TAYLOR, ANITA DIANNE. David Ross Locke, Consistent Advocate. (1978)
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David Ross Locke was a newspaper editor, novelist, satirist, and lecturer prominent during and immediately after the Civil War period. He gained widespread fame because of his creation, "Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby." In Nasby, Locke created a character to satirize the Northern Democrats who sympathized with the Southern point of view. On a weekly basis, Nasby wrote letters to the editor which chronicled his misadventures. Because of his bigotry and narrow, self-serving motivations, Nasby always came to bad ends. Locke's contemporaries considered the Nasby letters invaluable in maintaining Northern morale during the war.

Because of the prominence he gained through Nasby, Locke was asked to lecture nationally. His three major lectures, "Cussid Be Canaan," "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question," and "In Search of the Man of Sin," proved very popular with his audiences. The lectures are comprehensive statements of his positions toward the major social issues of his day--slavery, women's suffrage, and corruption. These lectures are also satires. Humor, however, was not Locke's primary goal. He considered himself a reformer, and sought, through his lectures, to persuade. The analyst of his lectures must evaluate them in that light in order to properly assess their worth.

The best insight into Locke's positions is obtained by analysis of his statements across all his major media. This content analysis proves that Locke was a consistent advocate who was faithful to his

positions throughout his lifetime. Locke's advocacy was the advocacy of fairness. He fought for equality of the races and sexes, and for honorable conduct in public and private life. While the effectiveness of Locke's speaking with his audiences cannot now be measured, available testimony from contemporaries shows that many people recognized Locke's purposes and applauded his goals.

DAVID ROSS LOCKE, CONSISTENT ADVOCATE

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser John Lee Jellicorse

Committee Members Ethel C. Glenn

Thomas L. Telford

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Waived
Date of Final Oral Examination

PREFACE

"Too much sanity
may be madness,
And the maddest of all,
to see life as it is
and not as it should be."

--Man of La Mancha

For the Wizard, who should understand

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any work which demands a significant amount of the writer's time and thought becomes a preoccupation. That preoccupation often leads to a desire to discuss the work at length with those individuals who find their lives caught up with that of the writer. Families and friendships which can survive so sore a trial are indeed priceless. To all those who listened to me throughout this period, I humbly offer my sincerest gratitude and appreciation.

Four people deserve special recognition for their tolerance, understanding, and aid. My parents, John T. and Barbara Taylor, have offered continued support and encouragement throughout my education. Dr. John Jellicorse introduced me to Locke's work. Both he and Dr. Ethel Glenn have been sensitive listeners whose suggestions proved very helpful in the completion of this study. They are all special people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Each era in history produces its own great men, men who serve their countries and their countrymen well in times of national turmoil. Many of these men are remembered. Their actions and praises are set down in school books so that children may share a heritage and at the same time see examples of the best of human conduct and principles.

Hindsight, however, is not perfect. Sometimes even great men are forgotten once their era and their crises are past. Such neglect is unfortunate and especially undeserved in the case of David Ross Locke. Locke was a conscious and consistent advocate who spoke often on matters of human dignity, on the equality of the races and the sexes, and on the need for public men and private to act honorably toward their fellows. Much of what Locke said may be as constructively considered by contemporary America as it was by the many Americans a century gone who recognized his genius and accorded him a well-earned place in their hearts.

Outlined in this thesis are Locke's career and documentation of the arguments he made in each of his major media. His writing and his speaking prove him to be a man who spent his lifetime working for the right of every person, regardless of race or sex, to an equal opportunity to make the best of himself, free from prejudice and arbitrary legal restrictions. David Ross Locke is a man worthy of inclusion in the histories of American public address.

CHAPTER I

LOCKE'S CAREER

With the thundering announcement, "We are all descended from grandfathers," David Ross Locke launched Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby on his lecturing career.[1] Or perhaps it is more nearly correct to say that the penname, Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby, launched David Ross Locke. Nasby was Locke's brainchild, but in the public mind the creation often overshadowed the creator. Through Nasby, Locke became one of the nation's most powerful reform advocates during the turbulent Civil War era. Because of Nasby a poor country newspaper editor achieved power, fame, position, and fortune. One grandfather's grandson died a millionaire because of Nasby.[2]

Petroleum V. Nasby was an early prototype of Archie Bunker, current television's superbigot. Nasby was the embodiment of everything his creator detested. Through Nasby, Locke mercilessly ridiculed injustice, prejudice, and ignorance. So popular did Nasby become that Locke was highly in demand as a platform speaker. But as a lecturer, Locke almost

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[1]David Ross Locke, "Cussid Be Canaan," The Struggles (Social, Financial and Political) of Petroleum V. Nasby (Boston: I. N. Richardson & Co., 1872; new ed., Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1893), p. 629. This volume was reprinted by the Gregg Press, Upper Saddle River, N. J., in 1977. Anyone interested in reading an assortment of the Nasby letters should examine this volume as it is the one most readily available and contains the largest assortment of letters.

[2]Petroleum V. Nasby is so important in Locke's career that the character is given detailed treatment in Chapter II of this thesis.

completely abandoned his mouthpiece as he advocated equality of the races and sexes and public and private morality. Why would a man abandon the vehicle upon which his career had been substantially based? In this case, for only one reason. What Locke had to say was too important to him to risk misinterpretation. Rather than trusting his audiences to find his true messages beneath Nasby's satire, Locke straightforwardly advocated the changes he wanted. Throughout his life, he was a consistent advocate, a man whose strong beliefs would not allow him to remain silent.

Examination of Locke's life and his other works demonstrates the validity of these contentions. In order to evaluate Locke the speaker, however, Locke the man must first be known.

David Ross Locke was born on September 20, 1833, the seventh child of Nathaniel Reed Locke and Hester Ross Locke. Because Nathaniel was a poor businessman, the family experienced almost continual financial difficulties. But in spite of this, family life appears to have been pleasant and intellectually stimulating. According to Osman Hooper,

> From early childhood he [David Ross Locke] was inflamed by a great love of liberty and fair play, taught him by his Whig father. Everything that savored of autocratic domination and subjugation he was instructed uncompromisingly to hate.[3]

Nathaniel Locke was a firmly religious, temperance, and anti-slavery man who freely discussed his ideas with his children. He carried on extensive correspondence with leading Abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, and later became one of the first members of the Republican

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[3]Osman Castle Hooper, History of Ohio Journalism, 1793-1933 (Columbus, Ohio: Spahr & Glenn, 1933), p. 159.

Party. Active political participation ran in the family. Nathaniel Locke had been a drummer boy in the War of 1812. John Locke, Nathaniel's father, enlisted five times during the Revolutionary War and was a member of the Boston Tea Party, quite possibly the leader. Hester Ross Locke's grandfather was a commissary general and aide to George Washington. She was also descended from Betsy Ross.

Young David's formal schooling lasted only five years. This seems exceptionally brief by modern standards. At that time, however, it was not uncommon for the sons of rural families to spend even less time in school. Locke was encouraged to read at home, and he devoured his father's small library, which included the works of Flavius Joseph, Rollins' Ancient History, Aesop's Fables, Robinson Crusoe, and Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales.[4] Evidently Locke was bright and quick. Henry Randall, at that time superintendent of the Cortland County, New York, schools, reports that Locke accompanied his sister Ruth when she took her oral examination for the teacher's certificate. Randall had to reprimand the young man for giving the answers aloud before his sister had time to reply. The boy was then eleven.[5]

Early Career

The following year David Ross Locke left home. In September, 1845, his father apprenticed him to the Cortland County (New York) Democrat.

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[4]John M. Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, David Ross Locke (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 14. Readers who are interested in more complete details of Locke's life than can be supplied in this thesis are urged to investigate this excellent biography.

[5]Ibid., p. 8.

Locke immediately began to show his talent for newspapering and learned the trade to which he was to devote his life so well that he was released from his apprenticeship after only five of the prescribed seven years. Leaving Cortland, he went to Corning, New York, where he became a journeyman printer on the Corning Journal. He served here with Marcus Mills "Brick" Pomeroy, who, in later years when both men had become famous editors, wrote of Locke's performance and popularity in Corning.[6]

Pomeroy includes in this account the history of the Fountain of Temperance, the first newspaper edited by Locke. Locke and A. Z. Lombard, the Journal's office foreman, decided they could make money by editing a temperance paper. They began industriously:

> 1st. Each of them signed the pledge. 2nd. They wrote and selected copy. 3rd. They worked nights and Sundays to set type and print the new candidate for public favor. 4th. They went about to the schoolhouses and country churches, lecturing on temperance and warning people against the bottle. 5th. When Locke talked temperance, Lombard circulated among the audience for subscribers. When he could obtain no more names . . . Zach would mount the platform and go for them. . . .
>
> . . . The boldness of the editorials in that paper--the startling statements as to the effect of liquor on the human system, so affected the people of Stuben County that from that day to this people are afraid to touch whiskey, smell of a gin cocktail, imbibe brandy, blow the froth from lager, and even loth to drink lemonade, especially in January.[7]

Despite these amazing effects on the populace, the paper collapsed after only a few issues. Locke and Lombard discovered firsthand what older, more experienced editors knew only too well: obtaining subscribers was one thing; obtaining payment was another matter entirely.

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[6]Ibid., pp. 20-22.

[7]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

Leaving Corning after only a year, Locke went to Cleveland, working first for the Cleveland Herald and then for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. From there he went to the Pittsburgh Chronicle where he was promoted from compositor to reporter, until a strike forced the Chronicle out of business. Locke had worked for three different papers in a year and a half. Now, at age twenty, he felt ready to open his own shop. With James Robinson, another young printer who had lost his job in the strike, Locke bought the Plymouth (Ohio) Journal for $42.00.[8] They changed the paper's name to the Plymouth Advertiser and rapidly set to work giving the somewhat false impression that the concern was thriving, financially and socially. Both young men were quite gregarious, especially the mischievious Locke, who loved to imitate Benjamin Franklin's trick of drawing the office shades and leaving the lights burning to give the impression of industry while he went out for an evening's fun.

Both editors began courting seriously during their second year in Plymouth. Robinson, by far the steadier of the pair, had little difficulty. But Locke, whose escapades were known despite his Franklinesque attempts at subterfuge, was required to reform. In order to win Martha Bodine's parents' consent, Locke went back to church, became a leader in the Sunday school, and earned a license to exhort. According to Cyril Clemens, Locke "had the license framed and in after

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[8]For additional details of Locke's journalistic activities in Ohio and histories of the newspapers on which he worked, see Hooper, History of Ohio Journalism, 1793-1933.

years had the habit of pointing to it as evidence that he once had character."[9] While Martha Bodine Locke was a capable and determined woman, there is evidence to suggest that Locke may have regretted his temporary reform. The union, though lasting, was not particularly happy, and in later years they spent much time apart.

