candidates out of thousands of competitors then he would

⁴"The Awakening of China" (editorial), Outlook, LXV (August 1, 1900), 855.

be highly honored by his home town and his future would be assured. A traveler in Peking at the time of the provincial examination was very favorably disposed towards the tradition of literary attainment. "It is difficult to decide which we should most admire: the genuine enthusiasm of all China for literary culture . . . or the marvelous ingenuity and precision with which this skill is tested, by a system of literary examinations hardly equaled and never surpassed by any nation in any age."⁵

The Chinese were characterized as a literary people. Sometimes this was done in order to suggest that the seeming lack of courage in Chinese soldiers was a result of China's emphasis on her literary tradition. But there were also those who thought that the strong literary tradition was a source of strength for China. One writer offered as proof of China's literary quality the fact that letter writing was a large business in China.⁶ Letter shops stood ready to serve the customer who wished to send a message to a distant part of the empire. Imperial messages traveled at the rate of sixty-six miles per day by runner or, if urgent, at the rate of 133 miles per day with horses. Ordinary business letters were sent at a slower rate. In many of the

⁵Charles Johnston, "Prince Hamlet of Peking," Arena, III (September, 1900), 269.

⁶Samuel L. Gracey, "Chinese Letter Shops," Chautauquan, XXI (June, 1895), 309-312.

magazines specializing in missionary matters the possibility of spreading the Gospel by means of appealing to the literati was discussed. The literary Chinese were so highly respected that once converted their influence over their countrymen would be very useful. The interest in Chinese literature included articles on fiction, drama, and other matters of literary concern. In all of these the attitude was largely one of sincere interest and appreciation.

The topic of China's religious and philosophical orientation was not looked upon as objectively as her literary tradition but there were some examples of a growing appreciation. The missionaries were not generally sympathetic towards China's religions. A writer in the Catholic World thought that missionaries should spend more time understanding Buddhism instead of condemning it outright as paganism.⁷ The author found much to praise in a religion which was a means towards the worship of God. Another exception to the general religious comment on oriental religion was an article in the American Journal of Theology. The author was W. A. P. Martin, one of the greatest admirers of Chinese culture and President of the University of Peking. He argued that while the Chinese did not worship exactly the same god as Christians did, their belief did leave room for such

⁷T. H. Houston, "A Chinese Holy Island," Catholic World, LXIII (July, 1896), 445-455.

worship.⁸ Eventually he thought that the Chinese might recognize in their vague Power the God of Christianity.

There was some praise of Chinese philosophy particularly Confucianism. China could be forgiven much, thought Thomas Magee, a highly respected real estate broker in San Francisco, for preserving intact the memory of her great philosopher.⁹ W. A. P. Martin felt that the Chinese had come closer to the heights in philosophy than the West had realized.¹⁰ The strong reverence, almost worship, for the past in China, while criticized for its tendency to produce backwardness was also praised because it encouraged a well balanced, more mature attitude towards life. The editor of the Monist, himself a philosopher and interested in China, concluded that, "the whole Chinese civilization is saturated with the belief in the divinity, the perfection, and the unqualified excellence of its principles, doctrines, and institutions."¹¹ There were disadvantages to such a strong, ingrown respect for their own ideas, but there was also

⁸W. A. P. Martin, "The Speculative Philosophy of the Chinese," American Journal of Theology, I (April, 1897) 289-297.

⁹Thomas Magee, "China's Menace to the World," Forum, X (October, 1890), 204.

¹⁰W. A. P. Martin, "The Speculative Philosophy of the Chinese," American Journal of Theology, I (April, 1897), 289-297.

¹¹Paul Carus, "Chinese Philosophy," Monist, VI (January, 1896), 189.

great strength and wisdom in such an attitude.

The Chinese language was thought by a few people to be one of the most attractive aspects of Chinese civilization. Instead of being "ear-splitting jargon" as it was usually described, the editor of Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly found it highly musical and quite like the notes of birds.¹² The language was thought to be rather easy to learn because there were no problems of syntax. Pure Chinese could be learned as easily as any foreign language and when learned the student had access to a vast source of written material. Pure Chinese was seldom spoken but all educated Chinese wrote it. The language was described as full of energy of expression, directness of purpose and natural logic. One writer even argued that Chinese might well become the universal language because a symbolic language eliminated all the problems of a phonetic language.¹³ At the least Chinese should be introduced and used in the professions in order to develop a means of consistent communication. The only block to its acceptance was its supposed difficulty to learn and the prejudice against the Chinese.¹⁴

¹²"The Chinese Language" (editorial), Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, XL (July, 1895), 90-91.

¹³"Is Chinese to be the Universal Language" (editorial), Literary Digest, XXII (January 12, 1901), 39.

¹⁴Ibid.

Some visitors to China belittled the famous wall and insisted on describing its insignificance, but a few defended it as one of the great engineering feats in world history. A writer for the National Geographic, which devoted several issues mainly to China in 1900, thought that ". . . the walls are so solid and inaccessible and the gates so well arranged and defended that it would puzzle a modern army with a first-class siege train to get through if any effort whatever were made for its defense."¹⁵ The length of the wall was variously described from 1,500 to 3,000 miles. Those who looked favorably upon the whole subject viewed it as a monumental engineering feat. The canals in China were also commented upon favorably because they provided excellent, cheap transportation as well as fertilizer from their muck bottoms for the farmer's fields. It was thought that with a little repair they would be the best in the world and a serious rival to any of the contemplated railroads in China.¹⁶

Chinese architecture in general was thought to be more distinguished for its engineering features than for its esthetic excellence. Chinese civilization was so

¹⁵"The Great Wall of China" (anon. article), National Geographic, XI (September, 1900), 374.

¹⁶George E. Anderson, "The Wonderful Canals of China," National Geographic, XVI (January, 1905), 68-71.

ancient that its architecture tended to be rather monotonous though thoroughly practical. The Chinese were excellent engineers and craftsmen. Their understanding of the quarrying, cutting and placing of granite was superior to that of any people in the world. The legend of a mason who was put to death because he left a joint in the wall wide enough to drive a nail into was cited in support of their insistence upon excellence.¹⁷ The Chinese arch and the principles of its design were the same today as in antiquity. The pagoda, originally developed from the design of a tent, was described as China's most characteristic building.¹⁸ While China's architecture was neither as elaborate nor as highly developed as in western countries it was well suited to China's needs.

Some of the favorable comment was directed toward China's present achievements. Chinese justice was not all cruelty and bribery as many writers had suggested. The ancient tradition of responsibility in China had produced a people who were a living example of the command that every man was his brother's keeper. An article in Century magazine described the system whereby loads of gold and silver might be sent safely through the countryside without

¹⁷C. T. Matthews, "Eastern Asia," Architectural Record, V (January, 1896), 288-297.

¹⁸Ibid.

guards.¹⁹ Travelers who stayed at the country inns in China were often suspicious of the insistence of the innkeeper that all valuables be deposited with him for safekeeping. What they did not realize was that the innkeeper would be held responsible for any loss to his lodgers and in order to protect himself from a loss which might be disastrous to his business he preferred to have custody of valuable items which he promptly returned in the morning.²⁰

An example of the system of responsibility in action occurred when an American was carrying a quantity of silver home from a bank in Canton and a man suddenly rushed up, snatched the bullion from his hands, and disappeared down an alleyway. Unable to find the thief, the man made out a statement explaining the circumstances which he sent to the owner of the shop closest to the point where he had been robbed. The storekeepers along the street made good his loss.²¹ Such incidents as this suggested that the Chinese were more orderly and law abiding than any other race. Very few Chinamen were held in jails and there was no prison problem as in the United States. There were probably more

¹⁹C. M. Cady, "Responsibility Among the Chinese," Century, LI (January, 1896), 341-345.

²⁰Ibid., p. 342.

²¹Ibid., p. 343.

prisoners in one American county jail than were in jail in a whole province of ten million people in China.²² A Chinese trial was described and the orderly process of the law was praised. No more cruelty existed than the writer thought existed in the local precinct in a large city.²³ The system of law practiced in China was thought to be as excellent as that practiced anywhere in the western world.

A sincere appreciation of Chinese customs was apparent in the attitude of several authors. Paul Carus, who wrote several sympathetic articles on Chinese ways for the Open Court magazine agreed that filial piety was sometimes carried to extremes in China, "still, it will be wise for us whose habits of life suffer from the opposite extreme . . . to recognize that all of them are pervaded with a noble spirit of respect for parents, which though exaggerated is none the less touching and ought to command our admiration."²⁴ The author of an article on Chinese folk-lore, a traveler in China and a student of folk-lore, emphasized the difficulty involved in appreciating Chinese folk-ways.²⁵ The language

²²M. A. Hamm, "A Chinese Trial," Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, XXXIX (February, 1895), 191-192.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Paul Carus, "Filial Piety in China," Open Court, XVI (December, 1902), 764.

²⁵Adele M. Fielde, "The Character of Chinese Folk-Tales," Journal of American Folk-Lore, VIII (July, 1895), 185-191.

was difficult to understand because of its emphasis on word accent and as a result much of the fine meaning inherent in all folk-tales could not be understood by foreigners. Yet with such a lengthy tradition Chinese folk-lore was a treasure house of human wisdom which had hardly been explored.

Chinese drama was praised for its lack of obscenity and sordidness which were so prevalent in western theater. Much of the strangeness of the Chinese theater was due to the foreigner's unfamiliarity with the customs and traditions of the Chinese people. Chinese music, wrote the secretary of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, for example, was not a hideous, unharmonic noise, but a highly developed system which had evolved along different lines than in the West.²⁶ In fact, an author pointed out, Europe is indebted to the earlier system developed in the Orient for some features of western music. The music sounds discordant because the western ear is not trained to appreciate the oriental system. The Chinese were heavily criticized for the place of women in their society and their attitude toward children. But the majority of Chinese homes were happy places where children were raised in an atmosphere of love and respect.²⁷

²⁶ Benjamin Ives Gilman, "On Some Psychological Aspects of the Chinese Musical System," Philosophical Review, I (January, 1892), 54-71.

²⁷ W. A. P. Martin, "As the Chinese See Us," Forum, X (February, 1891), 678-688.

The clan system was not simply the source of secret societies, explained a Chinese resident in the United States, but a growth out of the need for self-protection in a society where the government does not provide much in the way of police protection and other societal needs.²⁸

Defenders of China argued that Chinese civilization had contributed a great deal to the West. China appeared presently to neglect the sciences but in practice she had contributed a great many scientific discoveries and developments to the world's store of knowledge. The discovery of the principle of magnetism and its application in the use of the compass was noted. Chinese sailors were thought to have used the mariners compass several centuries before western sailors. European playing cards owed their origin to Chinese games which had utilized cards for centuries. Observations of birds and animals which resulted in the conclusion that animals utilized coloring as a protective device had predated similar western studies. The discovery of ancient Chinese coins in an Alaskan grave encouraged a missionary among the Chinese in San Francisco to suggest that the Chinese had come to America long before the white man in order to civilize the Indian.²⁹ Numerous such items were cited

²⁸Walter N. Fong, "Labor Unions in China," Chautauquan, XXIII (June, 1896), 320-324.

²⁹Frederick J. Masters, "Did a Chinaman Discover America?" Overland Monthly, XXIII (June, 1894), 576-588.

in order to strengthen the case for an appreciation of China as a civilization in its own right and entitled to a place in the world community.

The West had something to learn from the Chinese system of government. The editor of Nation commented in passing on, ". . . the guilds, habits, and superstitions of the wonderfully well organized people among us who have come from the freest country and greatest democracy in Asia."³⁰ The concept of China as a great democracy was suggested by several writers who thought that the system of examinations made it possible for anyone to rise to high rank and, therefore, made China the model of a democratic people. Not only was the Chinese government thought to be democratic, it was also praised for its moral tone because ". . . in theory of government the Chinese make large use of moral sentiments. For the preservation of order they rely on the better instincts of the masses, guided by the intelligence of the more educated."³¹ The author wondered if an attitude such as this was not sufficient to establish China's claim to be a respectable civilization "notwithstanding the paucity of her railways."³²

³⁰"China" (editorial), Nation, LII (April 23, 1891), 343.

³¹W. A. P. Martin, "Book-Making and Bookselling in China," Publishers Weekly, XLIX (May 23, 1896), 858.

³²Ibid.

The ability to distinguish between the different elements in China's governmental system was a sign that Americans were becoming more sensitive in their attitude toward China. Li Hung Chang, for example, was recognized by a few political commentators as a highly influential person in Chinese politics but not the prime minister of China as many assumed. Not all writers condemned China for her failure to prevent the missionary massacres in the 1890's. A few thought that China was doing all in her power to handle a situation which at best was extremely volatile. It was recognized that China could not be thought of as a nation when she lacked a national consciousness and, therefore, should not be expected to act as a nation but as a civilization. The distinction between the Manchus and the Chinese was recognized by those who sought to explain the difference between dealing with the Manchu rulers and understanding the Chinese. A more sympathetic view of the Chinaman was apparent as he began to be appreciated for his ability to govern himself with intelligence and moderation.