His new family responsibilities produced a steadying effect on Locke. His former bluffs of business success would no longer do: two cannot live as cheaply as one. For six months after his marriage, Locke continued to urge civic improvements and support for the newspaper. Then he and Robinson sold, at last admitting their disgust at the lack of financial support shown by the community. Locke would continue to face this problem as long as he stayed in rural journalism.

The Plymouth Advertiser was typical of the small town papers Locke would be involved with until he joined the Toledo Blade in 1865, and in many ways the Blade was merely an expansion of the editorial philosophies which were evident in the Advertiser. Locke was among the first small town editors to obtain telegraph dispatches of national news. He did not like to rely solely on the exchange system, a practice whereby editors swapped editions of their papers in order to obtain wider coverage of events. There were no national news services in those days, nor copyright on newspaper stories, so plagarism, which Locke deplored, was rife. He also bought the best equipment he could afford; mechanics fascinated him.

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[9]Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby (Webster Groves, Mo.: International Mark Twain Society, 1936), p. 8.

Locke's social and political philosophies were also evident in Plymouth. He believed strongly in the greatness of his country and in the right of all her people to a decent life and a chance to better themselves. As a young man he was a staunch Democrat of the Jeffersonian school. He left that party when it departed from those principles. He regularly lambasted slavery and hated all forms of oppression.

Even though Locke gave close attention to national news, he did not neglect local events. Many a small town editor, then and now, fails to realize that city newspapers are in a better position to cover national and international news because of their larger staffs and budgets. Rural people interested in thorough coverage of events outside their immediate areas will subscribe to city papers precisely for these reasons. But city papers cannot cover rural, local events, which are so important to the people involved with them. Locke realized the importance of striking the balance between local and national coverage. He assessed community interest in events of the day and attempted to supply information which would meet his readers' needs. In his novel, The Demagogue, Locke, ever the omniscient and obtrusive narrator, explains his philosophy while discussing the operation of the fictitious Pulaski Clarion:

> . . . Mr. Rhoades, the editor, was a man of considerable shrewdness. He had mastered some elementary principles of success in rural journalism which were not well understood at that day. He understood, first, that it flattered a man to be asked his opinion on topics of public interest; second, that any subject upon which two men, from different sections of the country, who came to town on business and there met by accident, would stop upon the street

and discuss, was of sufficient interest to be mentioned in the paper.[10]

The Clarion's star reporter, Caleb Mason, carried these principles one step further in discovering that ". . . the mention of a man's name in the paper was not only flattering to that person himself, but also pleased his friends. And Caleb boldly reasoned that the same must necessarily be true of women."[11] These practices brought the Clarion increased circulation, just as they helped Locke build his own newspapers.

In 1848, Robinson and Locke left Plymouth for Mansfield, Ohio, where, with Roeliff Brinkerhoff, they ran the Herald. Locke lasted here only four months. Like his father, he had poor judgment in finances and investments and could not manage his share of payments to the previous owner. His next effort was more successful; he stayed in Bucyrus, Crawford County, Ohio, for almost six years. The first of his three sons and his favorite, Robinson, was born five days before he bought the Bucyrus Journal on March 20, 1856. Jim Robinson having stayed in Mansfield with the Herald, Locke's first partner in Bucyrus was his brother, Dan Locke. After the first year, Jim Robinson bought Dan's interest, thereby reforming the original partnership of Robinson and Locke.

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[10]David Ross Locke, The Demagogue (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1891; reprint ed., Upper Saddle, N. J.: Gregg Press, 1970), pp. 83-84.

[11]Ibid., p. 108.

The seeds of Nasby were sown in Bucyrus, but the Copperhead[12] incarnate would not emerge full-blown until Locke was editing his next paper, the Hancock (County) Jeffersonian, in Findlay, Ohio. Partly because of his desire to make his points in whatever way possible, Locke began to write what were ostensibly letters to the editor of the Jeffersonian under the penname, Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby. Nasby, Copperhead preacher and politician, would commit himself to a position and, in explaining it, demonstrate to everyone but himself the ridiculousness of both the argument and its adherents. These letters gained wide popularity with Republicans and Union Democrats, and Locke continued to write them until his death in 1888.

Association with the Toledo Blade

During the four and one-half years Locke devoted to the Jeffersonian, from June 14, 1861, to November 10, 1865, Nasby's fame spread around the country, thanks to the exchange system, and Locke became a national figure. With this change in his fortunes, Locke began to tire of rural journalism. The Jeffersonian was his second attempt at running a staunchly Republican sheet in a predominantly Democratic county; battling politically uphill was becoming increasingly frustrating. Locke published The Nasby Papers, the first collected volume of the Nasby letters while in Findlay and was becoming prominent in the Republican Party. He wanted a position on a city paper, preferably

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[12]"Copperhead" was the name given to Northern Democrats who sympathized with the South and opposed the conduct of the war.

the Toledo (Ohio) Blade. Although the Blade was a small paper of modest circulation, several factors made it very attractive to Locke. He was now thirty-two years old and had spent twenty years in small town journalism, most of them in towns where political preferences ran contrary to his own. Thus he had had limited support and backing, and could develop a paper only up to a point. The Blade was a Republican sheet in a Republican district and had tremendous growth potential which Locke wanted to exploit. The metropolitan setting would also help Locke in his non-newspaper activities. During the crucial Civil War years when his Nasby letters had become increasingly popular and instrumental to Union morale, he had been unable to capitalize fully on his success because he was too far away from any major business center.

A. D. Pelton, publisher of the Blade, was also interested in Locke and wrote to ask if he would consider working for the Blade. Locke replied enthusiastically, but in the meantime, a friend of Pelton's had given the editor an unfavorable hearsay account of Locke's character, causing Pelton to discontinue negotiations.

Locke then bought a part interest in the Bellefontaine (Ohio) Republican, keeping it only two months. He returned to Findlay still dissatisfied, and six weeks later, on February 10, 1865, he wrote his valedictory not only from the Jeffersonian, but also from journalism:

> With this number my connection with the Jeffersonian ceases. Three years ago it was dead and the Union party of Hancock was without an organ. I have revived it, and by persevering effort have succeeded in placing it upon a solid foundation, so that its continuance is sure and certain.

> While the paper was under my care I labored faithfully and earnestly to make it of use to the party, and the country. Whatever seemed to me good, I advocated, and whatever seemed bad I condemned, with all the ability I possessed. If it has done good I am glad, if not the fault is not mine.[13]

Leaving the paper in the hands of his brother Otis, Locke joined J. M. Huber in the drug business. Locke had a life-long interest in medicine and regularly condemned quackery. Although his active participation in the medical industry ended in October, 1865, he continued to promote it editorially, and in the mid-1870's brought out a series of satirical sketches about Abou Ben Adhem, a healer of dubious qualifications.[14]

Pelton was still thinking of Locke and finally wrote to him again, repeating the unflattering rumors he had heard. Locke denied them emphatically, supplying instead a glowing account of his character and morals. He volunteered to come to Toledo on a trial basis, and Pelton soon realized he had employed a wizard. In addition to filling in setting type or running the presses if the Blade was short-handed in those departments, Locke did the work of two editors so well that another editor resigned because he had nothing to do. Besides producing a Nasby letter each week, he wrote editorials and local matter with ease and speed.

Pelton realized Locke was responsible for the almost immediate growth in circulation the Blade experienced. George P. Rowell recounts an interview he had with Pelton shortly after Locke joined the firm:

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[13]As quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, pp. 119-20.

[14]David Ross Locke, The Morals of Abou Ben Adhem (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1875).

> At Toledo I called at the office of the daily Blade, where I saw the proprietor, who told me that he was then issuing 1,800 copies. I had supposed the edition was larger and said so, whereupon he admitted quite willingly that it had not been so large until very recently; but told me he had lately secured, as editor, David R. Locke, who had become rather famous as the writer of the Nasby Letters.[15] Since Mr. Locke came the circulation had increased.

Pelton gave Locke increasing control over the paper and made him a partner in 1867. In 1874 he became President of the Blade Publishing Company, a position he held continuously until his death in 1888. He sold the Blade itself several times over the years, but always bought it back within a few months. Locke often boasted that no one else could run it successfully, a fact in which he took great pride.

Under Locke's direction, the Toledo Blade became one of the most influential papers in the country. When he joined the Blade, it was a daily paper competing with twenty others in the same city. Locke added a weekly and a tri-weekly edition. The paper gained popularity initially as Nasby's vehicle and in advertising was billed as "Nasby's Paper." Newspaper humorists were enjoying boom times in those days. "Artemus Ward" (who was in reality Charles Farrar Browne), "Josh Billings" (whose legal name was Henry Wheeler Shaw), "Mark Twain" (born Samuel Langhorne Clemens), and a host of others gave their papers dramatic increases in circulation. Most newspapers boasted lesser humorists than these giants and fell abruptly from favor when their columnists went out of vogue. But according to noted journalism historian Frank Luther Mott, ". . . various newspapers gained wide reputations for their

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[15] George P. Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent (New York: Printer's Ink Publishing Co., 1906), p. 99.

humor columns without losing their character as newspapers."[16] He lists the Blade among them.

Locke had high ambitions for this paper, as shown in his statement of purpose:

> It should contain a news department so all-embracing and perfect that when the reader was through with it he or she would have a perfect knowledge of what the world had done during the week; this accompanied with editorial comments making clear to the mind of the reader the philosophy of the events; a department for women and girls especially, which would not only be entertaining but instructive; the best literature for the entertainment and elevation of the taste of the people; regular articles on agricultural and mechanical industries; the markets; the politics; and the social movements of the day; and opinions forcibly put, on all topics of interest, and above all the advocacy of everything calculated to make men and women better.[17]

Evidently the public thought Locke fairly successful in meeting these goals. During his first year as editor, the paper's circulation rose phenomenally to 120,000, with a breakdown as follows: New England states, 2,000; Middle states, 40,000; Southern states, 10,000; Western states, 58,000; and, Pacific Territory, 10,000.[18] Hooper claims the Blade's highest circulation figure was 250,000.[19] Jack Clifford Ransome records the Blade's boast "that it was delivered to every post-office in

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[16]Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1865-1885 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 270.

[17]As quoted in William H. Taft, "David Ross Locke: Forgotten Editor," Journalism Quarterly 34 (Spring 1957): 205.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Hooper, History of Ohio Journalism, 1793-1933, p. 113.

the United States."[20] The Blade benefited from a central location which meant it could be delivered to most areas of the country before the New York papers. Ransome also notes that "its price of a dollar a year to everybody and its wide circulation made it an important advertising medium."[21] Under Locke, the Blade rested on firm ground.

Non-Newspaper Activities

Mark Twain wrote of Locke that "for suddenness, Nasby's fame was an explosion; for universality it was atmospheric."[22] After he became connected with the Blade, Locke's non-newspaper career grew rapidly. In December, 1867, he began lecturing, which he continued extensively through 1871. That same year he became managing editor of the New York Evening Mail, although he also acted as the Blade's New York representative. He continued to be active in the Blade's business and editorial policy-making and to write the Nasby letters for publication in that paper. Locke was with the Mail when the Boss Tweed scandal broke, and he joined his friend Thomas Nast in fighting the Tammany Ring. The Mail was a sedate society paper of high literary tone; several other members of the managing staff opposed Locke's intention to make the paper a political sheet. The ensuing rift put Locke in power only for

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[20]Jack Clifford Ransome, "David Ross Locke, The Post-War Years," Northwest Ohio Quarterly 20 (Summer 1948): 154.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1924), p. 148. Twain usually referred to Locke as Nasby.

a short period. Eventually he resigned; Locke could no more avoid writing about politics than a fish can avoid swimming in water.

While in New York, Locke became associated with the advertising firm of Pettingill, Bates, & Company. In 1873, journalists were just beginning to accept advertising as legitimate big business. Prior to that time papers were supported almost entirely by subscribers and whatever job printing the shop could secure; hence the editors' constant pleas for subscribers to pay their bills. Locke, true to his Republican leanings, supported business growth and naturally was interested in developing new areas within his own field. The advertising firm of Bates and Locke was soon formed, although Rowell, who knew both men well, said: "just what good Locke did the agency I never could learn. He surely was not a safe counselor for an advertiser after getting beyond advising him to use the Toledo Blade . . . ."[23]

Locke had splendid editorial judgment, but he never developed shrewd business sense. He shared this problem with his friend, Mark Twain. Both of them were fascinated by machinery, especially that which related in any way to printing. Both had a talent for investing in the wrong invention; or, if they found the right invention, they chose the wrong time. Both men believed heartily in the typewriter and began using it extensively shortly after it was placed on the market. Locke was so taken with the machine that, when Melville Landon wrote to him asking for his autograph, Locke sent it, typed![24] The firm of Locke,

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[23]Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent, p. 258.

[24]Melville D. Landon, Kings of the Platform and Pulpit (Chicago: Werner Co., 1895), p. 99.

Bates, & Yost opened in 1875 to represent the Remington type machine, as the typewriter was first called. They failed miserably by starting too soon. The Remington Company says it made only 4,000 machines during its first four years in business (1873-77); at $125.00 each, they were too expensive to gain wide popularity.[25] Twain lost a fortune on a typesetting machine shortly after turning down Alexander Graham Bell's pleas for backing for his telephone.[26] While neither man could be considered greedy, both came from humble beginnings and neither wished to be poor again. Locke once told Twain that "only one thing was better than a dollar, and that was a dollar and a half."[27]

In 1879, Locke went back to Toledo. Here he became active in promoting education and the arts. David Ross Locke was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Northwest Ohio Medical College when the school was established in Toledo in 1878. Although Locke sometimes had his doubts about the workability of democratic government--he had seen too many people rally behind dishonest or unethical politicians to believe the institution infallible--he always championed democracy. He believed that an educated public could make the best of itself and of the governmental system.

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[25]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, pp. 219-21. This company is also discussed in Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent, p. 259.

[26]Milton Meltzer, Mark Twain Himself (New York: Bonanza Books, 1960), pp. 197-99.

[27]Arlin Turner, Mark Twain and George Washington Cable (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1960), p. 74.

European Travels

Having seen most of America while on his lecture tours, Locke was determined to see Europe. He was grooming his son Robinson for the diplomatic corps and intended that the two of them should tour the continent together. While abroad, he sent regular accounts of his observations back to Toledo for Blade publication. Originally he intended to do a book of Nasby letters based on the trip, and he did write a few letters in this vein, but the book which emerged, titled Nasby in Exile,[28] bore no resemblance to the infamous "confedrit's" previous volumes. Travel books were much in vogue. The American frontier being largely settled, the young country was taking a new interest in the rest of the world. Nasby in Exile is one of the best books in this genre, recounting the observations and encounters of an American's first exposure to European customs and traditions. Locke, never the unbiased observer, inserted comments about the advantages of democracy over monarchy and in other ways showed a decided preference for his native land.

The tone throughout most of the book is light, except when dealing with Ireland. Before this journey Locke had thoroughly hated the Irish because of their involvement with corrupt political machines such as Tammany Hall. At one time he even sent Nasby to the "Harp uv Erin S'loon, in the 6th Ward, Noo York," to satirize the Irish.[29] He had

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[28]David Ross Locke, Nasby in Exile (Toledo: Locke Publishing Co., 1882).

[29]The Nasby letters written between Nov. 20, 1869, and April 12, 1870, usually appear under this dateline.

not expected to change his views while in the British Isles, and probably would not have had he not run into James Redpath, his former lecture manager. Redpath had become an ardent supporter of Ireland and bet Locke that he would become one also if he saw the conditions in that country. Locke took the bet, traveling to Irish villages with Redpath and Rob. What he saw of the misery, poverty, and exploitation the Irish endured so moved him that he wrote some of the strongest, most persuasive non-fiction of his life, rivaling only the lectures, which were his best works. While riding through Ireland, he told his driver that he would send him the best rifle in America if he would promise to shoot a landlord with it. When the driver asked him which landlord, Locke replied, "I don't care, . . . so long as he is an Irish landlord."[30]

Notable Editorial Campaigns

Locke returned to Toledo in October, 1881, but sailed back to Europe in July of the next year to spend another ten months abroad. After his second return, he embarked on the two most concerted editorial campaigns of his career, the "Busted Banker" series and the "Pulverize the Rum Power!" campaign.

The "Busted Banker" series ran from June 5, 1883, to May 7, 1884. On April 2, 1883, while Locke was still in Europe, the Blade announced the failure of the Commercial Bank of Toledo, also known as the C. H. Coy and Company Bank. As Coy, who had hidden his assets under the names

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[30]As quoted in James Burton Pond, Eccentricities of Genius (New York: G. W. Dillingham Co., 1900), p. 95.

of relatives, continued to live as a wealthy man, irregularities were suspected. No effort was made to repay the depositors any portion of their losses; not even a financial statement was produced. When Locke returned home, he began calling for an explanation. Coy did not respond. Locke then brought all his talents as a writer into play, employing emotional and logical proofs through melodramatic examinations of the plights of Coy's depositors, logical appeals for banking reform based on this case, and satiric accounts of punishments dealt out to busted bankers in various foreign countries. He hammered at the case until finally, in February, 1884, the statement of accounts Locke had demanded was produced by Coy's assignee, Lysander K. Parks. It showed the bank insolvent for eight years before the failure. During that time, Coy had continued to accept deposits which he had used to speculate in railroad bonds, grain futures, and other stock schemes. The railroad went under; the bank followed. Locke was enraged. He continued the fight until May 7, when the announcement that fifteen cents on the dollar would be paid to depositors was made. Locke concluded that this was better than nothing, and let the matter drop.

Some other editors suggested that Locke took up the problem so vigorously because he had personally lost $1,400.00 in the failure. As Locke was already a millionaire, he cannot have been deeply distressed over this comparatively small sum. He was motivated by a strong sense of moral outrage. To see poor but honest working class people made penniless by a man who continued to live affluently was more than he could stand.

Locke always wrote best when he was fighting for what he considered a moral cause. This case differs from his other major battles, most notably slavery and temperance, in several ways: first, the problem was local, not national; second, the problem was specific, not general; third, the villain was an individual rather than a segment of the whole society; and, fourth, a concrete solution was available in the short run. Harrison points out the significance of the series:

> As an example of the editorial techniques of which he was a master and of a style of personal journalism even then waning in American newspapers, it remains a classic. . . . The personal attacks on Coy are often shrill and frequently abusive. Yet in the context of the period--its journalistic style, its literary tastes . . . these editorials represent a notable example of one editor's determination to arouse the people to question established practices and values.[31]

Harrison goes on to note the parallel between Locke's sketches on punishments for busted bankers and the contemporary columns of Russell Baker and Art Buchwald, men who also use the humorous and satiric veins to point out flaws in societal attitudes and governmental policies.

The "Pulverize the Rum Power!" campaign was begun in October, 1883, and ended with Locke's death five years later. In this series, Locke attacked liquor and beer manufacturers, distributors, and retailers. He had become convinced that alcohol was undermining society and decided that total prohibition was the only solution.

As with the "Busted Banker" series, Locke used a variety of approaches. His logical attacks consisted primarily of editorials and

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[31]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 279.

investigative pieces aimed at businessmen. Editorially, Locke argued that drinking men represented more economic and political disadvantages than were generally realized. The drunkard spent a good part of his salary on alcohol. This money, therefore, could not be spent on food, clothing or household goods, nor could it be invested. The only segment of the economy to profit was the liquor industry, which was not taxed as heavily as other businesses. Since licensing requirements were lax, some establishments were not licensed at all; these paid no taxes. Furthermore, the political system was weakened because drinkers did not take their obligations seriously. Instead, they sold their votes for beer. Thus reprobates and scoundrels were elected to positions of public trust.

Investigative, in-depth reporting was still in its infancy during this period, but Locke employed this style as he attempted to determine the number and types of liquor outlets in Toledo, the amount of taxes they paid, and their gross and net profits. Locke went to Maine, where total prohibition had been in effect for some years. The stories Locke wrote, picturing Maine as a social, economic, and political utopia, show his bias. Such editorial bias, however, was common at that time and therefore not widely frowned upon. If anything, it probably increased Locke's ethos with his target audience, since he backed up his contentions with solid information.