The sensational accounts of the experiences of travelers in China were countered by more appreciative and understanding reports. A writer in Harpers New Monthly noted in 1899 that there was, "too common a tendency to rate Asiatics as barbarians."³³ In all his travels in China he had never

³³J. Barnett, "America in the Pacific and Far East," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, XCIX (November, 1899), 918.

carried a fire-arm, only a walking stick. He had observed everywhere the natural, spontaneous kindness of natives with their reserved but sincere hospitality. The immorality of the Chinese was certainly no worse than elsewhere and possibly a little better. Crime was less noticeable and most Chinese were thoroughly honest with only an occasional example of sharp practice. In fact, the author concluded, the more time one spends there the greater is the respect which one feels toward the Chinaman.³⁴ A traveler in Canton was impressed by the absence of policemen and the orderly procedure of the crowded traffic in the streets where laborers with heavy loads were given the right-of-way over chair borne officials.³⁵ The author thought that accounts of the horrible filth and odors were exaggerated. She was also impressed by the absence of beggars and the intelligent use of available space for living quarters and recreation areas.

A frequent contributor of articles on China and widely travelled in the Far East, Julian Ralph summed up a journey by houseboat with a description of the Chinese as people who "will live in my mind forever . . . as the jolliest, kindest, most generous souls I ever found in such

³⁴Ibid., pp. 917-926.

³⁵Florence O'Driscoll, "In the City of Canton," Century, XLIX (November, 1894), 62.

profusion anywhere in my roving."³⁶ During his travels on a Chinese river he had never bothered to lock up his valuables. The servants who had been hired to assist on the trip proved intelligent, quick, trustworthy, and thoroughly capable in all respects. Our Day magazine reviewed Julian Ralph's article on houseboating, from which the previous remarks were taken, and concluded that Ralph was a just traveler who, unlike most travelers, found scenes of beauty instead of degradation, viciousness and filth.³⁷

The basic occupation of most Chinese was farming and several observers marveled at the Chinaman's ability to extract the utmost from the soil. The careful utilization of every conceivable source of fertilizer from human to plant and animal was described in detail. The Chinese often sowed two crops together of varying maturity dates, such as cotton and wheat, so as not to waste any growing time. The soil was prepared carefully and young rice shoots were planted by hand. If it were not for the marauding river pirates and the plagues of mandarins and locusts the Chinese farmers' life would be thoroughly happy. If a man owned ten acres he was considered wealthy, the usual amount being one-tenth

³⁶Julian Ralph, "House-Boating in China," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, XCI (June, 1895), 3.

³⁷Julian Ralph, "House-Boating in China" (anon. review), Our Day, XV (July, 1895), 1.

to one-half an acre per individual. On this land he could support himself and his wife, two children and his parents. A people organized on such Jeffersonian principles as these could not fail to attract a little sympathy even from hostile Americans.

In addition to their achievements as an ancient civilization and as a respected modern people, the Chinese were viewed favorably because of their inherent racial attributes. John R. Proctor, who because of his reputation for honesty in government was appointed head of the United States Civil Service Commission in 1893, thought that regardless of what was said about corruption and deceit of the mandarin, the great mass of the Chinese people were "contented, sober, and industrious, with traditional habits of obedience to and respect for authority."³⁸ Even when measured against western standards of civilization the author thought it was doubtful that a population of four hundred million people who were as well-to-do and contented as the Chinese could be found elsewhere in the world. The Chinese were looked upon as a race of naturally peaceful people who disliked aggressive ways. They were solid, industrious men who were willing to work at any task in order to provide for their families. When compared to the Japanese, the Chinese

³⁸John R. Proctor, "Saxon or Slav?" Harpers Weekly, XLIII (November 25, 1899), 1179.

appeared to be the stronger race, with little tendency to indulge in frivolous activities on which the Japanese often dissipated their energy.

An American who spent fifteen years in China characterized the people as having the highest capabilities of any she had ever known.³⁹ Isolated instances of selfishness were more than balanced by their characteristics of self-respect, tenderness, heroic endurance, patience and earnestness. Chester Holcombe, missionary in China, secretary and then charge d'affaires of the Pekin legation, and author of books on China, pointed out that the rule in western lands was to misunderstand the Chinese.⁴⁰ The author then described what he believed to be the true situation in China. What he had to say was not entirely complimentary, but his appeal for greater understanding on the part of Americans for China was indicative of a more favorable attitude.

The attitude toward China of those connected with the missionary movement has been described as paradoxical. On one hand the Chinese were viewed as racially inferior, as pagans in need of Christian salvation. But it is obvious that optimism not pessimism must lie at the heart of a missionary's attitude toward his work. Christian ministers at

³⁹Alice Morse Earle, "Travels in the Orient," Dial XVIII (April 1, 1895), 211.

⁴⁰Chester Holcombe, "Through Asia at My Study Table," Dial, XIX (July 16, 1895), 49.

home and abroad believed that the Good News of Christianity had the power to change people's lives. Therefore, in the long run the missionary attitude towards the Chinese must be a hopeful one. The Chinaman might be depraved but he was not beyond saving. The concept of a salvagable heathen existed alongside that of a degenerate heathen, and gradually began to receive more emphasis.

It is only a short step from the concept of a salvagable heathen to the concept of Christian responsibility. If the Chinese were not hopelessly depraved but were, in fact, capable of conversion, then Christian nations as well as Christian churches had the duty of making the necessary efforts to accomplish the conversion.

Some Americans easily took the step from the responsibility felt by religious people towards individual Chinese to the feeling of a responsibility for all the Chinese people. In this way religious responsibility was joined with the concept of America's duty to educate the world in the ways of progress. As a result of the happy combination the nation could move steadily forward, secure in its knowledge of the truth, to distribute the fruits of religion, democracy, and commerce to a starved world.

Before the step was taken, however, missionaries had to satisfy themselves that the Chinese as a race would accept Christian teaching. A missionary who invested many years in

work among the Chinese both in the United States and China thought, "if the testimony is to be taken on both sides, it simply amounts to this; the Chinese, as a nation, are not so bad as to be past help, and not so good that they cannot be made better. In short, like every nation, China needs the gospel of our Lord and Saviour."⁴¹ The missionaries were attacked on all sides by critics who thought that a Chinaman could never be converted and that the missionaries were wasting their efforts in the United States and in China. Consequently, numerous articles appeared in the various religious periodicals attesting to the faith of Chinese converts. Frederick J. Masters was a minister familiar with the work in China. His article, "Can a Chinaman Become a Christian," concluded that he could and that when once converted the Chinaman's faith was very strong as witnessed by the loyalty of converts during the massacre of Christians in China.⁴² It is interesting to note that Masters stressed this point after the Boxer Revolt of 1900.

A more favorable attitude toward the Chinaman precipitated a greater willingness to consider his religion as a preparation for Christian teaching. One writer presented a sympathetic description of Taoism in which he concluded that

⁴¹W. C. Pond, "The Los Angeles Chinese Mission," American Missionary, V (May, 1897), 162.

⁴²Frederick J. Masters, "Can a Chinaman Become a Christian?" Literary Digest, V (October 8, 1892), 629-630.

Lao-Tsze had introduced concepts familiar to Christian thought long before Christ was born. He felt that no one who had read the words of Lao-Tsze could doubt "that the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity was revealed to the Chinese five centuries before the coming of Christ."⁴³ Some missionaries had held that a Chinaman was not really converted until he had given up his allegiance to the teachings of Confucius. Since Confucianism was practically a way of life in China this often proved very difficult so that some people doubted whether a Chinaman could ever be converted. But a happy way out was seen by W. A. P. Martin who thought that there was no inherent conflict between the two systems. Confucius was not a prophet, not a god but a perfect man, therefore, there was no conflict between Confucius and Christ.⁴⁴

Another point on which some Americans modified their view of Chinese racial characteristics was that of the courage of Chinese soldiers. The accounts of Chinese cowardice in battle were balanced by others which presented a more favorable picture. Chinese troops were thought to possess great competence when trained and led by European officers

⁴³George H. Trever, "Lao-Tsze and His System," Methodist Review, LIX (March, 1899), 233.

⁴⁴W. A. P. Martin, "On Chinese Ideas of Inspiration," Andover Review, XV (May, 1891), 472-481.

under rigid discipline.⁴⁵ This view was supported by several correspondents and other observers in China. The Chinaman's intrinsic qualities of bravery, obedience, steady nerves, endurance and mechanical skill allowed him to be made into an excellent soldier. Stories of Chinese feats of skill and bravery in battle were circulated by those who were sympathetic towards the Chinese during the Sino-Japanese war.

The question of Chinese honesty had not been settled by those who argued that his ways were inherently those of deviousness and deception. Businessmen who were experienced in Chinese trade and diplomats in China made highly favorable comments about the honesty of the Chinese. It was believed by almost all of these men that the Chinaman would usually make good on his contracts, including verbal ones, even if a drop in prices worked to his disadvantage. In fact, if a balance were struck between the wrongs committed by American and Chinese businessmen, the Chinaman would appear as the injured party in the majority of cases. Chinese banks were thought to be generally sound and only a few small ones overextended themselves to the point of danger. The large banking houses enjoyed a reputation of scrupulous honesty.⁴⁶

⁴⁵"Chinese as Soldiers" (editorial), Literary Digest, XIX (July 22, 1899), 113.

⁴⁶Willard Fisher, "The Currency of China," Yale Review, V (February, 1897), 403-427.

Part of the reason for the development of a more favorable attitude toward China was the feeling that China might have a future after all. Americans have never been noted for their patience and it seemed impossible that a geographical area of the size of China could stand still in history. When a positive view of China was taken it implied that China would move forward instead of backward. America's role in this movement did not play an important part in such thinking prior to 1898. But just as the religious view was soon to shift from its emphasis on the individual Chinese to its emphasis on the entire race so was the more positive view of China soon to involve American in new ideas about America's place in China's future.

The editor of Harpers Weekly spoke in just such a vein when he noted that hitherto China had been interesting almost entirely as an illustration of a past civilization but that ". . . today it is something more than this. At last the thought of the future intrudes itself;" ⁴⁷

The Sino-Japanese war stimulated many comments which suggested the possibility of China awakening in order to take a new role in future world affairs. In reference to the war itself, one editor commented, "it has evidently been God's plan for throwing China open to the fuller influences of the

⁴⁷"China Today" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XL (May 30, 1896), 538.

progressive spirit of the nineteenth century."⁴⁸ The role of the missionaries in the opening up of China to new ideas was recognized early in the 1890's. Missionary schools, hospitals and colleges were making an impact on conservative Chinese thought. Some writers insisted that they could name the exact year or event which worked a revolutionary awakening. As it turned out, arousing China from her lethargy would be a long process only beginning during the 1890's.

Signs of the awakening were evident for those who wanted to see them. In 1888 at the examinations in Peking a premium was placed on knowledge of mathematics and western science. Of the candidates offering themselves for examination in those subjects, five per cent would be allowed to pass instead of the usual one per cent in the classics.⁴⁹ In 1893 the editor of Public Opinion magazine noted the opening of new cotton mills, an increase in railroad mileage and an increase in foreign trade as signs of a new awakening.⁵⁰ Li Hung Chang's visit to the United States in 1896 prompted recognition of his role in introducing progress into

⁴⁸"Peace in the Orient" (editorial), Our Day, XIV (May, 1895), 218.

⁴⁹Marcus L. Taft, "Chinese Education--Past and Present," Missionary Review, III (September, 1890), 697-701.

⁵⁰"China's Progress" (editorial), Public Opinion, XV (June 3, 1893), 9.

China. Two years later a national university was opened at Peking and in the following year the ill-fated reforms of the Emperor were hailed as the dawn of a new age for China. Every year during the last decade of the nineteenth century articles were published announcing the beginning of a great period of railroad development for China. When plans did not materialize as rapidly as anticipated no one was discouraged, instead, new prophecies of progress were advanced.

One of the certain indications of maturity is the development of the faculty of self-criticism. With Americans, the ability to recognize the causes of the anti-foreign feeling in China was a sign of maturity. An author just returning from a long stay in China as missionary and diplomat who noted that coastal defense guns manufactured in England were often defective and blew up killing scores of Chinese was indicating a willingness to consider western responsibility for some of China's animosity against foreigners.⁵¹ Foreigners hired to assist the Chinese government were often so imperious in their demands as to make it impossible for the Chinese to work with them. It was a disgrace for westerners to act in this fashion. Li Hung Chang was never treated with the cordiality which he should have received on his journey to the capitals of the West.

⁵¹Chester Holcombe, "Li Hung Chang," McClures Magazine, VII (October, 1896), 427-436.

The treatment of the Chinese in some countries was a shame to western civilization. Thoughts such as these worked a new emphasis in America's image of China. Instead of a second-class race, worthy only of condemnation and mistreatment, China began to emerge as a civilization with ancient resources and a hope for the future.

The favorable attitude toward China was expressed by a small group of men who were leaders in their professions. W. A. P. Martin has already been identified as a man who spent a great deal of his lifetime in China, part of it as President of the University of Peking, and a man who was very sympathetic toward Chinese culture.⁵² Paul Carus was born in Germany and his primary interest was philosophy. He published widely including many articles in the Open Court magazine, an excellent liberal journal published in Chicago, which came under his editorship early in the 1890's. He had a reputation for open mindedness and honest scholarship.⁵³ Thomas Magee was a real estate broker in San Francisco who forced his competitors to adopt higher ethical standards by setting an example for honesty with his clients. He was an amateur Shakespearian scholar and also interested in the Orient.⁵⁴

⁵²"Martin, W.A.P.," The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, XV (New York, 1947), p. 20.

⁵³"Carus, Paul," Dictionary of American Biography, III (New York, 1929), p. 548.

⁵⁴"Magee, Thomas," National Cyclopedia, XXXIII, p. 385.

William B. Parsons led a survey party through the strongly anti-foreign province of Hunan in 1898 and then pioneered the building of the first subway in New York city.⁵⁵

Chester Holcombe went to China in 1869 as a missionary where he was in charge of a school for boys in Peking. He was a close friend of Samuel Wells Williams and served in a diplomatic capacity at the Peking legation during the 1870's and 1880's.⁵⁶ Frederick J. Masters and W. C. Pond were men of great energy and honesty who carried on sympathetic ministries among the Chinese communities on the West Coast and in China. John R. Proctor was director of the Kentucky geological survey and was forced to resign under political pressure because he would not allow the governor's son to hold a job on the survey. His honesty won him a place as head of the United States Civil Service Commission in 1893. He was the author of several articles on China which appeared in the National Geographic magazine.⁵⁷ These men are representative of those who wrote sympathetically of China in the 1890's. Many of them were experts on Chinese culture with long experience in China, others had only a minor interest in the Orient. All of them, however, shared a common desire

⁵⁵"Parsons, William B.," Dictionary, XIV, p. 276.

⁵⁶"Holcombe, Chester," Ibid., IX, p. 132.

⁵⁷"Proctor, John R.," Ibid., XV, p. 241.

to rise above popular prejudice in their descriptions of Chinese civilization.

The sympathetic viewpoint expressed by these writers did not indicate a moderating in anti-Chinese sentiment. It did indicate the view of some men who felt themselves bound by deep ties with China or by a code of honesty to report the true situation in China. Their articles appeared all during the period from 1890 to 1905. Toward the end of the period, however, the influence of their views increased. It was in the late 1890's that a subtle transition in emphasis occurred in the American attitude toward China. The threat of China was no longer met by simple denunciations of the Chinese as uncivilized. Expansionist minded men such as Henry Cabot Lodge and Alfred Thayer Mahan were calling for a new interpretation of America's destiny. These men agreed that China was uncivilized, but they argued that because the Chinese were backward did not mean that there was no hope for them in the future. On the contrary, ran their argument, China's backwardness was merely another proof of the need for American leadership, of the responsibility of the superior race for the inferior.

The ground had been partially prepared for this new viewpoint by the sympathetic articles on China published during the 1890's. Because these articles had refused to accept the view of a China debased beyond the point of recovery,

it was easier now for expansionists and others to emphasize the future of China under American leadership. The earlier sympathetic viewpoints had professed to see in the future a possibly great role for China. The new spokesmen for America's destiny in 1898 simply adapted the concept of a China with a future to fit their own vision of America's new destiny as the leader of backward peoples. According to their new interpretation, China still remained backward and uncivilized, but now with the possibility of future greatness under American leadership.

One of the best examples of the changed emphasis in America's image of China is the developing attitude of the missionary endeavor toward the work in China. It is a little hazardous to speak of a chronological development because all the elements of the missionary attitude toward China were usually present in some degree. Nevertheless, a definite change in emphasis is clearly visible. In the years before 1890 and in the early years of that decade, the Chinaman was most often pictured as a debased, immoral creature in desperate need of Christian Salvation.

Gradually, however, the emphasis on his degraded state began to give way to an increased emphasis on the promise which he offered when changed by conversion to Christianity. Descriptions of the heroic actions of Chinese Christians during the Boxer Revolt came partially as a result

of this change in emphasis. Finally, the religious viewpoint of China assumed an attitude of responsibility for the entire Chinese race. The emphasis on the conversion of individual Chinese gave way to a vision of converting the race itself, with all its potential as an ancient civilization, into a giant Christian army. It was this viewpoint which was accepted with the most eagerness by the missionaries themselves and by the spokesmen for expansion. Not only did such an interpretation greatly enhance a missionary's concept of the importance of his "call," but it accorded well with the vision of America as a nation destined to lead the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE AMERICAN EL DORADO

Slowly before 1898 and then more rapidly Americans were introduced to the concept of China as a great opportunity. Chinese exclusion had ceased to be of vital concern at the turn of the century. The antagonism toward China was moderating and being directed into new channels. Missionaries were beginning to speak of the increased importance of their work in China, and of the possibility of converting all of China to Christianity. Expansionist minded leaders from all areas of American life spoke excitedly and convincingly of the political and military needs of the United States in the Pacific and elsewhere. One of the strongest themes running through these arguments was the commercial opportunity existing in China.

The most enthusiastic exponents of America's commercial opportunity in the Pacific spoke of the unlimited possibilities offered by trade with China. These spokesmen were seldom businessmen but it was clear to them that China was a treasure city which lay in wait for the entrance of the United States. It seemed natural that America should expand. It was part of the very character of Americans that they should constantly be reaching out for more trade, more

territory, and more power. No satisfaction could come, according to this view, until Americans had captured the lion's share of the world's commerce.¹ The editor of Leslies Weekly summarized the combined interests of politics and commerce when he said, "our fingers itch for the world's commerce, and we are reaching out for it in the wake of Old Glory."² The star of empire had always moved westward for the United States, he thought, and it continued to move into the Pacific. A young man should now be advised to go to the Pacific.

The prospects for trade in the Pacific seemed almost dizzying. If Americans could invade England's manufacturing centers and compete with the Englishman on his own ground then think what might be done in China where shipping distances favored the United States.³ Charles Denby was United States Minister to China for many years and a very outspoken supporter of America's opportunity in China. When we realize how well American manufactures compete with foreign goods in their own territories, he said, we cannot help but be excited over the prospects for our manufactured goods in

¹Charles Austin Bates, "American Trade Expansion," National Magazine, XV (December, 1901), 292.

²"Enormous Possibilities of the Pacific Coast" (editorial), Leslies Weekly, LXXXVIII (August 4, 1898), 82.

³Charles Austin Bates, "American Trade Expansion," National Magazine, XV (December, 1901), 291.

China. Americans did not need to fear the rivalry of any nation in the Far East. All the advantages which any nation can possess in world trade are held by the United States in China.⁴ William Rockhill was a thoroughgoing expert on Chinese affairs who possessed insight as well as experience. He thought that if the United States wished to extend its trade to China there was nothing standing in the way. The field was open to Americans and it was their responsibility alone to avail themselves of the opportunity.⁵

The Nation editorialized in 1899 that, "every time the dry bones of China have been shaken up, an increase of commerce has followed."⁶ The editor had reference to the recent seizure of territory and concessions by European powers. Repeatedly writers emphasized that the United States had everything to gain from the breaking down of Chinese resistance to foreign penetration. If China could be opened up to western influence, the potential of her market was so vast as to stagger the imagination. Writers envisioned hundreds of millions of customers waiting anxiously for American products. Statistics were eagerly advanced showing the amount of trade that would follow if every Chinaman used one ounce

⁴Charles Denby, "Our Relations with the Far East," Munsey's Magazine, XX (January, 1899), 515-520.

⁵William W. Rockhill, "The Outlook in China," Colliers Weekly, XXVIII (January 4, 1902), 15.

⁶"China" (editorial), Nation, LXVIII (March 30, 1899), 236.

of wheat a day or purchased one shirt and a pair of pants a year or did whatever he needed to do in order to utilize a certain product. Just think, urged one author, in China alone one-fifth of the human race are awaiting the arrival of our goods.⁷

How can it be said that we have no interest in China wondered the editor of the Overland Monthly.⁸ From Liverpool through the Suez Canal to the Orient was a distance of thirteen to fourteen thousand miles. From Hawaii to Hong Kong was less than five thousand miles. The population of China was equal to that of all Europe combined. In the past ten years trade had increased ten fold. In just three years from 1895 to 1898 the export trade had increased from three and a half million to over eleven million. China was a huge giant that was just coming awake. Her appetite for manufactured goods such as watches, bicycles, sewing machines, and electrical supplies would be insatiable when once aroused. In the face of these enthusiastic descriptions few Americans could stand unmoved.

The prospect of China opening up to railroad and industrial development stimulated several articles in technical journals. The Engineering Magazine, for example,

⁷Charles Denby, "Our Relations with the Far East," Munsey's Magazine, XX (January, 1899), 520.

⁸"Our Interest in the Orient" (editorial), Overland Monthly, XXXII (October, 1898), 382-383.

examined the prospects for industrial advance in China and concluded that, "the prospects for the next decade point to a demand in Asia for the greatest engineering contrivances and equipment ever known in the history of the world."⁹ A whole new continent was being educated to the wants of the civilized world. Asia would develop into an engineer's paradise where everything needed to be done. Industrial plants, roads, railroads and buildings all begged for construction. The demand was unlimited and all the United States had to do was to provide the men and machinery in order to reap the harvest.

The possibilities for American railroad development in China were described encouragingly by travelers. American performance in this regard, however, was disappointing. An American syndicate finally took part in obtaining a concession for a railroad to be constructed from Hong Kong to Han Kau. The possibilities for profit seemed good because the line would run through areas rich in coal and iron deposits which had never been developed.¹⁰ The American syndicate never capitalized on its opportunity and far more hopeful signs existed in the sale of railroad supplies. Engines, rails, and couplings were sold in increasing amounts during

⁹Alexander H. Ford, "Russia's Field for Anglo-Saxon Enterprise in Asia," Engineers Magazine, XIX (June, 1900), 367.

¹⁰"American Enterprise in China" (editorial), Outlook, LX (October 22, 1898), 460-461.

the last years of the nineteenth century. Most of the material went into the building of the Chinese Eastern portion of the Trans-Siberian railway. The topography of China with its flat land was ideal for construction purposes, and its large population seemed to offer great potential for a profitable operation. The opinion was voiced that American industrialists were overlooking an important field for development.

Another commodity whose sale in China encouraged Americans to speak of the vast potential of Chinese trade was cotton. The North American Review noted in 1897 that, "it is believed that the figures which show that the importation of cotton goods from the United States is annually increasing in value also attest that every advance in civilization by China will open new markets for such goods."¹¹ The value of cotton exports to China increased forty per cent between 1891 and 1897.¹² Exports of raw cotton increased from slightly over eighty-five thousand dollars in 1890 to almost thirteen million dollars in 1900.¹³ These figures need to be qualified but for those who read them

¹¹Thomas R. Jernigan, "Commercial Trend of China," North American Review, LXV (July, 1897), 69.

¹²"Statistics of American Trade with China" (anon. article), Literary Digest, XVI (February 5, 1898), 154.

¹³O. P. Austin, "Foreign Markets for Our Manufacturers," National Magazine, XV (December, 1901), 299.

in the 1890's and the early years of the twentieth century they seemed to provide conclusive evidence of a growing opportunity in China.

Not only was the potential in China of vast proportions, but the need of American trade for that market was also great. Several writers warned that the major problem facing the civilized world lay in the fact that its powers of production had outstripped its powers of consumption. The only way to avert serious congestion was to open up new markets and new fields of enterprise in undeveloped areas of the world.¹⁴ Arthur R. Colquhoun, correspondent for Harpers New Monthly magazine, thought that China was a "world necessity."¹⁵ The United States was emerging from her isolation and safety from attack. The best defense now lay in the acquisition of a strong position in world trade. A commentator in the Atlantic Monthly felt that ". . . a large and increasing foreign market seems to this country . . . an absolute necessity. . . ."¹⁶ He saw such a market opening up in China and elsewhere and thought that unless the United States took advantage of its opportunity it ran the risk of

¹⁴"The Situation in China" (anon. article), Harpers New Monthly, XCVII (June, 1898), 137.

¹⁵Arthur R. Colquhoun, "Eastward Expansion of the United States," Harpers New Monthly, XCVII (November, 1898) 933.

¹⁶H. N. Fisher, "The Development of Our Foreign Policy," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXII (October, 1898), 558.

becoming a slave to the commercial monopoly of other powers.