As thorough as his appeals to businessmen were, Locke did not fail to consider the other segments of his audience. Many of his readers were rural and small town dwellers. The Weekly Blade, the most

prestigious and widely circulated of the three editions, was the newspaper that kept these people in touch with the larger world. They were more conservative and less worldly-wise than their city counterparts. Locke played on their fears of corruption and vice when he wrote of families made destitute by the husband and father who spent the grocery money on liquor and beer. He painted scenes of family units undermined because fathers were out drinking rather than helping with their children's intellectual and moral education. These fathers set a bad example for their sons, who often followed in their fathers' footsteps and became drunkards themselves. Liquor dealers were pictured as totally unscrupulous men who lured their victims by providing pleasant surroundings, congenial atmospheres, and liquor on credit. When the novice drinkers' bills reached significant size, the bartenders demanded immediate payment. These frightened creditors often turned to petty crime to alleviate their difficulties. Petty thefts became larger crimes as the drinkers had to support ever-increasing alcohol habits. Each of these articles, whether logically or emotionally based, was concluded by the admonition, "Pulverize the Rum Power!"

Locke believed that alcoholism was a disease, not a preference, and that every confirmed drinker was an alcoholic. Probably the most moving editorials in his emotional campaign were those which dealt with the drinker's attempt to free himself from a habit which destroyed him in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. Locke was preaching from the heart; this was his most personal war. He was not only attempting to save society from what he considered a deadly menace, he was also

attempting to save himself. As a young man, Locke had enjoyed his reputation as a drinker, but as he grew older he came to regret the hold alcohol had on him. He discussed the situation with George Rowell, who recorded this observation: "I do not know whether he 'reformed,' as he called it, or whether he needed to, for he made a great deal more of a pretense of drinking than he did of the actual demonstration of it."[32] Still, Locke believed that whatever successes he had made were lessened because of his dependence on liquor. Those of his contemporaries who accused him of hypocrisy in this case failed to consider his numerous attempts to stop drinking. His writing reinforced these attempts. Besides the Blade series, he wrote Nasby letters and magazine articles on the subject, and made liquor one of the agents responsible for the villainy he examined in his novels. No hypocrite would fight so determinedly for five years. The increased circulation of the Blade which resulted from this series is sufficient proof that the campaign was publically, if not personally, effective.

Non-Newspaper Writing and Publication

With the exception of the first volume of Nasby letters, Locke did almost all of his non-newspaper writing after he moved to Toledo. Including pamphlets, Locke authorized eleven editions of the letters:[33]

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[32] Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent, p. 262.

[33] This list includes only the first edition of each volume; most were published in several editions and by different publishers in various parts of the country.

The Nasby Papers (Indianapolis: C. O. Perrine & Co., 1864);

Divers Views, Opinions, and Prophecies of Yours Trooly, Petroleum V. Nasby (Cincinnati: Carroll & Co., 1866);

Androo Johnson, His Life (New York: J. C. Haney & Co., 1866);

Swingin' Round the Cirkle (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1867);

Ekkoes from Kentucky (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1868);

The Impendin Crisis of Democracy (Toledo: Miller, Locke & Co., 1868);

The Struggles (Social, Financial and Political) of Petroleum V. Nasby (Boston: I. N. Richardson & Co., 1872), reissued with the addition of the scripts of his three lectures in 1888;

Inflation at the Cross Roads (New York: American News Co., 1875);

The President's Policy (Toledo: Blade Co., 1877);

The Democratic John Bunyan (Toledo: Toledo Blade Co., 1880); and

The Diary of an Office Seeker (Toledo: Blade Co., 1881).

A twelfth volume, _The Nasby Letters_ (Toledo: Toledo Blade Co., 1893) was published postumously. _The Morals of Abou Ben Adhem_ came out in 1875. Abou pretended to be a Persian philosopher several centuries old who knew the answers to most of the problems which plagued mankind. He was in actuality Zephaniah Scudder, a native of Maine who had been involved in almost every variety of fraud. These actions had necessitated his removal to New Jersey, where he dispensed advice to all comers. Abou is pure humor, every bit as fresh and amusing today as he was a century ago.

Three serious novels bear Locke's name: A Paper City (New York: Dillingham, 1879); Strong Heart and Steady Hand (Toledo Weekly Blade: May 17-August 2, 1888); and The Demagogue (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1891). The latter two were posthumous publications. Strong Heart and Steady Hand, by far the weakest of the three, ran as a serial in the Blade and was never published in book form. Yet James Austin, the only critic to mention this work, feels that, ". . . because of its panoramic descriptions of western travel and its bold social thesis, it should be considered among Locke's serious novels."[34] The plot strains credulity; and characterization, always a problem in Locke's longer works, was weak. "Strong Heart and Steady Hand" deals with the adventures of a group of people traveling together from New York to California. The rumor circulates that the heroine has been seduced by the villain. Although there is no proof, she is virtually ostracized until the idealistic hero befriends her. A gold discovery and a duel increase the incongruity of a plot line which could scarcely have been believable even in the Victorian era. By contrast, the details of scenes and accounts of travel life, probably drawn from Locke's journeys on the lecture circuit, are colorful and credible. Years as a reporter and editor demand attention to detail; with Nasby in Exile Locke had already proven his ability in travelogue descriptions.

While this novel holds no interest for contemporary readers, Locke's other two novels are still valuable as sociological works. The

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[34]James C. Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1965), p. 132.

Gregg Press reprinted A Paper City in 1968 and The Demagogue in 1970, in their series of American Novels of Muckraking, Propaganda, and Social Protest.[35] Clarence Ghodes writes in the publisher's preface to the series:

> One purpose underlying the selection of titles in the series is to provide examples of socio-economic novels which are presently out of print but which are nevertheless important in showing the history of the genre, a topic so far treated by historians only sporadically. . . . Its usefulness as supplementary reading for college courses in American studies and social history speaks for itself.[36]

Volumes in the series deal with all the major nineteenth century protest topics, "but the theme governing the largest single element in this collection is the business tycoon and the battle between the capitalist power elite and the working class."[37] Both of Locke's reprinted novels fall into this category. The publisher's preface to Locke's novels is a brief biographical and analytical sketch which offers this contrast between the Nasby letters and the novels:

> In his novels, which are equally [as] bitter [as the lectures] in their contempt for the baser elements of society, Locke adopts a more conventional, narrative literary style, that of the omniscient author. And his target is economic greed and mismanagement, instead of ignorance and racism. . . . Locke, in addition to his extensive knowledge of the grubbier side of politics [evidenced in The Demagogue], had studied the economic forces which brought about such catastrophies as the Panic of [18]73.[38]

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[35]The Gregg Press is located in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

[36]David Ross Locke, A Paper City (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1879; reprint ed., Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Gregg Press, 1968), publisher's preface by Clarence Ghodes.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., publisher's introduction.

A Paper City, which appeared six years after the financial crash of 1873, deals with the type of speculation which led to this panic and was replicated previous to the Wall Street Crash on Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929. In his own preface to the book, Locke explains:

> All the cross-roads of the West expected to become Chicagos, and every man, owning one hundred and sixty acres of land, lived in expectation of seeing, before he should depart, stately buildings upon it, and of selling his ground for more per foot front, than it cost him per acre. The following pages simply record the rise, progress and fall of one of the thousands of these "cities," and it has the merit, if no other, of being entirely free from exaggeration.[39]

In this novel, Charles Burt, the brains of the operation, in conjunction with Colonel Peppernell, a Nasby-like figure, dupe the respectable but naive banker, Gardiner, Sr., into joining them in land speculation. Through various subterfuges, bluffs, and lies, the villains run up the price of land astronomically. Most of the citizenry fall for the scheme and begin elevating their life-styles drastically. Eventually the bottom drops out of the market, and the town returns to normal, poorer but wiser.

The concomitant love stories are affected by the speculation. Jim Gardiner, the banker's son, and Mary Lewis, daughter of a prominent family, plan to marry. Her parents break up the liaison when they learn privately that Gardiner, Sr., will lose his fortune in the speculation. They had kept secret the loss of their own money, and plan to secure for Mary a husband who can support them, too. They marry her to

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[39] Ibid., author's preface.

Tom Paddleford, a wealthy, unattractive brute. Jim throws himself into his law practice to forget and begins to court Emeline Butterfield, who is beautiful, upright, and intelligent, but poor. She works as housekeeper for the Burts. A false scandal concerning her and her employer is spread, and Jim deserts her. She leaves town and finds a decent life in Chicago. Paddleford also loses his fortune in the speculation and begins beating Mary furiously. Jim intervenes; following her divorce, he and Mary marry. Jim eventually realizes that Emeline is far the superior of the two women, but it is too late.

The Demagogue, strongest of the three novels, treats the career of Caleb Mason. Subtitled, "A Political Novel," it is a treatise on political patronage and the ensuing corruption it promotes. Mason is endowed with quick wits and a strong desire to escape the poverty into which he was born, for his is the lowest, meanest, and most drunken family in town. At the age of ten, he decides he must have an education and becomes the first Mason to go to school. As he shows progress and spirit, Sarah Dunlap, only child of the most prominent farmer in the community, befriends him. Caleb stages a fake accident in order to rescue Sarah and thereby gain her father's gratitude. The family takes the boy in, and he is raised as their son. He attends the academy, becomes a newspaper reporter, studies law, passes the bar, and is tacitly engaged to Sarah. The brilliant future he should have had is ruined because Caleb has an overly inflated idea of the importance of money, and, being extremely ambitious and desirous of a swift rise to prominence, he chooses to gain it through dishonest means.

Mr. Dunlap has appointed Caleb executor of his estate. The old man become critically, but not fatally, ill. Caleb is left to attend him during the night. He deliberately fails to give Dunlap his medicine, and Dunlap dies. Dr. Blanchard suspects this, but he has no proof of intent. Caleb steals and shreds the receipt he had given Dunlap for cash and bonds that should have gone to Sarah. Then he jilts her and marries Helen Harvey for her family's political influence. He is elected state representative, and then congressman, through corrupt machine politics.

Meanwhile Gleason, his former law student, had spent years piecing the shreded receipt back together. He and Sarah, whom he eventually marries, and Dr. Blanchard, Helen's jilted fiancée, form a partnership to expose Mason. Their efforts help erode the machine's strength. Helen leaves Mason, joins Blanchard and the Gleasons, and Mason is defeated in his bid for re-nomination. Facing sure prosecution for his crime, Mason commits suicide. His widow marries Blanchard.

The moral in both novels is that greed and dishonesty inevitably bring defeat; honesty and virtue will triumph in their own modest way. Both novels are plausible and their major characters have a vitality not found in "Strong Heart and Steady Hand" or in Locke's shorter fiction. All three novels benefit from Locke's talent for conveying local color and creating realistic settings. Their major flaw is their author's inability to allow his story to tell itself. Just as the reader is becoming enveloped in the plot, Locke intrudes with overt moralizing and destroys the narrative flow.