Because of America's vital need to find new markets it seemed clear to these same writers that the supreme concern of the United States in China must be a commercial one. Regardless of how the policy toward China was developed, whether in co-operation with England and other powers or not, the primary aim must be to protect America's right to share in the exploitation of China's resources.¹⁷ The same point was made in a petition drawn up by several prominent New York firms and presented to the New York city chamber of commerce. The petition urged that the chamber of commerce acquaint the State Department with the desires of business interests in the United States in regard to the protection of trade opportunities in China.¹⁸ George F. Seward who had served as United States Minister to China from 1876 to 1879 urged that the importance of our market in Asia was at least equal to that of South America.¹⁹ Trade is the key to the Far East, said the editor of the Independent.²⁰ It explained the interests of all the powers in China including the

¹⁷John Barrett, "The Crisis in China," Engineering Magazine, XIX (September, 1900), 804.

¹⁸"The Week" (editorial), Outlook, LVIII (April 16, 1898), 310.

¹⁹George F. Seward, "A Future for China," Independent, L (January 13, 1898), 42.

²⁰"Notes" (editorial), Independent, L (January 27, 1898), 118.

United States. We must protect our trade interests from the threat of foreign competition, he concluded.

The opinion in California emphasized the special interest which that state had in the development of commercial interests in China. The editor of the Overland Monthly thought that it was the "height of folly to look complacently on the spoilation of the Chinese empire," ²¹ Every year our commercial relations with China had been strengthened until now she was practically a close neighbor. It was impossible that the United States should not be vitally interested in commerce with China, and as for California, that state stood to profit greatly from such trade. A few months later the same editor again urged the importance of the Far East for California. "For the moment the interest of the United States in the Chinese question is obscured by the Cuban war cloud; but to California it is of infinitely greater importance that American trade in China shall suffer no injury at the hands of Germany than that the Cuban Junta should receive recognition as a civilized government." ²² American industries, particularly in California, had outrun domestic markets and the need for overseas markets was acute.

²¹"America's Interest in China" (editorial), Overland Monthly, XXXI (February, 1898), 178.

²²"Our Interest in the Orient" (editorial), Overland Monthly, XXXI (May, 1898), 480.

The vitality of trade interests for some Americans was demonstrated by the boycott against cotton in China in 1905. The National Association of Manufacturers expressed alarm at the threat to a growing trade.²³ Exports of cotton cloth to China for a ten month period ending in April had risen from sixteen million dollars in 1903 to forty million dollars in 1905.²⁴ In the same year the Outlook editorialized that the Chinese had made a shrewd appeal to the American pocketbook which seemed to have much more effect than similar appeals to the American conscience.²⁵ A circular published by a literary society in Shanghai, had urged a social and commercial boycott of all who sold, handled, or received American goods in China and the editor feared that it was having some effect.

The new interest in the potentials of Chinese trade caused an alteration in America's image of China. Americans were no longer as free to malign the Chinese as they had been before. Those who had reviled the Chinese in the United States as a threat to the American way of life and had characterized all Chinamen as barbarians were now faced with the necessity of establishing commercial relations with them.

²³"Alarm Over the Chinese Boycott" (editorial), Literary Digest, XXXI (August 12, 1905), 203.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵"The Chinese Boycott" (editorial), Outlook, LXXX (July 29, 1905), 794-795.

The South, for example, adopted a noticeably pro-Chinese attitude because of its interest in the cotton trade with China. Hostility toward the Chinese did not lessen though its form was somewhat altered. Antagonism toward China was submerged in an attitude of responsibility for China's development and well-being. Many Americans remained untouched by these feelings and many remained hostile, but some looked upon China as an opportunity to establish the rightness of American principles.

It is consistent with the changed attitude toward China that Chinese commercial opportunities came to mean more than financial profit. They came to mean also the salvation of China as a new nation. A writer in 1905 reasoned that the way to preserve national integrity in Asia was to develop China's material resources, a method ". . . which will not only enrich China and the world, but will help to arouse the people from their age-long sleep; and . . . will serve to maintain the empire's independence."²⁶ Americans were told that they should join with England whenever possible in exploiting concessions in China. There should never be any fear that the development of concessions was a form of national aggrandizement because they were inherently beneficial and in line with the best material interests of

²⁶C. K. Edwards, "China's Renaissance," Popular Science Monthly, LXVII (September, 1905), 393.

the Chinese empire. Gilbert Reid, a missionary well known for his educational work in China, wrote in Forum that Amer-ica should co-operate with England in China because in this way the welfare of the Chinese people could be speedily protected through commercial development.²⁷

The viewpoint of these writers should not be judged from the vantage point of a more cynical age. When the editor of Harpers Weekly reasoned that, "we want our share of her resources, but we do not want it at the expense of our self-respect," he was voicing the common conviction that humanitarian and commercial interests were compatible in regard to China.²⁸ Humanitarian and commercial motives were so thoroughly mixed that it is folly to try to separate them. The missionary might be uneasy about capitalizing on the presence of the gunboat but he seldom saw anything inconsistent in utilizing treaty concessions to further his work. The seasoned diplomat in China spoke of the responsibility of both merchants and missionaries for bringing western civilization to China. The historian who seeks to separate the realist from the idealist in this jungle of human motivation will have a hard time of it.

²⁷Gilbert Reid, "American Opportunities in China," Forum, XXVII (April, 1899), 242.

²⁸"The Partition of China" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XLIII (December 9, 1899), 1226.

Since China lacked the power to regenerate herself it was up to the West to accomplish it for her. The responsibility of the West in the face of China's need was clearly stated as early as 1895. "If China is ever to be reformed, it can only be by the agency of the foreigner, either within her or upon her; nor has she the power of choosing which, for that would imply that she also had some power of self-regeneration."²⁹ When the dissolution of China appeared imminent to some observers in 1899 it was again emphasized that China was at the mercy of the European powers. The responsibility of America to throw herself into the struggle in order to preserve the commercial and political interests of both China and the United States seemed clear. A writer in the same year observed that "although civilization may not always seem to help him, it does far better by him when dispensed through forceful foreign hands. . . ."³⁰ The Chinaman could not help himself, therefore, the only alternative was outside assistance.

If China could not act to save herself it was necessary to act for her. This line of reasoning produced America's commercial policy toward China prior to 1905 and

²⁹"China's Extremity" (editorial), Public Opinion, XVIII (May 9, 1895), 501.

³⁰J. Barnett, "America in the Pacific and the Far East," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, XCIX (November, 1899), 919.

justified the responsibility which Americans felt to act in her behalf. Charles Denby Jr., who had served as legation secretary in China under his father, admired the Chinese for their strength, intelligence and endurance. But if it was necessary to humiliate China in order to bring her into the circle of nations then it must be done because China could never do it herself.³¹ China could not adapt to foreign ways through her own efforts because she selected mostly what was bad and ignored the good. Only foreigners themselves could discriminate between these qualities and select what was necessary for China.³² The Chinese were capable of progress and they possessed the necessary resources, all that was needed was for the West to show them the way.

The concept of China as America's opportunity and responsibility dominated the viewpoint of the nation's role in the Pacific. The annexation of the Philippines was urged because it would serve as a strategic point from which to establish the nation's influence in China. The Overland Monthly spoke for California as well as the entire country when it reasoned that if the United States was interested in trade with China the only sensible course of action was to

³¹Charles Denby, Jr., "The Crisis in China," Independent, L (January 13, 1898), 42-43.

³²J. Barnett, "Americans in the Pacific and the Far East," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, XCIX (November, 1899), 919.

utilize the Philippines in that trade.³³ In San Francisco the mayor and the president of the chamber of commerce agreed that the future of California dictated the retention of the Islands.³⁴ The editor of Colliers Weekly reasoned that the magnitude of the nations present and prospective interest in China's foreign trade required that possession of the Philippines should be in American hands.³⁵

So closely was the Philippine question tied in with China's foreign trade that the future prosperity of the Islands was thought to rest on that trade. The former Chief of the Bureau of Statistics in the Treasury Department made the point that because of the dependence of the prosperity of the Philippines on the trade with China the question of annexation really involved the whole range of American policy toward China.³⁶ He argued that even though the United States had not planned to become involved in the Philippines the possibility of using them as stepping-stones in order to strengthen our trade with China required that they be retained. Shipping interests, farmers, and manufacturing

³³"Two Opinions of Oriental Expansion" (editorial), Overland Monthly, XXXII (October, 1898), 374-378.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵"An Alliance with England or With Russia?" (editorial), Colliers Weekly, XXI (July 2, 1898), 2-3.

³⁶Worthington C. Ford, "The Commercial Relations of the United States with the Far East," Annals, XIII (May, 1899), 117.

interests paid increasing attention to them and Congress would do well to take that into consideration. The presence of the United States in the Philippines had enhanced the nation's reputation in the Far East and was sure to have favorable effects on trade.³⁷ It was believed that possession of the Islands would increase our military effectiveness in the Far East and thereby influence our ability to profit from China's trade.

Similar reasons were advanced for the importance of Hawaii. When China awoke, wrote one author, the United States would need to have at hand every facility that it possessed in order to profit from the new trade.³⁸ The nation's real stake in Hawaii was based on the value of the islands as a coaling station and harbor for ships in the Orient trade. The Navy would be similarly strengthened, therefore, the possession of Hawaii could not help but be a favorable factor in trade with China.

The problem of developing a diplomatic course of action in China was not discussed publicly in any but the vaguest terms. On one point, however Americans seemed fairly well agreed. Any gains made by England would also benefit the United States as her close friend and even ally, if need

³⁷ J. Barnett, "America in the Pacific and the Far East," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, XCIX (November, 1899), 926.

³⁸ John R. Proctor, "Hawaii and the Changing Front of the World," Forum, XXIV (September, 1897), 34-35.

be, in time of trouble. Charles W. Beresford was a British naval officer who went to China in 1898 on a special mission on behalf of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in England. On his return in 1899 he visited the United States and delivered several speeches emphasizing the unity of British and American interests. Editors and others who commented on his remarks agreed when he said that the door in China should be kept open for the English speaking peoples.³⁹ When the British spoke of "spheres of influence" Americans interpreted this to mean "open door." Announcements of new concessions won by England for the development of anthracite deposits or the construction of a railroad were applauded in the United States. Because of the great opportunities existing in China for trade the United States should not fail to support the policy of England whenever possible. In this way China was looked upon as a source of mutual profit to England and the United States.

The United States would profit from a relationship with England in more than just a commercial sense. At the base of expansionist thinking and concepts of responsibility toward another people were the implicit assumptions of race. Americans were still feeding on Darwin and his interpreters.

³⁹"Lord Beresford on the 'Open Door' For China" (editorial), Literary Digest, XVIII (March 4, 1899), 242-244.

China appeared to be an opportunity for exercising the Anglo-Saxon genius for leadership. The open door concept had been developed into an international agreement by Anglo-Saxons. The statesmen who accomplished it desired to preserve the integrity of China as well as the availability of her trade. China was more than a commercial opportunity, it provided a chance for the United States to join her Anglo-Saxon brother in ministering to the needs of an inferior race. Such an attitude was not cynical but a serious expression of the burden of responsibility carried by a superior race.

The attitude toward the role of the nation in the Far East was clearly illustrated by a cartoon appearing in Harpers Weekly in 1899 captioned "Me and China."⁴⁰ The drawing showed Uncle Sam and China standing in a doorway labeled "China." On each side of the door stood England, Russia, France, and Germany. Broken swords, guns, and other armaments litter the ground. Uncle Sam announced: "The door is open gentlemen." American opinion looked upon the role of leadership which the United States had acquired in negotiating the Open Door agreement as an example of the sort of responsibility which the nation ought to assume in the world. The announcement of John Hay's diplomatic success was instantly recognized by editors across the nation

⁴⁰"Me and China" (cartoon), Harpers Weekly, XLIII (December 23, 1899), 1312.

as an indication that the powers in China could look to the United States for leadership in solving the Far Eastern problem. China took on glamor as a place where America could demonstrate her right to be considered a world power.

Secular opinion was often very hard on the missionaries in China. Historians writing about this period have often adopted a similar attitude, discrediting or at least seriously criticizing the work of the missionaries. There was a segment of public opinion during these years, however, which praised the missionaries for assistance in opening up China to western ideas and particularly to trade. A writer in the North American Review believed that the missionaries were breaking the hold of the past on China and that no other force of similar effectiveness was present in that country.⁴¹ Businessmen who were interested in the development of a demand for American products in China often voiced the opinion that the introduction of western ideas into China by the missionaries would help to create a need for American manufactures. It was felt by diplomats and others familiar with the situation in China that whatever the moral justification for missionary work, there was no doubt that the presence of foreign communities helped to stimulate interest in western merchandise.

⁴¹Francis E. Clark, "The Empire of the Dead," North American Review, CLXXI (September, 1900), 388.

China was described as the El Dorado of American trade in the late 1890's and early years of the twentieth century, but in some quarters strong qualification of such a view occurred. Several writers suggested that the development of trade in China was not nearly so certain as was claimed. The editor of the Nation thought that "with every explanation, the mystery of Asiatic trade increases."⁴² Despite the predictions of a great future for Chinese trade he believed that such trade remained very much of a gamble. John Barret, despite his enthusiastic descriptions of the opportunity in China, noted that the practical value of the potentialities there depended to a large extent on the development of the necessary facilities for exploiting them.⁴³ The potential of Chinese trade was essentially just that, because even after the turn of the century the United States continued to import more tea and silk from China than it exported American goods to her.

A very complete article in the Annals in 1899 described a dim future for western trade with China. How could American cotton compete with that of India, China, and Japan, wondered the ex-Chief of the Bureau of Statistics.⁴⁴ As

⁴²"Notes" (editorial), Nation, LXVIII (March 16, 1899), 205.

⁴³John Barrett, "America in China," North American Review, LXXV (November, 1902), 660.

⁴⁴Worthington C. Ford, "The Commercial Relations of the United States with the Far East," Annals, XIII (May, 1899), 107-130.

China and Japan developed their ability to manufacture cotton goods the cheap cost of labor would force American goods out of the market. China's vast resources of oil would, when developed, compete disastrously with the American product. Industrial development in China would have a similar effect on the export of steel, machinery and other industrial goods. Arguing from another angle, there was no certainty that China would develop along lines similar to Japan. Chinese conservatism was a potent drag on progress in China and might very well prevent the Chinese from ever advancing beyond their present state of backwardness. China would probably have to undergo a social revolution before it could become a significant market for western goods.

Those who saw a great future in China were thought to have overlooked Chinese prejudice against Americans. The cotton boycott was a warning that there were serious obstacles in the way of American trade in China. The editor of the Commercial and Financial Chronicle quoted an opinion from a letter he had received that "America seems to produce very little that the Chinese need. . . ." ⁴⁵ The writer thought it improbable that China would ever change much since not even war had awakened her to a realization of her backwardness.

⁴⁵"Effects on Trade of the Opening of an Additional Chinese Treaty Port" (editorial), Commercial and Financial Chronicle, LXI (August 8, 1895), 182.

Sir Robert Hart, who was Inspector-General of Chinese customs for many years and became part of Chinese tradition, thought that "China needs neither import nor export, and can do without foreign intercourse."⁴⁶ He felt that foreign traders would be able to dispose of their merchandise only "in proportion to the new tastes they introduce, the new wants they create, and the care they take to supply what the demand really means."⁴⁷ Those who sought to develop China, to build railroads, open mines and start industries should remember that "their eagerness to supply does not necessarily mean a corresponding demand. . . ."⁴⁸

An article in the Sewanee Review tried to sort out the different positions on the subject of trade with China.⁴⁹ The author described the view represented by Alfred Thayer Mahan who appealed for a new vigor in the nation's approach toward the world, a new recognition of power complete with coaling bases and harbors. Mahan and his followers argued that the interests of the United States in the Philippines and China were great and ought to be protected. The author wondered, however, whether the Chinese could be persuaded

⁴⁶Robert Hart, "China and Her Foreign Trade," North American Review, CLXXII (January, 1901), 58.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 71.

⁴⁹W. P. Trent, "In Regard to Imperialism: Some Phases of the Situation," Sewanee Review, VI (October, 1898), 479-499.

by force to like Americans and to buy their products. It would cost more to maintain a government in China than could be drawn from her trade in profit. In the long run America's future in China seemed doubtful.

Not only was the market for western goods doubtful, but the means with which to exploit that market were lacking. American businessmen were deficient in understanding how to conduct commercial relations with the Chinese. Part of the reason for this state of affairs was the lack of people knowledgeable in the ways of the Orient, and part was the lack of interest in learning the special needs of Chinese trade. A political economist at Cornell chided American businessmen for their inability to appreciate that goods sent to China must be well crated in order to withstand shipment.⁵⁰ The refusal to extend long-term credit, inexactness in filling orders, and a general attitude of superiority toward the Chinese hindered the development of trade relations. Americans were not always noted for dealing fairly with Chinese businessmen. Claims for damaged goods were often refused and the special requirements of Chinese import regulations ignored, resulting in increased expense for the Chinese.⁵¹

⁵⁰Jeremiah W. Jenks, "How to Extend Commerce in the Far East," North American Review, LXXXI (October, 1905), 518-529.

⁵¹"Current Topics" (editorial), Cassiers Magazine, XV (December, 1898), 167-168.

Businessmen were hampered by their inability to understand either the language or the customs of the Chinese. Advertising circulars were distributed broadside among Chinese merchants. Ineffective as this method was it appeared ridiculous when most of the Chinese were unable to understand the language in which the circulars were printed. There was almost no understanding of Chinese attitudes towards color and design. A red dragon on the package could boost the sale of an item considerably whereas an unlucky design or color, such as white which was the color of death, could inhibit sales no matter how good the product was.⁵²

An export salesman who preferred to remain anonymous described the inadequacy of American methods for soliciting business in Europe.⁵³ If the situation in Europe was as bad as he described, one can imagine what it must have been like in China. The difficulty of finding men who were competent in business and understood Chinese customs as well as the language greatly hampered the sale of American goods. Usually the consuls had to be relied upon for contacts with Chinese merchants. But they were already overloaded with duties and though they did their best, American goods were

⁵²"Suggestions for Labels and Trade Marks in China" (editorial), Scientific American, LXXVII (January 22, 1898), 51.

⁵³"The Follies of Some American Export Traders" (anon. article), Engineering Magazine, XIX (June, 1900), 348-353.

given a poor showing. In 1901 the consul of Canton drew up a list of suggestions for businessmen who desired to extend their business in China.⁵⁴ If an agent could not be engaged to represent the firm then a sample of the product should be sent instead of descriptive literature. Exaggerated claims should be avoided because the Chinese took the manufacturer at his word until shown otherwise.

Despite the strong interest in America's commercial opportunity in China shown by many people the general public seemed largely unaware of the Far East. Albert Beveridge complained in 1902 that Americans had "paid little attention to this immeasurable and near-by market and to this uncounted and interesting people."⁵⁵ A year earlier the Chautauquan was commenting on a petition presented by southern businessmen urging the government to protect the South's interest in China's cotton market, when it noted that the figures pertaining to the cotton trade would be news to most people.⁵⁶ Few people were even aware that the United States sold cotton to China. In 1905 the effort to develop a profitable trade with China was looked upon as still very feeble. A writer

⁵⁴Robert M. McWade, "Trade Suggestions from United States Consuls," Scientific American Supplement, LII (September 7, 1901), 21485.

⁵⁵Albert J. Beveridge, "Winning the Markets of the Orient," Saturday Evening Post, LXXIV (March 22, 1902), 1-2.

⁵⁶"Cotton" (editorial), Chautauquan, XXXIII (September, 1901), 556.

in Sunset Magazine described how the people of the Pacific Coast looked toward China as the coming market for exports and how "the little army of commercial Americans who are laying siege to the fortress of Oriental prejudice and European competition have done their work with little support from home," ⁵⁷

A curious feature of the attitude toward Chinese markets was that a great many businessmen showed no interest in trade with the Orient. The Commercial and Financial Chronicle which claimed to represent the industrial and commercial interests of the United States published many issues between 1890 and 1905 without a single editorial comment or article on China. The isolated instances where China received attention were in most cases brief news items. American businessmen were criticized by foreign observers for caring only for the present and not the future. If this was true in regard to trade with China it might help to explain the lack of interest. If an immediate profit could not be gained then there was no interest in developing commercial relations further. Whatever the reason was, and it may have been simply that business was good elsewhere, it is a clearly

⁵⁷Wallace Dana Evans, "American Railroad Building in China," Sunset Magazine, XV (August, 1905), 368.

observable fact that American business moved very slowly into the area of oriental trade.

The most imaginative and vocal descriptions of the commercial opportunity in China were advanced not by businessmen but by politicians, diplomats, missionaries, and others who looked favorably upon the idea of America expanding her authority into the world. In large part the cry which arose to encourage the exploitation of markets in the Far East was raised by these men in order to gather support for the concept of America's expanding destiny in Asia. Not so much out of a desire for trade did these men argue but out of an emotional involvement in the vision of America as the prophet of progress through industrial development. If indeed China could be restored through such progress then America's claim was justified.

CHAPTER VII

THE DRAGON AWAKENS

The emphasis on commercial developments in China was only one part of a growing interest in the Far East. In the early 1890's and up until 1898 Americans with few exceptions had rejected any thought of China as a potentially great nation. China was characterized not as a nation at all, but as a racially backward and inferior people. The widespread anti-Chinese attitude resulted from America's feeling of insecurity as the nation faced what it considered to be the Chinese threat. But gradually as events in the Far East focused more attention on the Chinese it became evident to an increasing number of observers that China was showing signs of renewed life. In the light of the new interpretation of America's destiny put forward by expansionists it became neither possible nor desirable to dismiss China with the simple explanation of inferiority. Indications of a growing Chinese nationalism plus the need to demonstrate America's capacity for leadership combined to alter the American image of China. China was still described as inferior, but no longer as a people without hope. She was now looked upon as America's responsibility, as an opportunity for the manifestation of the new interpretation of America's destiny.

China had been "awakening" for so many years that it seemed as though readers would become discouraged by the repetition of this fact. But every fresh claim of evidence that purported to show that China was at last ready to move down the road of progress was met with new interest. The prophetic instinct was evident among many writers of the 1890's who thought they had the special ability of being able to determine the exact moment when China turned the corner and left her backwardness behind. Nevertheless, taken together the events of the 1890's and early 1900's indicated a pattern of China's continuing awareness of western ideas.

Americans had already begun to notice signs of change. Li Hung-Chang was recognized and supported as the greatest proponent of progress in China. Sympathy with his attempt to win respect for western methods was widespread. Schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, and improved agricultural methods were attributed to his efforts.¹ Chang Chih Tung was also recognized as an advocate of progress as was Sheng Ta-Jen, a leader known for his desire to develop a modern railway system and whose popularity rivaled that of Li Hung Chang.²

¹Chester Holcombe, "Li Hung-Chang," McClures Magazine, VII (October, 1896), 427-436.

²S. P. Butler, "A Modern Railroad System for China," Harpers Weekly, XLI (November 27, 1897), 1175.

Sheng Ta-Jen promised that China could build her own railroad without foreign aid because she had the capacity to produce the necessary rails and equipment. This attitude appealed strongly to the Chinese. The traditional Chinese antagonism toward railroad development was breaking down. The emperor himself had come out in support of a line from Peking to Hankow as early as 1890 according to one report.³ The new emphasis on railroad development was not only a sign of China's new interest in western progress but would in itself encourage further interest along the same lines.

Hunan had long been recognized as the province most opposed to foreign influence. It was the source of anti-Christian propaganda and of much of the agitation against missionaries and other foreigners. An engineer who had worked in China observed in 1900, however, that even in Hunan there were signs that western ideas were making headway.⁴ Electric lights glowed in some cities and explorations to determine the vast extent of the mineral resources were being conducted. The resources of the province would play an important part in the development of China.

³"Proposed Railroad in China" (editorial), Scientific American Supplement, XXIX (January 11, 1890), 11687.

⁴William B. Parsons, "Hunan--the Closed Province of China," National Geographic Magazine, VII (October, 1900) 393-400.

Under the urging of K'ang Yu-wei, the emperor embarked upon a series of reforms in the summer of 1898.⁵ He proposed the establishment of a new medical college in Peking, the improvement of naval training facilities and the inauguration of a system of budgeting. These and other reforms prompted a reaction by Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi but the signs of progress could not be erased. Even the sacred tradition of the literary examinations was bending before the force of western ideas. At Kuikiang two men were said to have gotten their degrees after only one month of study.⁶ They offered themselves for examination in a new subject, chemistry. Even though they knew little about their subject, the examiners knew nothing at all and were afraid not to pass them. One candidate obtained his degree by writing the ten commandments and commenting on them. He called his essay an examination of the great code of laws of the western nations.⁷

In 1905 some perceptive observers noted that, even though the boycott of American goods was a matter for concern, the movement itself testified to the beginnings of Chinese nationalism. The editor of the Literary Digest

⁵Charles Johnston, "Prince Hamlet in Peking," Arena, XXIV (September, 1900), 268-280.

⁶"China" (editorial), Missionary Review, VII (November, 1898), 877.

⁷Ibid.

agreed that the boycott was disturbing but felt that it was natural for the Chinese to express resentment toward the United States. "We can not expect to maintain an open-door policy for trade in China with one hand, while holding a closed door against Chinese immigration with the other."⁸ The Chinese were beginning to realize, concluded the editor, that pressure could be exerted on foreign nations by means of trade restrictions. The list of grievances published by the Chinese guilds in Canton in connection with the boycott clearly indicated the extent of Chinese resentment.⁹ Prominent among the objections was the unfair treatment accorded Chinese who sought admittance to the United States. Unnecessary delays, regulations abusive to personal rights, and a general arbitrariness in the American attitude toward the Chinese were condemned.

The importance of China was steadily increasing in western eyes. As early as 1897 the editor of the Nation argued that China had become one of the most important posts in the diplomatic service of the country.¹⁰ Two years later

⁸"Chinese Boycott of American Trade" (editorial), Literary Digest, XXX (May 27, 1905), 772.