Locke also has two plays on record with the U. S. Copyright Office. He failed, however, to submit scripts, and no copies are available today. Inflation, or The X's of the X Roads (1876), was not widely produced; possibly it played only once. James A. Garfield recorded a very low opinion of it in his diary.[40] Probably the play was drawn on the Nasby pamphlet, Inflation at the Cross Roads, which opposes the introduction of paper money. These letters, as propaganda, have some merit, but lack many of the elements necessary for good theater. In all genres there are works which are excellent in their original form but will not profit from adaptation. Nasby's racious burlesque is better imagined than dramatized.

The second play, the Widow Bedott (1879) drawn from Frances Whitcher's Widow Bedott Papers, was considered an excellent adaptation by the critics of the day. The Annals of the New York Stage records its success in many different theaters from 1879 to 1882.[41] The play was humorous rather than serious and has many similarities to the sketches Locke wrote before Nasby was created.

Hannah Jane, a narrative verse, was published in book form in 1882.[42] Ornately bound and illustrated with sixteen line drawings, it consists of twenty-nine, four-line stanzas of maudlin sentiment. The narrator, a man of means, reflects on his marriage. He has tired of

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[40]Quoted in Theodore Clarke Smith, The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield, Vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 751.

[41]George Clinton Densmore Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, Vol. 11 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 42.

[42]David Ross Locke, Hannah Jane (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1882).

his homey wife, and has begun to turn his attentions elsewhere, when he remembers all the sacrifices she has made to enable him to get ahead. Overcome with remorse, he promises eternal fidelity. Written in iambic heptameter couplets which produce a sing-song effect, the verse is awkward. It was, however, typical of that period's popular verse. Locke used it as an encore to his lectures, and it became almost as popular as "Cussid Be Canaan."

Locke was also engaged in magazine publishing. In 1869, he became one of the principal backers of the Reverend Francis Ellingwood Abbot's The Index, a free religion publication. Frank Luther Mott wrote of this magazine:

> It was begun at Toledo, Ohio, where Abbot was minister of an "independent" society. David R. Locke, far better known as "Petroleum V. Nasby," was a member of Abbot's congregation, and not only suggested the paper but advanced the money for the first year or two of its publication. The Index printed contributions from many of the writers for The Radical [another Free Religious Association publication of broad scope], though its tone was not always so lofty or its attitudes so philosophical.[43]

Harrison sets Locke's financial contribution at $3,000.00 the first year,[44] plus expertise. Locke was the initial publisher; and The Index was, for the first eighteen months of its life, printed on Blade Printing Company presses. Thereafter, Locke became a stockholder only. He had been raised a Methodist, but the social reform ideas of the Free Religionists were more akin to his temperament. The Index was published from 1870 to 1886, a remarkably long life for magazines in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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[43] Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1865-1885, p. 78.

[44] Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 208.

Locke's National Monthly was not blessed with such longevity. Founded in December of 1872, and suspended four years later, it was a magazine aimed at the whole family. In his newspapers Locke generally promised to provide wholesome, entertaining, and uplifting literature. Locke's National Monthly, subtitled, "A Magazine of American and Foreign Literature," was an expansion of this promise. It contained original material in all literary genres, serialized novels, essays, and some items reprinted from other sources. Locke wrote much of the material himself, either under his own name or one of his many pennames. In writing style and content, these pieces were equal to the majority of work done in their respective genres. In other words, they were not of any lasting literary merit. Only Abou Ben Adhem, which first appeared in this forum, is still of interest.

The Blade Press also did some book printing. Probably the most influential work to come from that press was John McElroy's Andersonville: A Story of Rebel Military Prisons.[45] In his author's preface, McElroy states that he wrote the book at Locke's suggestion.[46] This book was one of a number of post-war publications accused of "waving the bloody shirt" by fanning the hatreds left from the war. Its horrible details of prison life make uncomfortable reading even now.

Locke also occasionally contributed articles to other magazines. Usually these contributions took the form of one or more Nasby letters.

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[45]John McElroy, Andersonville: A Story of Rebel Military Prisons (Toledo: D. R. Locke, 1879).

[46]Ibid., p. xiv.

Typical of the forums in which his work appeared was the first Nast Almanac, published in 1871, ". . . an amusing booklet of the months, to which Mark Twain, Josh Billings, Nasby, and most of the 'funny men' of the time contributed."[47] According to Albert Bigelow Paine, Locke and Nast first met in 1867,

> . . . with great rejoicing and became good friends. The artist subsequently made a drawing of their first meeting, and was the illustrator of two of Nasby's books--Swingin' Round the Cirkle and Ekkoes from Kentucky. "Nast and Nasby" made an attractive advertising phrase which the publisher used with telling effect.[48]

Nast also illustrated The Struggles. Many artists attempted to draw Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby. Only Nast succeeded in pleasing Locke.

The record of Locke's literary output is complete with his five hymns. One of these, "Come Unto Me," was sung at his funeral on February 15, 1888.[49]

No summary of works can do justice to such an energetic and prolific writer. David Ross Locke accomplished more in fifty-four years than many people do in much longer lifetimes. Yet if one accomplishment must be singled out for attention, that one must be Nasby. The next chapter is devoted to the character who so often spoke for, and finally overshadowed, his creator.

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[47]Albert Bigelow Paine, Th. Nast, His Period and His Pictures (New York: Macmillian Co., 1904), p. 202.

[48]Ibid., p. 114.

[49]Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 107.

CHAPTER II

PETROLEUM VESUVIUS NASBY

Locke's fame rests on Nasby. Contemporary scholars, if they mention Locke at all, refer to him in this connection, giving, therefore, an incomplete or inaccurate picture of the man. Histories of American public address list him among lecture stars, usually with the humorists. Journalism histories mention the prominence of the Blade. Some scholars of literature treat his work with that of the period's humorists. Civil War historians mention Locke's connection with Lincoln, who greatly admired Locke's work. Always he is referred to as Nasby; usually, references are parenthetic, oblique, or inaccurate. Aside from the previously mentioned biographies done by Harrison and Austin and a very few scholarly articles on his novels and his role as an editor, the occasional oblique references to Nasby constitute all the fame the twentieth century gives to David Ross Locke.

Locke may have known this would happen. In a typical "Prefis, or Interductry Chapter," he has Nasby say,

> Wat posterity will say I don't know; neither do I care. I ain't labrin for posterity; . . . Posterity may assign me a niche in the temple of massive intellex, or may not; it's all one to the subscriber. I woodn't give a ten-cent postal currency for wat the next generashen will do for me. It's this generashen I'm goin for.[50]

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[50] Locke, Ekkoes from Kentucky, author's preface.

Yet Locke was not completely in earnest in these remarks. Cyril Clemens records this incident which occurred late in Locke's life:

> One day he was sitting in the office of the Toledo Blade, busily engaged upon an editorial, when a tall, gaunt countryman appeared in the doorway and stood looking at him, saying nothing. Locke was working without coat or vest as it was a hot, sultry August afternoon, the perspiration simply rolling down his face. Looking up he saw the man in the doorway and asked somewhat gruffly, "What do you want?" The farmer replied, "Nothing in particular, I just wanted to see Nasby."
>
> The heat and the fact that he was greatly overworked all tended to make Locke infuriated, and he replied:
>
> "Well, look at him. God, yes, look at him! look at him!"
>
> When the visitor had retreated with great precipitation, Locke turned to his son Robinson and remarked:
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> "I wish to God that I had never heard of that Nasby stuff. Here I am a man who has accomplished things. See the business blocks I have built. Look at the great paper I have made. See the serious books I have written. Yet on account of that damned Nasby stuff every hayseed in the country feels he has a right to step up and holler, 'Hello Nasby'."[51]

Even if he did come to hate Nasby, Locke never deserted him. Although the frequency of the Nasby letters gradually decreased after the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, Locke continued to write them throughout the remainder of his life.[52] If he had abandoned Nasby, Locke would have lost a very important and influential forum. And without Nasby, the other aspects of Locke's career would have improved far more slowly; certainly he would never have become a lyceum star.

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[51] Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 126.

[52] The last Nasby letter, which appeared in the Blade on December 26, 1887, deals with reducing the treasury surplus.

Birth of Nasby

The first Nasby letter, "The Secession of Wingert's Corners," appeared in the Hancock Jeffersonian on April 25, 1862. The character changed very little thereafter. His growing pains had been accomplished in other sketches, under other pennames used by Locke.

Probably he got his start in Plymouth, Ohio, in the guise of "J. Augustus Sniggs," who wrote of his difficulties in courtship and marriage. Sniggs' third letter to the editor described the personal effects a recent election had produced upon him.[53] One of Sniggs' friends had won an election bet, which he proposed to liquefy in the company of Sniggs and two other worthies. Bacchus would have applauded the drunken revel which followed; the lengthy account of destruction, both physical and moral, makes hilarious reading. The piece is pure light humor and broad slapstick, with a touch of irony. Sniggs is far more fluent and better educated than Nasby, but two elements of his letter directly foreshadow Nasby: first, Sniggs spells the names of his friends phonetically; second, Sniggs reveals far more of himself than he realizes. Nasby uses non-standard spelling far more widely, but his problem of intending to make one point while unwittingly making another is Sniggs', exactly.

Sniggs' drunken revel is possibly an exaggeration of one of Locke's own exploits since Locke often drew from personal experience. Another Sniggs episode deals with his difficulty in managing a cow given him

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[53]This letter is reproduced in full in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, pp. 34-37.

by his mother-in-law. He recounted his troubles to a brother-in-law, who admonished him to give it up. That cow, the brother-in-law reported, had been given to each new son-in-law in succession, and none of them had been able to keep it a week before giving it back to the old lady. Roeliff Brinkerhoff, Locke's partner in the Mansfield Herald, thought the Sniggs sketches the funniest things Locke ever wrote.[54] He advised Locke to reprint them. When Brinkerhoff went back to his copy of the Herald's files, he found those letters had been cut out. This, Brinkerhoff supposed, supported the general theory that Sniggs' escapades revealed too much of Locke's in-laws' affairs to suit the family and that they had ordered these letters suppressed. Anyone who reads Locke extensively will realize that he frequently reused or reworked popular material. That Sniggs did not reappear supports Brinkerhoff's theory.

On December 24, 1857, the next developmental phase was accomplished with a letter from an "unlearnt preacher."[55] The preacher used phonetic spelling and spoke in the religious rhythms Nasby was prone to use, but this piece was written entirely in fun, while Nasby's letters were always intended to make a point.