⁹"China and America" (editorial), Outlook, LXXXI (December 23, 1905), 952.

¹⁰"China" (editorial), Nation, LXV (December 23, 1897), 487.

Harpers Weekly noted that the post had grown tremendously in importance and that the best possible man should be given the responsibility.¹¹ The editor wondered why McKinley was removing Denby when he was obviously the best qualified man for the position. In 1903 a professor at the law school of the University of West Virginia pointed out that in the nineteenth century the biggest question was the balance of power in Europe, in which the United States had had only an academic interest.¹² But now in the twentieth century it appeared that the major question would be the balance of power in China and in this question the United States had very important economic and political interests.

The awakening of China caused American interest in the Far East to increase. Yet that increase was neither steady nor uniform. The dramatic events, the massacres of missionaries, the two wars, and the civil strife each created fresh interest. While the sum of these incidents was to increase the attention paid to the Far East there were many slack periods. Events in Cuba and the Philippines occupied the center of the stage and the subject of China often did not rate even a passing notice. Those who paid the most

¹¹"Our Legation in China" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XLIII (April 1, 1899), 306.

¹²Edwin Maxey, "The Far Eastern Situation," Sewanee Review, XI (October, 1903), 490-496.

attention to China were men whose interests naturally included the problems of the Far East, such as missionaries, diplomats, political leaders involved in expansionist thinking, and a few businessmen. Popular opinion was often ill-informed or as a Presbyterian clergyman in Pittsburgh put it in 1903, ". . . the civilized world has shown a disposition to maintain a deep-studied attitude of whimsical disinterestedness" toward China.¹³

As the attention of Americans was directed increasingly, if unevenly, toward China, questions concerning the nation's interests arose. What did Americans desire in China and how should they achieve their goals? Two items came immediately to the front in response to this question. The United States sought to preserve the integrity of China and to protect American treaty rights. John Hay emphasized these goals when he announced the policy of the Open Door as the nation's official attitude toward China. The United States sought a solution to the Chinese problem which would bring about permanent safety and peace, preserve the territorial and political integrity of China, protect all treaty rights, and assure free and open trade.

William Rockhill, who played a crucial role in the formulation of the open door policy, emphasized in 1900 that

¹³W. C. Jameson Reid, "The Asiatic Problem," Political Science Quarterly, XVIII (June, 1903), 181.

the United States had proposed the policy not just to provide commercial opportunity but to defend the integrity of China.¹⁴ Rockhill summarized the fears of many Americans when he said that unless China protected herself either by accepting foreign assistance or by instituting her own reforms she was doomed to partition. It was not likely that China could reform herself, therefore, it appeared that only steady pressure from the West could prevent dismemberment. If China was unable to rescue herself then the United States had an obligation to do so. Since the European powers seemed determined to pursue their interests in China, America in a very real sense was China's only hope. Many Americans seemed to accept the conclusion that to refuse the responsibility offered by China was to deny the meaning of America's mission to the world.

Lyman Abbott, the editor of the Outlook, defined the majority view on America's commercial interests in China when he said, "a few gentlemen . . . are announcing that if China is to be partitioned we must have our share, but these gentlemen are without following. The preservation of American treaty rights through any changes of sovereignty which may take place on Chinese territory is seen to mark definitely

¹⁴William W. Rockhill, "The United States and the Future of China," Forum, XXIX (May, 1900), 324-331.

the limits of our interest in Chinese affairs."¹⁵ Comments from a number of magazines supported this view. Two years later, in 1900, Lyman Abbott reiterated his belief that from the beginning the administration had only two distinct objects in view in China. The first was to preserve the integrity of China and the second was to protect the rights of American citizens and American trade.¹⁶

There was less certainty about the methods required to implement American goals in China. One viewpoint called for a policy of friendship. The policy of force, of intimidation and criminal aggression, had been followed for many years and it had failed miserably, thought a lawyer who had been deputy consul general in Shanghai, 1889 to 1892.¹⁷

"All Europe is not strong enough to carry China on its back. . . ."¹⁸ Force would not solve the problem, instead, an appeal should be made to China's reason and good-will. Albert Beveridge wrote in the Saturday Evening Post, "why should Americans not keep their hands off, cultivate China's good-will, and increase their trade by force of friendship

¹⁵"The Week" (editorial), Outlook, LVIII (January 8, 1898), 103.

¹⁶"The Administration and China" (editorial), Outlook, LXVI (September 8, 1900), 97.

¹⁷Mark B. Dunnell, "The Settlement with China," Forum, XXXII (February, 1902), 660.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 661.

won by kindness?"¹⁹ Instead of combining with England or Japan the United States would do better to follow a unilateral policy. Edwin Maxey of the law school at the University of West Virginia offered statistics to show that trade with China had prospered because of America's policy of friendship.²⁰ The policy of friendliness did not cost anything and yet it would profit the United States better than any other method.

There were also those who advocated a more forceful policy toward China. This might take the form of vigorous co-operation with England in order to share more fully in present as well as future concessions.²¹ The writer, a Presbyterian clergyman, believed that American interests in China were identical with British interests and, therefore, the United States should support England. Another writer thought that partition offered no threat to American interests and would be the proper solution for China's problems.²² According to this view, the United States could simply sit

¹⁹Albert Beveridge, "The War Cry of the German Empire in the East," Saturday Evening Post, CLXXIV (March 15, 1902), 18.

²⁰Edwin Maxey, "Our Policy Toward China," Arena, XXXIII (May, 1905), 505-510.

²¹W. C. Jameson Reid, "The Political and Commercial Future of Asia," Forum, XXXII (November, 1901), 341-354.

²²"Concerning China" (editorial), Public Opinion, XII (February 27, 1892), 525.

back and wait until China was carved up and then enjoy the advantages gained by the powers.

This was an earlier view, however, and in 1902 William Rockhill thought that the experiences of the West in China during the Boxer uprising were ample evidence that partition was a dying issue.²³ Seventy thousand troops had been unable to keep order in the province of Chihli where a few thousand poor Chinese troops had succeeded in doing so before. How then could Europeans ever expect to govern a partitioned China. The best policy, he thought, was steady pressure in order to obtain moderate changes over a period of time.

The idea of using force in China, however, died hard. A writer in Harpers Bazar in 1900 thought that ". . . the gatling gun must blaze the way, shrapnel and shell must knock civilization into the most bigoted and most stubborn race in the world."²⁴ Forceful intervention was suggested as the only means of educating such a backward race to the advantages of western civilization. Finley Peter Dunne caricatured this attitude in his inimitable way. Mr. Dooley remarked to his friend Mr. Hennessy that there would probably

²³ William W. Rockhill, "The Outlook in China," Colliers Weekly, XXVIII (January 4, 1902), 9.

²⁴ Edgar Mels, "The Women of China," Harpers Bazar, XXXIII (August 4, 1900), 857.

be a celebration when the troops arrived to civilize China. "I'd like to hear th' sojers singing 'Gawd r-rest ye, merry Chinymen,' as they punchered thim with a baynet." Mr. Hennessy thought that it would be a good thing and would civilize the "Chinymen." "'Twill civilize thim stiff," said Mr. Dooley.²⁵ A law professor writing in the Sewanee Review objected to the suggestion that a forceful policy meant "shooting Christianity into the heathen."²⁶ The government would merely be discharging its duty in protecting its interests and its citizens.

The United States had an obligation to protect its interests in China. The preservation of the integrity of the Chinese people and an insistence on the observance of treaty rights would assure the development of these interests. America also had a commitment in China, an obligation to serve as China's protector. The explanations offered by Rockhill and Hay of the Open Door policy, the descriptions of the missionary endeavor, and the claims of a developing market in China all reveal the feeling of responsibility felt by Americans toward China. The history of Chinese-American relations was referred to as the story of America's

²⁵Finley Peter Dunne, "Mr. Dooley: On the Future of China," Harpers Weekly, XLIV (August 18, 1900), 782.

²⁶Edwin Maxey, "The Far Eastern Situation," Sewanee Review, XI (October, 1903), 481.

friendship for China. Unpleasant factors in this relationship, such as Chinese exclusion, were played down because the new and vocal element in the United States was interested in China not as a barbarian people but as a protege of the West. It was just as much a part of America's interest to fulfill its duty in regard to China, to preserve intact in American eyes the image of America's responsibility to the world.

American responsibility toward China was closely tied to events in the Philippine Islands. The Bibliotheca Sacra discussed the problem at length in 1899.²⁷ The author, a Congregational clergyman, author and specialist in youth work, viewed the struggle in the Pacific as a conflict between races. Because of the growing solidarity of the world, he felt that the United States was "destined" to be in the Far East and the Pacific. Part of this destiny was the obligation of the superior race for the inferior, the obligation to protect and encourage the people of the Philippines and China. It made no difference whether the actions of the United States in the Philippines were right or wrong because the nation had a responsibility there. "We cannot unboil the egg."²⁸ The author believed that God still controlled

²⁷William Byron Forbush, "America and the Far East," Bibliotheca Sacra, LVI (October, 1899), 759-774.

²⁸Ibid.

the destiny of the nation and that the United States could not shirk its duty even if it wanted to.

A similar viewpoint was expressed in the same year by Robert T. Hill of the United States Geological Survey. He described the recent expansion of the nation as due not to governmental intent but to the ". . . culmination of great forces acting through the individual atoms of society which moved irrelevant to any preconceived political plan."²⁹ The superior quality of American citizens gave them a special responsibility toward the Pacific. No longer could Americans regard the province of their destiny as the land alone; they now owned an interest in the ocean as well. These would be empty words unless the United States took an actual part in guiding the development of the people in the Philippines. The presence of the nation in the Philippines could be explained as the working out of America's destiny, but unless the United States actually exercised the required leadership the vision of an American mission to the world would fade.

The responsibility of the nation toward China was phrased in similar terms. In 1903 a writer for the Political Science Quarterly concluded that the United States had now become a world power of the first rank and must accept the responsibility of its new position. "Destiny has forced

²⁹Robert T. Hill, "The Commercial Relations of the United States with the Far East," Annals, XIII (May, 1899), 131.

us into a position which we did not dream of assuming a few years ago."³⁰ The editor of Outlook, Lyman Abbott, wrote in 1900 that the duty of America as a Christian nation was plain.³¹ She had a responsibility to fulfill toward China which dictated friendship not force. The United States could not treat China with inhumanity or take any part in partition because the Chinese expected America to defend China's integrity. A Presbyterian missionary in China and President of Union College at Tungchou wrote that, "the hope of China is not in itself. The realization of its best thought must come from without. Christian civilization will bring to China a truer conception of the nature of man, a better understanding of his relations and duties, of his dignity and destiny."³² If China could not help herself it was obviously America's duty to assist her.

Civilizing the Chinese had some pleasant aspects. A mission worker among the Chinese in New York city wrote several articles describing her experiences.³³ One of the assumptions which underlay her attitude toward her work was

³⁰W. C. Jameson Reid, "The Asiatic Problem," Political Science Quarterly, XVIII (June, 1903), 196.

³¹"The Awakening of China" (editorial), Outlook, LXV (August 1, 1900), 856.

³²D. Z. Sheffield, "Chinese Civilization: the Ideal and the Actual," Forum, XXIX (July, 1900), 595.

³³See, e.g., Helen F. Clark, "The Chinese in New York," Century, LIII (November, 1896), 104-113.

that the Chinaman should be Americanized. The reason for this, she felt, was that simply by forcing the Chinese into the mold of American life he could be civilized. The two terms "Americanization" and "civilization" were identical in meaning for her.³⁴ Civilizing China would mean, therefore, exporting the sentiments closest to American hearts. Americans by helping China to establish her independence, thought one writer, who was professor of physics at Canton Christian College, would also be helping her to enjoy the dearest principle of American life, that is, freedom.³⁵ Paul Reinsch, political economist and United States minister to China in 1913, wrote in Forum that "the idea of endowing an inferior or backward race with the institutions of a more highly developed civilization has at present a great charm for the American people."³⁶ His remark was made in 1901 when interest in China was at a high point. It was certainly true that many people at that time were thoroughly enamored with the idea of instilling American principles in the Chinese.

The missionaries were believed to have an important role to play in fulfilling America's responsibility toward

³⁴Ibid., p. 104.

³⁵C. K. Edmunds, "China's Renaissance," Popular Science Monthly, LXVII (September, 1905), 383.

³⁶Paul S. Reinsch, "Governing the Orient on Western Principles," Forum, XXX (June, 1901), 385.

China. Alfred Thayer Mahan expressed the hope that Americans would not neglect to inculcate spiritual as well as material ideas in the Chinese.³⁷ The missionaries had the special responsibility of introducing the Chinese to western values. Shortly after the liberation of the Peking legation in 1900 Sir Robert Hart wrote a rather alarming appraisal of the situation in China.³⁸ He spoke of the possible threat of a westernized China and concluded that only foreign intervention or the Christianization of China could prevent such a threat. He thought partition unlikely and Christianization difficult but recognized the special responsibility of missionaries in China.