Study of Locke confirms Harrison's belief that

> Locke's penchant for the imaginative knew no bounds. He was as likely to give it free rein in reporting the news as he was in

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[54]Roeliff Brinkerhoff, Recollections of a Lifetime (Cincinnati: Robert Clark Co., 1900), pp. 95-98.

[55]Portions of this letter are reproduced in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 70.

> writing fiction or satire. Or perhaps he sometimes only used news events as pegs on which to hang his flights of fancy.[56]

A survey of Locke's newspapers shows that most editions contain some bit of wise-cracking, even if it be nothing more than a small filler. In Bucyrus, Locke's jibes began to show signs of Nasby's tactics of overt needling of the opposition. Especially during elections Locke took gleeful potshots at the Democrats and at his rival newspaper, The Forum. Sometimes these jibes were in verse; Nasby would later pen an occasional rhyme or "sonnit."

Sarcastic treatments of the material which would compose the first two Nasby letters appeared in the Bucyrus Journal of 1860, over a year before the first letter bearing Nasby's signature would be printed. The overblown fear of black equality, which was in reality a fear of black supremacy, and the secession of a governmental unit because of fancied persecution by the larger body were the topics. With these editorials, the last component to be embodied in Nasby had appeared. All that remained to be done was to join them together.

How was this union accomplished? Locke himself explains in an interview given to a reporter in 1871:

> Reporter: Is this character of Nasby simply a brain-child?
> Locke: Yes; I don't believe he ever existed in flesh and blood.
> Reporter: When did you first conceive the idea?
> Locke: In 1861 I was in Hancock County, Ohio. I had determined upon a series of letters the year previous. It was in the spring of 1861 that I wrote my first letter. The subject was secession, and I worked up a mock article about the secession of Crawford

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[56]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 68.

> County, Ohio. It was in type when the first battle of Bull Run occurred. I didn't think it advisable then, the whole country being in mourning, to publish it, and held the letter till fall. About that time my second letter was written. All the Border States democracy were howling about the great influx of negroes which the war would cause. They said they wouldn't work, and must go to the poor-houses or jails, and thus be a burden to the community. There was one fellow, named Fleener, who lived in the town of Findlay. He didn't work himself, and his family were supported by the township, and yet he howled the loudest of them all. I met him one day with a petition against the negroes, which he was getting signed, and made it the basis of a letter, in which I published Mr. Fleener's name. I produced this in the Hancock Jeffersonian, which I was running at the time. It had a sudden and great popularity all over the country, and it was in this gradual manner that Mr. Nasby was born. Poor Fleener, I think he died in one hundred days' service, from inducing gangrene by scratching a sore foot with a nail in order to avoid duty.[57]

Either the reporter or Locke erred in stating the date of publication of the first letter as the fall of 1871. Otherwise, this is substantially the same account Locke generally gave when asked about the birth of Nasby.

Slight differences in one account are worth noting because they reveal a bit more about Locke's creative processes. Emily Bouton, Blade ladies department editor and close friend of the Locke family, gives this version in an article she wrote for the Blade:

> About the time the war broke out, I [Locke] heard of a paper being circulated for signatures, petitioning the Legislature to prohibit negroes from coming into the state, and asking for legislation to remove all the colored population the state then contained. What was known as Copperheadism was an important element in the state political history of the time.

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[57] From an interview published in the Newark (New Jersey) Courier, November, 1871. Reprinted in Frederic Hudson, Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1873), pp. 693-94.

> I was then, as now, a Republican, and the petition was not brought to me. I heard of it, and hearing also that it was being circulated by a shiftless, worthless fellow, named Levi Fleener,--whose parents, by the way, were both in the almshouse as county charges,--I made up my mind to see that paper. The satire of the situation struck me at once. The few negroes we had in Findlay were hard-working, law-abiding men, and to remove them and leave Levi was a preposterous outrage upon the fitness of things.
>
> One night, in a drug store, where people gather in country towns, I met Levi. I saw a paper in his pocket, and, as I knew the fellow never read a newspaper at all, I seized it as the petition. And so it was. I read it aloud with comment, and as I read, interpolating my own remarks, I felt the afflatus of the situation and made up my mind to write the Nasby letters.[58] That week I published the first one.

There are two primary differences in these very similar accounts: tone and timing. The first interview reveals the reflective, deliberative Locke. Probably he did delay printing the first true Nasby letter out of respect for the dead at Bull Run. Such actions, however, were not typical of him. He was much more likely to react as he indicates in the second account, to strike in the heat of the moment. Any good newspaper staffer knows that news is printed immediately; history is printed later. The first version of the letter, "Negro Emancipation," specifically named Fleener. Locke wanted the people of Findlay to react against Fleener's petition; obviously, then, he had to protest against that petition while it was being circulated. Locke was a spontaneous writer who often set the Nasby letters directly into type without bothering to write guiding copy.[59] He would have written the

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[58]Quoted in Emily S. Bouton, "David Ross Locke," Toledo Daily Blade, 15 February 1888, p. 4.

[59]Jack Clifford Ransome, "David Ross Locke, Civil War Propagandist," Northwest Ohio Quarterly 20 (January 1948): 9.

letter energetically and spontaneously, immediately after confronting Fleener, as indicated by the tone of the version given by Bouton.

The difference in timing concerns the actual development of the Nasby character. Looking back, Locke probably realized that he had been for years writing stories and features which contained elements of Nasby, hence his reference to the "gradual manner" in which Nasby was born. The actual process of putting these elements together into a consistent character, however, was probably spontaneous also. Locke indicates as much when he speaks of "the afflatus of the situation." There is no record that he deliberately planned to create the character specifically for use as a satiric propaganda tool. Rather, he wrote the first two Nasby letters to serve a particular purpose at that point in time, just as he had written the Sniggs letters and the letter from the unlearnt preacher. If Nasby had not proven so popular, he probably would have been dropped after a few letters, just as Sniggs and the preacher were dropped.

The lack of a clear explanation of the derivation of the penname substantiates the spontaneous creation theory. The explanation most frequently quoted is that given by Robinson Locke to Melville D. Landon in 1883:

> My father's nom de plume I hardly think has any particular significance. The word "Nasby" was coined probably from a remembrance of the battle of Naseby. About the time the Nasby letters were commenced in the Toledo Blade, the petroleum excitement was raging in Pennsylvania, and Vesuvius was used for euphony. Father never gave any other explanation of this pseudonym than the above.[60]

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[60] Quoted in Landon, Kings of the Platform and Pulpit, p. 99.

Harrison offers another version of the christening:

> One account has it that, not long after the fighting had begun, Locke attended the funeral of a union soldier at Wingert's Corners and that, in the course of prayer, a German minister named Peter Vail asked God "to have mercy on another victim of this Goddamned abolition war." According to this same account, Peter Vail became Petroleum Vail (though there is no trace of him in the Journal during Locke's years as editor), and finally Petroleum V. Nasby, by addition of the name of a "quaint, humorous and original character who lived near Benton, Crawford County, named Nasby Wilcox."[61]

Such speculation is interesting, but as is often the case with explanations formed after an event has occurred, they may or may not be valid. Given the vogue for outlandish pennames during the period and Locke's penchant for creating these names, his motivations for adopting something out of the ordinary are obvious. The name may well have emerged as the distilled product of the subconscious interaction of several stimuli. Probably the account given by Robinson Locke is most nearly correct. Landon had asked about the derivation of the pen-name because he intended to include Locke's work in a book he was writing. Undoubtedly Locke approved Rob's version of the christening before it was given to Landon.

The first piece signed by Nasby, "Letter from a Straight Democrat," appeared in the Jeffersonian on April 25, 1862. This letter was subsequently reworked and retitled, "Negro Emigration."[62] On May 2, the second installment, "Another Letter from P. V. N.," was printed. This

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[61]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 77.

[62]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 41-42.

letter later became "The Secession of Wingert's Corners."[63] Both letters are included in several volumes of the letters, and are printed in the reverse order, "Secession" preceding "Negro Emigration." The early letters specifically named local places and citizens and gave as much attention to local matters as to national ones. Therefore they created no immediate wide sensation. Locke decided to help his creation along by marking the letters in the copies of the Jeffersonian he contributed to the exchange system. Most of the period's humorists got their starts in this manner. Many of the editors who used the letters did not credit their author; but the famous editor, Murat Halstead, at that time with the Cincinnati Commercial, not only credited Locke, he liked Nasby so much that he also offered Locke $20.00 for each subsequent letter Locke could provide. "It was simply boundless prosperity to me," Locke later declared. "I had never hoped, even in my wildest dreams, to possess so much money, and that's the way I got my start in life as Petroleum V. Nasby."[64] Halstead, then, was responsible for insuring the continuance of Nasby. Locke used the character to convey serious messages, but without the financial benefits Nasby presented, Locke might well have abandoned him in favor of another mouthpiece.

Nasby, Superbigot

Who was Nasby? Locke once described him as "a sort of nickle-plated son of a bitch."[65] He was an arch stereotype. He has roughly

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[63] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[64] Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 110.

[65] Ibid., p. 98.

the dimensions and depth of character development as a contemporary comic strip character. He is never delineated as a human being with complex motivations. Nasby is known completely by his reactions to situations; he is purely the creature of convenience. Outrageously self-serving, his one aim is to secure what he considers the necessities of life at a minimum of labor, preferably labor done by someone else. A position where he may live on government graft, the post office of his dreams, unlimited whiskey, boon companions, and someone lower than himself, the "nigger," to kick, these things form Nasby's utopia. No act which will further his purposes is too base for Nasby. He is thoroughly disgusting, but completely honest about his motivations and his own character. For example, he records having gone to President Andrew Jackson to ask for a position in the government. After Jackson had read his application, Nasby pushed for acceptance:

> "Can't yoo make yoose uv sich a man ez me?" sez I, inquirinly.
> "Certinly," sez he; "I kin and alluz hev. Its sich ez yoo I use to beet the whigs with, and I am continyooally astonished to see how much work I accomplish with sich dirty tools. My dear sir," sez he, pintin to the door, "when I realize how many sich cusses ez yoo there is, and how cheap they kin be bought up, I really tremble for the Republic."
> I didn't get the office I wantid.[66]

Nasby communicates such episodes to the world through his letters to the editor, yet he writes as though addressing only Democrats of his own stripe, thus the complete candidness which he could not use in dealing with weak members of his own party or with Republicans. Not one letter

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[66]Locke, Swingin Round the Cirkle, p. 34.

in the entire series, a remarkable effort covering more than twenty-five years, from April 25, 1862, to December 26, 1887, shows any change in Nasby's attitude, policies, or goals.