Diplomats often spoke favorably of the work of the missionaries and of its importance. A diplomat who was familiar with China believed that "the most potent force for the uplift of this country is not trade or commerce or diplomacy, but Christian missions. The missionaries are doing more for this land than all other foreigners combined."³⁹ Lyman Abbott quoted the opinions of several well known

³⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The Problem of Asia," Harpers, C (April, 1900), 747-759.

³⁸ Robert Hart, "The Peking Legations," Cosmopolitan, XXX (December, 1900), 121-139.

³⁹ Francis E. Clark, "The Empire of the Dead," North American Review, CLXXXI (September, 1900), 387.

diplomats in the Outlook.⁴⁰ John W. Foster, former Secretary of State and counselor to the Chinese government in negotiations with Japan, thought that the only hope of China was in Christianity. John Barrett thought that anti-missionary talk originated in ". . . the superficial gossip of treaty parts."⁴¹ Furthermore, he said, "We cannot think of withdrawing the messengers of Christianity from Asia until we are ready to withdraw the merchants of commerce and the ministers of diplomacy."⁴² George F. Seward, minister to China from 1876 to 1880, and Charles Denby were also quoted. Missionaries had a peculiar place in the thinking of those who looked upon China as America's responsibility.

The opinion of missionaries themselves covered a wide range of attitudes during the years from 1890 to 1905. The Chinese had been described as barbarian heathens in order to emphasize their need for Christian teaching. On the other hand the ability of the Gospel to convert any human being, including a Chinaman, certified to the salvability of the Chinese. Now the missionaries were caught up

⁴⁰"Missionaries Vindicated" (editorial), Outlook, LXVI (October 13, 1900), 383-384.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 383.

⁴²Ibid.

in the idea of converting a whole nation to Christianity. The restoration of a single soul to a state of grace was an exciting event in the life of a mission worker. But to be involved in the work of restoring an entire race was a calling worthy of the greatest of men. When missionaries considered their endeavor in this light the massacre of thousands of Chinese Christians and dozens of missionaries by the Boxers seemed not too great a price to pay.⁴³

A Presbyterian missionary in China writing in Century magazine described the opportunity. "Let the spirit of Christianity regulate the intercourse of the nations with China in some moderate measure and she will be preserved in her integrity, her institutions will be reformed, and the best capabilities of the people will find their realization in a just and beneficent government and in an enlightened and purified society."⁴⁴ No Christian could shirk his duty in the face of such a clear call. The slogan calling for the evangelization of the world in one generation did not seem so wide of the mark when an entire civilization was already on its way toward embracing Christianity. The missionary endeavor took on new importance because the church

⁴³"The Plans of the American Board for China" (editorial), Missionary Herald, XCVII (January, 1901), 8-9.

⁴⁴D. Z. Sheffield, "The Influence of the Western World on China," Century, LX (September, 1900), 791.

was teamed with the nation in spreading the dual gospels of Christianity and American civilization. Great indeed was the stature of a man participating in such work.

One aspect of the American image of China remains to be described, the view of the Chinese as a threat to western civilization. The concept of China as a peril to the United States and to the rest of the western world was a small voice compared to the noise from the spokesmen for American superiority. But it was persistent and it expressed more or less precisely the fears of a larger number of people who never felt quite at ease in the presence of China. As Americans looked out from their mountain top to see the world emerging around them some were never convinced that China did not occupy a higher peak.

A dominant theme during these years before and after the turn of the century was that of race. The followers of Mahan and the missionaries often saw their problems in terms of racial inferiority or superiority. A dominant theme of America's relationship with China, whether in contact with the Chinaman in the United States or in viewing his civilization from across an ocean, was race. In 1897 a sociologist suggested that races possess inherent characteristics which make them either superior or inferior.⁴⁵ The Chinese possess

⁴⁵J. S. Stuart-Glennie, "The Conflict of Races: A Reply to Criticisms," Monist, VII (July, 1897), 608-611.

characteristics which make them inferior and unless the superior white race defends itself the Chinese race will drag it down to an inferior level. The conclusion to be drawn from this reasoning was that the Chinese, therefore, constituted a "yellow peril."

The racial characteristics of the Chinese were widely discussed and anyone who had even the slightest acquaintance with a Chinaman, perhaps only once a week at the laundry, or even not at all, could speak expertly on the subject. Edward A. Ross, sociologist and author of several standard texts as well as books on China, thought that the extraordinary power of the Chinaman to accommodate to any circumstance was certainly "ominous."⁴⁶ From Siberia to Singapore the Chinese could outdo the native people at their own work. The Assistant Commissioner of Immigration in New York city summarized the characteristics which made them a threat.⁴⁷ They did not assimilate, they adapted to any circumstances, they degraded the community around them, and there were four hundred million of them. Because the Chinese were a colonizing race that did not mix with adjacent peoples but sought to control them, they were thought to be a serious threat.

⁴⁶Edward A. Ross, "The Causes of Race Superiority," Annals, XVIII (July, 1901), 69.

⁴⁷Z. F. McSweeney, "The Character of our Immigration, Past and Present," National Geographic Magazine, XVI (January, 1905), 10.

The original concept of the "yellow peril" seems to have sprung from the brain of Kaiser Wilhelm who was probably stimulated in part by radical Japanese writers in 1895 who claimed that China, because of her weakness, was a permanent disturber of the peace in Asia.⁴⁸ The German Kaiser, by his own hand, produced an illustration of the "yellow peril" the title of which warned, "Nations of Europe, Guard Your Most Precious Possessions."⁴⁹ The Archangel Gabriel is shown standing on the edge of a precipice pointing into the distance where the figure of Buddha is seen surrounded by dark clouds and flashes of lightning. In the valley below a city is in flames and Gabriel is warning the powers of Europe who surround him on the hill of the coming danger. It was a sensational theme and the notoriety of its author helped to increase its popularity.

The keynote of Kaiser Wilhelm's "yellow peril" was the vision of a horde of Chinamen descending upon Europe. The idea was current before Wilhelm made his drawing. One traveler in 1890 said that Chinatown had left a sinister menacing impression, ". . . a sense of this being the first gnawing yellow wave of an overwhelming flood--forced upward

⁴⁸"The Ruling Dynasty of China" (editorial), Public Opinion, XXIV (January 13, 1898), 43-44.

⁴⁹Fritz Cunliffe-Owen, "The Real Yellow Peril," Munsey's Magazine, XXXI (June, 1904), 327.

by the irresistable propulsion of an overpopulation behind."⁵⁰ The Chinese in California were driven to migrate by hunger and more would follow resulting in the obliteration of civilization. The Chinese were called a plague and a tide which was threatening to engulf the United States.⁵¹ The editor of Harpers Weekly pictured millions of well armed Chinese overrunning Asia and then Europe.⁵² European opinion was quoted in support of the alleged danger from the yellow race. The secretary of the London Chamber of Mines said in 1900 that in his visits to China he had studied the question thoroughly and was convinced that the peril was a real one and comparatively near at hand.⁵³ Unless the "great white powers" acted quickly the potential threat might develop into proportions which would paralyze the world.

The concept of a horde of Asiatics drew heavily upon the images of Attila and the Huns and of Genghis Khan and the Mongols for its greatest impact.⁵⁴ Sir Robert Hart, an

⁵⁰Elizabeth Bisland, "A Flying Trip Around the World," Cosmopolitan, IX (May, 1890), 54.

⁵¹"Chinese Immigration Again" (editorial), Literary Digest, IV (January 30, 1892), 360.

⁵²"The War in Asia" (editorial), Harpers Weekly, XXXVIII (October 13, 1894), 963.

⁵³Marcus L. Taft, "The 'Yellow Peril,'" Missionary Review, XXIV (July, 1901), 518.

⁵⁴Ibid.

old China hand, in his analysis of the Chinese problem thought "that the future will have a 'yellow question,' perhaps a 'yellow peril,' to deal with, is as certain as that the sun will shine tomorrow."⁵⁵ People would probably laugh at such words as "imperil the world's future," but "twenty millions or more of Boxers, armed, drilled, disciplined and animated by patriotic--if mistaken--motives, . . . will carry the Chinese flag and Chinese arms into many a place that even fancy will not suggest today, thus preparing for the future upheavals and disorders never even dreamed of."⁵⁶ Hart was accused of writing his account while still under the influence of the ordeal at Peking. But others were also worried by the Boxer uprising and warned that it was a sign of the future when the "yellow peril" would become a menace to the whole world.⁵⁷

With the rise of Japan as a power in the Far East the idea of an Asiatic horde received new vitality. Lafcadio Hearn, appreciative student of Chinese culture and author of books and poems on China, thought that if China was compelled to do what Japan had done voluntarily, that is to accept

⁵⁵Robert Hart, "The Peking Legations," Cosmopolitan XXX (December, 1900), 136.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 137.

⁵⁷Demetrius C. Boulger, "America's Share in a Partition of China," North American Review, LXXI (August, 1900), 181.

western progress, then ". . . the increase of her population within one century will probably be a phenomenon without parallel in the past history of the world."⁵⁸ These millions of new members of an inferior race would pose a serious threat to the superior white race. The Russo-Japanese war in 1904 prompted several writers to warn of the changed situation in Asia. Heretofore it was thought that the destiny of the Far East depended on the actions of Europe, but, noted Seth Low who was President of Columbia University from 1890 to 1901, "the war between Japan and Russia has changed all that; at least in the sense that it is now apparent that Japan is a power which must be reckoned with in every movement relating to the Asiatic side of the Pacific Ocean."⁵⁹ The "yellow peril" was no longer a myth, concluded a Major General in the army, now that the oriental race had a leader.⁶⁰

The original "yellow peril" had been formulated upon the basis of a Chinese threat, but with the rise of Japan it became an "Asiatic peril." Wilhelm was not all wrong as many had thought, he was half right. If he had not localized

⁵⁸Lafcadio Hearn, "China and the Western World," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVII (April, 1896), 460.

⁵⁹Seth Low, "The Position of the United States Among Nations," Annals, XXVI (July, 1905), 5.

⁶⁰James H. Wilson, "The Settlement of Political Affairs in the Far East," Annals, XXVI (July, 1905), 61-74.

it to China, explained an anthropologist who was professor of prehistoric anthropology at the National University of Washington, he would have been entirely correct.⁶¹ The real "yellow peril," thought an editor of the New York Tribune, lay in the possibilities of the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics," a dream, the possible realization of which had fired the imagination of every oriental mind.⁶² The "yellow peril" of the Kaiser's imagination, thought another writer, will always remain a mere nightmare. But the threat of an aroused Japan capable of harnessing the vast political energy and natural resources of China was sufficiently real to promote the fear that the next Boxer uprising might be successful.⁶³ China would become a "fearful menace to Christendom" if the work of the missionaries failed to alleviate the danger.

The specific form which an Asiatic threat might take was thought by many to be industrial rather than military. A writer in the Atlantic Monthly, author of books and essays on China, believed that "the future danger from China will be industrial, and will begin with the time she passes under

⁶¹Thomas B. Wilson, "The Asiatic Giant," Overland Monthly, XLVI (July, 1905), 39.

⁶²Fritz Cunliffe-Owen, "The Real Yellow Peril," Munsey's Magazine, XXXI (June, 1904), 322.

⁶³Sydney Brooks, "Some Results of the War," North American Review, LXXXI (October, 1905), 595.

occidental domination."⁶⁴ In the early and mid-1890's when antagonism toward the Chinese in America was still somewhat vocal the threat of commercial competition from China tied in well with the charges against cheap labor. As more was learned about China it was thought that China's resources in combination with Chinese labor and mechanical ability could prove to be a really serious threat in a world market. A long time observer of the Chinese wrote in 1899 that an awakened Chinese population would not buy European goods but would instead produce them for themselves.⁶⁵ Consequently, China constituted a serious industrial threat for the future.

The phrase "yellow peril" never came into sufficiently wide usage so as to cause it to be written without quotation marks. The employment of such a term to describe the Chinese situation seemed a little strained to most people if not completely misleading. A writer in Forum magazine, who had been legation secretary at Tokyo and later entered the Japanese foreign service where he was awarded the rare honor of the second class of the order of the Rising Sun, explained the prevailing situation.⁶⁶ Those who advocated the theory

⁶⁴Lafcadio Hearn, "China and the Western World," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVII (April, 1896), 454.

⁶⁵"China as an Industrial Menace" (editorial), Literary Digest, XIX (December 23, 1899), 763-764.

⁶⁶D. W. Stevens, "Japan's Attitude Toward China," Forum, XXX (September, 1900), 76-85.

that the awakening of China's millions would threaten the world as in the time of the mongolian hordes were indulging in irresponsible speculation. Nor was China to be feared in combination with Japan because such a possibility was a "fanciful absurdity."⁶⁷ The peril of China was imaginary and close co-operation between Japan and China was impossible. A professor of philosophy at Peking University thought that "the 'yellow danger' is a very catchy phrase, good to create a sensation and sell newspapers but there is nothing in it."⁶⁸ A missionary in China felt that "surely the Kaiser must be suffering from a severe attack of jaundice if he can detect symptoms of the 'yellow peril' emanating from calm, contemplative Buddha. . . ."⁶⁹

What many of these writers were not able to see was that the concept of the "yellow peril" was tied in with changing American attitudes toward China and Japan. In the 1890's Kaiser Wilhelm's Asiatic horde was a useful concept to use in disfiguring China. When Japan loomed on the eastern horizon a few Americans wondered if too sympathetic an attitude toward the Japanese might not be a mistake. They worried about what would happen to American interests in an

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Isaac T. Headland, "The Crisis in China," Munsey's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1900), 15.

⁶⁹Marcus L. Taft, "The Yellow Peril," Methodist Review, LXXXVII (March, 1905), 221.

Asia controlled by Japan. As a consequence of such thinking the "yellow peril" lost its strictly Chinese flavor and gained more of the aspect of a Japanese threat. However, the "yellow peril" remained a minority view, and in 1905 there were indications that the American image of China was taking on a more favorable emphasis.

Americans who expressed themselves on the subject of China looked upon her at first, particularly as they came into contact with the Chinese in America, as an inferior barbarian race. Gradually a more appreciative view of Chinese civilization developed. When America looked outward in 1898 it was able to adopt the more favorable view of China into an attitude of paternalism. The claim that the United States had always had a peculiar destiny, which led it to expand across the continent, was enlarged into the vision of a similar role in the Far East. The proof of this lay in America's peculiar responsibility toward the Chinese to bring them progress, Christianity, and civilization. Americans, in fulfilling their responsibility to bring the principles of American life to the Chinese, justified their belief in the rightness of these principles and in the nation's new destiny in the world.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

One important ingredient in the American image of China was the hostile impression gained from contact with the Chinese in the United States. The Chinese had been encouraged to come to the West Coast by representatives of the Union Pacific Railroad and others who had described in glowing terms the opportunities for employment at high wages. When the demand for their services was sharply reduced in the 1870's by the decline in railroad construction, the collapse of the mining industry, and a general slackening of business activity, their presence tended to irritate the problem of unemployment. Largely because of the desires of California politicians and the added importance given to the far western states by the closeness of the presidential contests, the Chinese problem attained national prominence during the 1870's and 1880's. Anti-Chinese feeling was encouraged and exploited by politicians who sought to campaign on the issue of Chinese exclusion.

The agitation for the exclusion of the Chinese resulted in their being generally condemned. The charges of cheap labor and of immoral behaviour against the Chinese by California politicians and writers were repeated across the

nation. The admitted weaknesses of the Chinese were magnified and their finer attributes either ignored or made into vices. Writers dwelt at length on the threat posed by the Chinese in the United States who were described as the advance swell of a great following wave which would innundate the nation. The Chinese were characterized as a threat to American labor and prosperity because they would cause the lowering of wages. Innumerable articles pictured the Chinaman in his opium den, as a treacherous criminal, and as an enslaver of women. Because of his inherent immorality it was thought that he would degrade American civilization.

The attitude toward China itself was simply a reflection of the anti-Chinese feeling in the United States. Travelers in China, diplomats, missionaries, and other observers all emphasized the unfavorable aspects of Chinese civilization. Stories of cruelty, poverty, and debauchery were circulated widely and were believed by most Americans to represent the true picture of China. The first impressions of China had been gained by contact with Chinese coolies in the United States and during the 1890's and early 1900's these impressions changed very little.

Another important ingredient in the American image of China was the attitude of Americans toward their own environment. By 1890 memories of past contacts with other nations were almost extinguished. Therefore, the decade of

the 1890's was a period of increasing awareness of outside influences for many Americans. Interpretations of the state of American society, of where it had been and where it was going, were widely read. Consequently, there were many perceptive observers who were sensitive to the changing role played by the United States in world affairs. These writers sought to analyze the significance of the changes for other Americans and to construct a self-image of the nation to fit these changes.

In seeking to re-establish their own identity in the midst of a changing environment, Americans were faced with the problem of China. China seemed threatening because of her vast and ancient civilization. As Americans struggled to interpret their own role in the world China appeared as a roadblock to the working out of an interpretation of America's future greatness. Such men as Mahan, Strong, Roosevelt, and Lodge liked to picture America as a prophetic nation which, by capitalizing on its unique experience in creating a completely new government founded on principles of justice and freedom, would show the way for the rest of the world. An increasingly larger number of people responded enthusiastically to such a view during the 1890's.

China threatened this vision of America's destiny because of the uncertainty of her role in the development of the world as Americans knew it. If China was proved to have

as great a civilization as that of the West, or perhaps even greater, then the claim of the United States to be the exponent of progress to the world would appear false. Consequently, according to the American self-image, China had to appear as an inferior, backward, and uncivilized race. The hostility toward the Chinese both at home and abroad was a result of this need.

As the details of the new image of America were worked out by expansionists and others at the turn of the century the characterization of China as uncivilized took on a new emphasis. It was not enough simply to remove the threat which China posed to America's expanding destiny in the world by describing China as inferior. A positive approach was required which would demonstrate the validity of America's claim as a superior race. China was certainly inferior, but she had not moved beyond the power of the United States to redeem her, reasoned the expansionists. With the tools of industrialization and the spiritual values of Christianity many Americans felt sure that China could be brought to a higher level of achievement.

The developing religious attitude toward China was an example of the changing image. At first the missionaries had voiced their concern over the heathen Chinese and their need for Christian teaching. Gradually as the enthusiasm of Mahan and Strong gained a stronger hold they began to speak

of the possibility of converting all of China. The slogan of the Student Volunteers Movement to evangelize the world did not seem impossible when the conversion of China's millions was considered. The thought of the conversion of an entire race was strong wine and missionary and expansionist alike were influenced by it.

Americans looked to China for justification of their new self-image, therefore, it mattered little if the policy of the United States in China was based on actual conditions. What did matter was that any policy had to be formulated in accord with the concept of America's new role in world affairs. The Far Eastern policy of the United States was inconsistent because the American image of China on which it was based was inconsistent. Americans thought they saw in China circumstances which justified their attitude toward the Orient. But in actual fact what Americans saw was only what they wanted to see.

The United States had only one real policy in China from 1890 to 1905, to protect the lives and property of American citizens. When the lives of missionaries and diplomats were threatened during the Boxer uprising the government contributed troops to the Peking relief expedition. It was the only time that the United States actively intervened in China during these years. The highly touted Open Door policy of Hay and Rockhill was primarily a result of

America's false idea of the importance of her role in the Far East. It was received enthusiastically in the United States because it fitted with the concept of the importance of the nation's influence in world affairs.

The keystone of American policy in the Far East was the myth of Chinese inferiority. This myth was developed by Americans to shield themselves from the apparent threat offered by Chinese civilization. The far eastern policy of the United States was designed to fit the American image of China, not the actual conditions existing in the Orient. It was formulated in an unreal atmosphere where visions of racial superiority and world leadership protected Americans from the harsher realities of the power struggle in the Far East. The policy which evolved from these circumstances satisfied the demands of the American image of China but not those of the Chinese problem. The policy was based on broad principles which were never elaborated and on inconsistencies which were never reconciled. Its essential ingredient was the mythical concept of Chinese inferiority and its chief characteristic was ambivalence.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The best introduction to periodicals published between 1890 and 1905 is Frank L. Mott A History of American Magazines, 1885-1905, IV (Cambridge, Mass., 1957). Mott's book includes an individual sketch of thirty-four magazines which flourished during the period as well as a history of magazine publishing during these years. Harold R. Isaac's Scratches On Our Minds (New York, 1958) deals with a later period but is helpful for its thoughtful analysis of American attitudes toward the Chinese. A comprehensive study of the anti-Chinese agitation in California is available in Elmer C. Sandmeyer, The Anti-Chinese Movement in California, Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, XXXIV (Urbana, 1939). Paul A. Varg's Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats (Princeton, 1958), provides a good analysis of the inter-relationship between the missionary movement in China and diplomatic events. His suggestions as to how Americans thought of themselves during the 1890's and early 1900's are very helpful in understanding American attitudes.

Individual magazines of particular relevance have been discussed in the text, therefore, only comments of a general nature are offered here. Most of the several thousand magazines published between 1890 and 1905 are too

limited in scope to be of value for the purpose of this study. The following periodicals have been selected from over two hundred magazines because they proved to be especially useful in analyzing the development of public opinion. They are classified according to their frequency of publication and special interests.

Among magazines published monthly, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Century Magazine, and the Atlantic Monthly continued to occupy a leading place in the literary field, followed by Scribner's Magazine which was started in 1887. Other monthly magazines such as Lippincott's Magazine, Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, and Drake's Magazine were not as high in quality but had a wider circulation. Among the general monthlies the three most useful magazines based on their broad appeal, high quality, and diversity of interests were McClure's, Munsey's Magazine, and Cosmopolitan. These belonged to the ten cent magazine phenomenon which played such a large part in boosting magazine circulation and influence in the 1890's. The Saturday Evening Post was a five cent monthly which did not become important until it was taken over by Curtis in 1897.

The monthly review was a popular and widely circulated form of monthly magazine which carried articles on a wide range of subjects. The most valuable of these were the North American Review, Forum, Arena, and Review of Reviews. The

latter tended to annoy readers because of its unwillingness to offer any opinion on the subjects reviewed. The Bay View Magazine, Chautauquan, Eclectic Magazine, and Our Day were monthly review magazines which also carried articles pertaining to China.

Among weekly magazines, the general illustrated weeklies were valuable for their responsiveness to matters of current interest. Harper's Weekly, Illustrated American, Leslie's Weekly, and Colliers were well illustrated publications with many short articles on current events. The Independent and Outlook were weekly magazines which began as religious publications under the auspices of the Congregational Church. The latter was published as the Christian Union until 1893 when Lyman Abbott became editor. They gradually lost their exclusively religious character and became sensitive and widely respected commentaries on American life. The weekly reviews were lighter in weight than the monthlies though the Nation often included perceptive comments. The Literary Digest, Public Opinion, and Living Age presented summaries of weekly opinion.

The general quarterly magazines of special usefulness included Current History magazine and two excellent reviews, Yale Review and Sewanee Review. Both of these began publishing in 1892 and the former contained many articles on politics, history and philosophy until 1897 when the advent

of the American Historical Review caused it to drop its interest in history and concentrate primarily on the field of political science.

Special interest magazines were useful for the insights which they gave into special areas of American life. The local and regional magazines were represented by such publications as the New England Magazine and the Bostonian, later National Magazine, in New England, and the Critic in New York. Chicago was the home of the Dial and on the West Coast the Overland Monthly, Californian Illustrated, Out West, Lark, and Sunset Magazine provided many insights into California attitudes toward China. The strongest of these was the Overland Monthly which gave Bret Harte a start as editor in 1870 and continued publication until 1923. Out West magazine, which changed its name from Land of Sunshine in 1894, was published in Los Angeles and devoted to the prosperity of Southern California.

Journals of literary criticism and book reviewing were of limited value except for their editorial comment and occasional reviews of books on China. The best of these were the Bookman, Book Buyer, Current Literature, Literary World, and Publisher's Weekly.

Scholarly journals, while publishing a limited number of articles on China, usually offered the most comprehensive analysis of a given subject. The Annals contained

several extensive articles on trade with the Orient and other subjects related to China. Other journals of this type which published occasional articles on China were the Political Science Quarterly, American Journal of Sociology, Journal of American Folklore, and the Journal of Social Science. The best scholarly journal on China was that of the Royal Asiatic Society, North China Branch which was published in Shanghai. The National Geographic did not develop its present excellent format until 1899, when in that year and following ones it published many articles on China.

Religious magazines were numerous and of varying quality. Two of the best of these which started as religious periodicals have already been mentioned, the Outlook and Independent. The Andover Review was an excellent religious and theological monthly which discontinued publication in 1893. The Methodist Review and Baptist Review were also of good quality and contained occasional articles on China as well as editorial comment. The American Journal of Theology was published by the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and the Charities Review and Lend A Hand specialized in social problems. The Catholic World and American Catholic Quarterly Review presented a different viewpoint on some subjects. The Missionary Herald, American Missionary, and Missionary Review offered insights into the problems and

attitudes of missionaries in China and in the United States.

Journals such as the Philosophical Review, International Journal of Ethics, and Open Court carried occasional articles on Chinese philosophy and related subjects. The latter was edited by Paul Carus as was a similar journal in Chicago, the Monist. Several scientific journals contained miscellaneous items of interest on China. Science, Scientific American, Popular Science Monthly, and Scientific American Supplement were the best of these. Cassiers, Engineering Magazine, and American Architect published articles on housing and engineering in China. Outing and Nature occasionally described Chinese outdoor activities and other aspects of daily life in China.

The absence of comment on China in the Commercial and Financial Chronicle was consistent with a general lack of interest shown by other business magazines. Women's magazines such as the Ladies Home Journal, Woman's Home Companion, and Harper's Bazaar also largely ignored China.

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