Nasby himself best tells the story of his life:

> I hev bin in the Apossel biznis more extensively than any man sence the time uv Paul. First I established a church uv Democrats in a little oasis I diskivered in the Ablishn State uv Ohio, to wit, at Wingert's Corners, where ther wuz four groceries, but nary church or skool-house within four miles, and whose polulashen wuz unanimously Dimocratic, the grocery keepers hevin mortgages on all the land around em . . .[67]

Nasby left Wingert's Corners for Canada in order to evade the draft. Caught when returning to America, he was impressed into the army, only to desert to a Southern regiment, the "Loosianer Pelicans," at his first opportunity. Finding life worse with the Confederates than with the "Linkin Hirelings," he deserted once more and returned to Wingert's Corners and his parishioners. His church was originally named "The Church uv St. Vallandigum," after the arch Copperhead Clement L. Vallandigham. When the Copperheads repudiated Vallandigham, the name became "The Church uv the Slawtered Innocents." Finally, when the Copperheads changed their policies after Southern defeat became certain, the parish was rechristened, "The Church uv the Noo Dispensashun." Nasby believed in capitalizing on the events of the moment.

With Lincoln's re-election in 1864, Nasby found Ohio uncomfortable and moved to New Jersey, the only state in the North which produced a Democratic majority in that election. There, at Saint's Rest, he founded

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[67]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 9.

another church and life was as pleasant for him as it had been in Wingert's Corners until the fall of 1865. Then

> . . . that State got ornery and cussid, and went Ablishn, and agin, like the wandrin Jew, I wuz forced to pull up, and wend my weary way to Kentucky, where, at Confedrit X Roads, I hoped to spend the few remainin years uv my life. I wuz happy and contented. Under the administrashen uv President Johnson, upon whose head blessins, I wuz livin in the enjoyment uv that end uv the hopes uv all Democrats, a Post Office, with four well-regulated groceries within a stun's throw, and a distillery ornamentin the landscape only a quarter uv a mile from where I rite these lines, with the ruins uv a burnt nigger schoolhouse within site uv my winder. I wantid nothin more.[68]

During this blissful period of his existence, Nasby frequently went to Washington to advise the President; indeed, he became Johnson's personal chaplain. Naturally, then, when Grant was elected, Nasby was dismissed as Postmaster for the X Roads. He migrated to another Democratic stronghold, the predominantly Irish Sixth Ward of New York City, where he operated the "Harp uv Erin S'loon." Because he drank up twenty-five per cent of the stock and his customers refused to pay their bills for the remainder, this venture failed.

Nasby decided to return to the X Roads. He explains why this spot in Kentucky was the most suitable place for him:

> Massychoosits ideas can't penetrate us here. The aristocracy uv this seckshun bleeve in freedom uv speech, but they desire to exercise a supervision over it, that they may not be led astray. They bleeve they'r rite, and for fear they'd be forced to change their minds, whenever they git into argument with anybody, ef the individooal gits the better uv them, they to-wunst shoot him ez a disturber. Hence Massychoosits can't disturb us here; the populashen is unanimously Democratic, and bids fair to continyoo so.[69]

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[68] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[69] Ibid., p. 10.

Except for occasional journeys, Nasby did remain at the X Roads. His letters, however, decreased in frequency after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment; "nigger ekality" broke his heart.

The best of the letters, certainly the most important ones, cover the period from Nasby's birth in 1862 through 1869. Locke worked for the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment; Nasby was born of that fight. In Austin's opinion, Nasby was also a release for the darker side of Locke's own personality. Nasby, he feels, was Locke's alter ego. He ". . . was what David Ross Locke might have been had he not possessed a gnawing conscience."[70]

Several of Locke's contemporaries testify to the similarities between character and creator. Probably the best description of Locke is that furnished by Mark Twain to the readers of the Alta California:

> Nasby [Locke] is about 35 years old. He is compact, solid, heavy. He weighs a hundred and seventy or eighty, perhaps. There is nothing of a dainty look about him, but on the contrary, he is as burly and vigorous as a theatrical blacksmith. His energy is invincible. After traveling all day and lecturing every night for months together, he was as fresh as ever. His attire is unfashionable, but he cares nothing for that. It does not fit, but that does not concern him. He is not graceful on the stage, but that does not distress him. He is not as handsome as I am, but more picturesque.[71]

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[70]Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 28.

[71]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, "Letter from 'Mark Twain'," Alta California, 25 July 1869. Reprinted in The Twainian 8 (May-June 1949): 5. Twain and Locke were great friends and frequently swapped barbs. In his Autobiography (Vol. 2, p. 71), Twain defended himself against reports that he was not particularly handsome: "That lie began its course on the Pacific coast in 1864 and it likened me in personal appearance to Petroleum V. Nasby. . . . For twenty-five years afterward, no critic could furnish a description of me without fetching in Nasby to help out my portrait. I knew Nasby well and he was a good fellow, but in my life I have not felt malignantly enough about any more

G. W. Cable, who was repulsed by Locke, described him as "a big man with disheveled hair, knotted forehead, heavy middle and dowdy dress. An easy talker, a coarse man of the harder world, successful and unsatisfied."[72] Cable's indictment cannot be taken at face value. Cable was a Southern aristocrat who wrote romantic novels. He would have been as out of place in Locke's world of city newspapers as Locke would have been in Cable's more genteel environment. Cable also found the easy going Mark Twain vulgar and uncouth, much to Twain's delight.

But Cable was correct in describing Locke as combatative and unsatisfied. Rowell, himself an advertising agent, interpreted these same characteristics in a different light:

> If there was ever a man more keen in retort, or more absolute in his power to make a rejoinder that left nothing whatever that the opponent could answer back, Locke was the man. I wonder how many stories of his and about him I have listened to; and I can hardly recall one that will not make me laugh, even when I am not in good spirits.[73]

Locke's gregarious, social nature was an advantage to him in building his newspaper and business ventures. The dissatisfaction mentioned by Cable was also an advantage to Locke, for he channeled it positively into his work and his reform campaigns. He was, like Nasby, fond of whiskey and boon companions. Only the competitiveness and dissatisfaction, coupled with the gnawing conscience mentioned by Austin, saved Locke from being much more like Nasby.

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than three persons to charge these persons with resembling Nasby. It hurts me to the heart, these things."

[72]Paul Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1960; reprint ed., Gloucester Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966), p. 219.

[73]Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent, p. 258.

Nasby as Satire

Locke may have resembled Nasby physically, and they shared a few minor vices, but on the whole Locke viewed his creation as a conscious attempt at satire. As he once told Melville Landon,

> I can kill more error by exaggerating vice than by abusing it. In all my writings I have not said one unkind work about any people or party. I have simply exaggerated errors in politics, love and religion, until the people saw these errors and rose up against them. The humorist would describe "Deeken Pogram" and "Joe Biggler," of the "Confedrit X Roads," just as they are. That would have caused laughter; but I exaggered these characters, as Cervantes exaggerated Don Quixote, and made them ridiculous.[74]

Nasby could be considered the forerunner of the 1970's television character, Archie Bunker, superbigot. These two stand together as prime examples of the rhetoric of humor and indirection. This approach, as used by Locke, has Nasby, the vehicle, espousing principles and actions which are exactly opposite Locke's true beliefs. Nasby carries his ideas to their farthest logical extension where they become ridiculous, grotesque, and repulsive. As has been previously mentioned, Locke was always very careful to leave no opportunity for the reader or auditor to misinterpret his messages. Only when writing pieces which he considered primarily humorous, such as the Sniggs letters and the Abou Ben Adhem sketches, did Locke fail to insert his moral obtrusively. Most of his other works were blatant attempts to persuade his audiences to adopt his points of view. The creation of an archetype in Nasby was part of Locke's consistent pattern; thoughout his life, Locke preferred to paint his pictures in blacks and whites, relying on the contrast to reinforce

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[74]Quoted in Landon, Kings of the Platform and Pulpit, p. 98.

his points. His remarks to Landon demonstrate his belief that such exaggeration was an effective persuasive tactic.

While Locke's assumption is logical, and the tactic is probably effective with sympathetic and neutral audiences, contemporary research shows that people who are prejudiced against a persuader's position evade anti-prejudice messages.[75] This point has been documented through studies of the "Mr. Biggott" cartoon campaign. "Mr. Biggott" cartoons depicted racial and minority group slurs. The producers of these cartoons intended that

> . . . the prejudiced reader would perceive that Mr. Biggott's ideas were similar to his own; that Mr. Biggott was an absurd character; that it was absurd to have such ideas--that to have such ideas made one as ridiculous as Mr. Biggott. He would, then, as the final stage in this process, presumably reject his own prejudice, in order to avoid identification with Mr. Biggott.[76]

The results of this study did not verify this hypothesis. Prejudiced subjects who initially understood the cartoons and grasped the absurdity of the ideas ". . . went to such lengths to extricate themselves from their identification with Mr. Biggott that in the end they misunderstood the point of the cartoon."[77] This misunderstanding occurs in several ways. The subject may distort the information in order to draw a different point from the cartoon, or he may make the message invalid by considering it to be "just a story," or he may change the frame of

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[75]Eunice Cooper and Marie Jahoda, "The Evasion of Propaganda: How Prejudiced People Respond to Anti-Prejudice Propaganda," Journal of Psychology 23 (January 1947): 15-25.

[76]Ibid., p. 17.

[77]Ibid. Emphasis is Cooper and Jahoda's.

reference in the story in order to make it conform with his own frame of reference.

What does this mean in terms of Nasby's effectiveness as a propaganda tool? The Copperhead viewpoint was most antithetical to Locke's position. The notion of selective perception which states that prejudiced people simply avoid ideas which are contrary to their own implies that many Copperheads, those who recognized Nasby for what he really was, did not read the letters. Those who did come into contact with the letters may have drawn different points because of information distortion. For example, they may have decided that Nasby's views were correct, and that his neighbors and not his ideas were the source of his difficulties. Other Copperheads might have perceived the letters as stories written for amusement, which might account in part for Locke's reputation as a humorist. Both these possibilities are speculative and cannot be documented, but the third possibility, the chance that frame of reference could have been distorted, is supported by an account furnished by James Burton Pond:

> One meeting of the faithful [county Democrats] framed a resolution commending the fidelity to Democratic principles shown in the Nasby Letters, but urging Mr. Nasby, for the sake of policy, not to be so outspoken. The sarcasm was so broad that it is difficult, if one reads them today for the first time, to understand how the most illiterate partisans could mistake them. But at a time when men's passions were red hot, and their prejudices volcanic, [the letters] were universally applauded by the upholders of the Union.[78]

These county Democrats distorted frame of reference by believing that Nasby existed in flesh and blood. He was their compatriot because he

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[78]Pond, Eccentricities of Genius, pp. 192-93.

said and did the same things they said and did. The troubles Nasby experienced in the letters were the same abuses they suffered for their beliefs. They accepted Nasby as one of their own because they ignored the ridicule. Pond's account bears out one of the implications of the "Mr. Biggott" study:

> Given the tendency [of prejudiced people] to evade opposition propaganda, evasion is facilitated by making the message subtle or satirical. However, simplifying the message may lessen its emotional impact. . . . the more subtle--and therefore the more easily distorted and misunderstood--forms may be appropriate for neutrals and for inactive sympathizers of the anti-prejudice message . . and the impact of the item may make stronger supporters of them.[79]

No one can indict the Nasby letters for being overly subtle. The letters read today can seem overly harsh and violent. The repeated references to "burnt out nigger skoolhouses" and the penchant for "hangin niggers to celebrat Dimekratic victrys" are offensive unless considered in light of their purpose and period, and the red hot passions and volcanic prejudices mentioned by Pond. Locke's efforts cannot be faulted because contemporary research demonstrates that his approach would not have been persuasive with the Copperheads. Probably no persuasive attempt would have been effective with that group because their attitudes were the exact opposite of Locke's and because the country was at war. As long as the South remained in the war, the Copperheads' beliefs were reinforced by their identification with the Southern effort. Only after Southern defeat became sure were these people vulnerable to persuasion. Locke was on safe ground in using Nasby to reinforce Unionist beliefs and to sway the uncommitted.

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[79]Copper and Jahoda, "The Evasion of Propaganda," p. 21.

Unionists applauded Nasby; they needed him. As Cyril Clemens points out:

> Before Nasby appeared upon the scene, the South was an exceedingly indefinite enemy. What is the best way of dealing with an enemy? . . . The best effect can be achieved by ridicule and satire. . . .
>
> Nasby made the enemy a definite person for the Federal soldier.[80]

The English fought "Bony" (Napoleon Bonaparte); the American colonists fought the "Redcoat"; in World War I, the Allies fought the "Hun." In the American Civil War, the Union soldiers fought the "Nasbys" of the South. These soldiers could hate Nasby, and, hating him, lash out against him. Without a definite target to fight against, these soldiers might have given up in the midst of their hardships. But Nasby's letters came weekly to remind them of the reasons for their struggle. Northern readers looked forward to the Nasby letters and read them as eagerly as they read battle accounts. Mott feels that Nasby bolstered Northern determination; "perhaps the most effective argument against the Copperhead was that which made him ridiculous by exaggerating his defects and vices."[81] Ransome agrees and amplifies:

> Locke's misrepresentation of the Democrats served the purpose of shifting attention from depressing Union defeats to the fifth column. Northern Democrats on the whole supported and fought in the war, but Nasby conveniently classified all the fence-sitters and the party itself as being opposed to racial equality, racial emigration, and racial amalgamation. It is probable that most Republicans who enjoyed Nasby did not do so because of a feeling

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[80] Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 37-38.

[81] Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 393.

> of brotherhood for the Negro. Locke must have realized that his satires applied equally well to members of his own party in many respects, but it was politically opportune to make the Democracy the scrapegoat.[82]

While no evidence exists to prove that Nasby was an effective persuasive tool in Locke's fight to convert at least a part of the opposition to the Republican cause, it is probably safe to speculate that many of the uncommitted members of Locke's audience reconsidered their positions in light of the arguments advanced through the Nasby letters. Without doubt, Nasby served to reinforce the determination of the Union forces and to cement the young Republican Party.

The Mid-Nineteenth Century Humorists and Satirists

Nasby was a reflection of his era and his environment, a phenomenon that might not have occurred in another period. Attention to the development of American humor during the mid-nineteenth century shows that, while Locke's satiric and persuasive purposes were unusual, Nasby's rise to popularity was not, and goes far to explain why Locke is often mislabeled as a humorist.

Literary historian and critic Fred Pattee explains that

> . . . until the Civil War period opened there had been no school of distinctly American humorists, original and nation-wide. The production had been sporadic and provincial, and it had been read by small circles. The most of it could be traced to older prototypes" Hood, Thackeray, Lamb, Douglas Jerrold, Dickens.[83]

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[82] Ransome, "David Ross Locke, Civil War Propagandist," p. 10.

[83] Fred Lewis Pattee, A History of American Literature Since 1870 (New York: Century Co., 1917), p. 25.

Before the war, humorous literature was not quite respectable in America. Humorous writers were generally embarrassed by their activities and were often ashamed to admit that a particular character was their creation. The older, settled parts of the country emulated Europe in literary tastes and fashions, and frowned upon unrefined levity.

But the wilder regions were developing a flavor of their own, a new national spirit, and with it a new style of humor. This humor grew from the primitive conditions of life near the Mississippi, on the California coast, and, later, in the camps of the Civil War. Pattee describes the new school of humorists as ". . . uncolleged for the most part, untrained by books, fresh, joyous, extravagant in its bursting young life--the first voice of the new era."[84] Constance Rourke suggests that the rise of the comic figure was the natural result of the booming growth of the West, a child with no tradition to give it refinement. This new school had a regional flavor attached to no particular region because the mobility of the writers blended to become the American type.[85]

The chief architects of the new school--Locke, Mark Twain, Eli Perkins, Orpheus C. Kerr, Artemus Ward, and cartoonist Thomas Nast--were all born in the eight-year period from 1833 to 1841. In a sense

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[84]Ibid., p. 26.

[85]For discussion of the development of a distinctly American school of humor, see Constance Rourke, American Humor (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1931).

they grew up together since, according to Pattee,

> all of them had been thrown together with men under circumstances that had stripped them and the life about them of all the veneer of convention and class distinction. [And] . . . all of them at one time or another were connected with the press.[86]

With the exception of Nast, these men and many of their lesser contemporaries all eventually traveled the lecture circuit, but they initially found popularity through their newspaper writing. The more sedate critics deplored the trend, but they were powerless to stop it. Westerners embraced the new humorists immediately, and their popularity slowly began to spread eastward. But, in Walter Blair's opinion, it took the approval of the English to make the new school socially respectable at home.[87] England warmly received James Russell Lowell's Bigelow Papers, Artemus Ward's lectures, and Mark Twain's books. Thereafter, their success in America was phenomenal. The first edition of Artemus Ward's first book sold 40,000 copies as soon as it was released. Even a work by minor author Stanley Huntly, who employed the penname, "Spoopendyke," sold 300,000 copies in its first three months.[88]

Blair discusses several factors which contributed to produce these boom times for the new school. First, at about the same time as these humorists were rising to prominence, the "rube" character, or native American figure, found its place in drama. Audiences which enjoyed

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[86]Pattee, A History of American Literature Since 1870, p. 31.

[87]Walter Blair, Native American Humor, 1800-1900 (New York: American Book Co., 1937), pp. 110-11.

[88]Ibid., p. 111.

these figures on stage also enjoyed reading about them. Thus, wide publication became the second factor responsible for the rising popularity of humorists. Newspaper columns and comic magazines featured their work. Sometimes these columns were combined into books, as with Locke's work. In other cases, such as Twain's Tom Sawyer, the book was the initial product. Canvassers sold books door to door and prices were within the reach of most households. Most of Locke's books sold for $1.00, hardbound. Even the massive second edition of The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, 715 pages in length, which was illustrated by Nast, cost only $2.50.

Print popularity led naturally to demands for lectures by these men. The third factor, then, was public appearance. And, finally, interest in politics also meant interest in comic and satiric treatment of political issues and figures. A good deal of the popularity enjoyed by G. B. Trudeau's 1970's comic strip, "Doonesbury," results from Trudeau's frequent satiric treatment of political figures. College students from 1972 to 1975 looked forward avidly to Trudeau's daily commentary on the Watergate political scandal, just as Northerners waited for the Nasby letters during the Civil War. Lowell, Ward, Kerr, Josh Billings, and others also had frequent jibes for politicans. As their popularity grew, humorists became increasingly proud of their creations and often adopted their pseudonyms for everyday use. Locke seems to be one of the few who regretted his wide recognition by penname.

What traits had the new humorists in common? More or less, they all spoke in dialect, in a conversational, narrative style, using

deformed grammar and spelling. They employed non sequitors, hyperbole, anticlimax, antithesis, and fantastic juxtaposition of ideas. They punned, coined names, misquoted the classics and scriptures, and burlesqued any topic. They were extravagant, audacious, frivolous, and irreverent. And they did as many of these things as possible at the same time.

Nasby used almost all these devices. In one letter he announced:

> . . . I shel withdraw from public life and start a grocery, and in that umble callin will flote peacefully down the stream uv time, until my weather-beaten bark strikes on the rocks uv death, gettin my licker in the meantime (uv which I consume many) at wholesale prices.[89]

In this sentence, which is horrid even by Nasby's standards, are misspellings, dialect, horrid grammar, anticlimax, and a mixed metaphor. Nasby's favorite titles, "Perfesser of Biblikle Politics in the Southern Classikle & Military Institoot," "Chaplain to his Excellency the President," "late pastor uv the Church uv the Noo Dispensashun," and "p.m. [postmaster] at the Confedrit X Roads, Kentucky," used singly cr, as Nasby preferred, in conjunction, are burlesques in themselves. Although he quotes frequently from Shakespeare and other classicists, shows a knowledge of history, and draws repeated Biblical references, he never quotes correctly or in context. Patrick Henry would hardly be flattered to hear himself quoted thusly: "I know not wat others may do, but ez for me, I can't go."[90] Very few Sunday School Superintendents would sanction the following plan for a lesson:

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[89]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 101.

[90]Locke, Divers Views, Opinions, and Prophecies of Yours Trooly, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 52.

> Readin uv one uv the follerin passages uv Skripter: 9th chapter uv Gennysis, wich relates the cussin uv Canaan provin that niggers is skriptoorally slaves; and the chapters about Hayger and Onesimus, wich proves the Fugitive-slave Law to be skriptooral. (The rest uv the Bible we consider figgerative, and pay no attenshun to it watever.)[91]

Many pro-slavery people claimed Biblical support for the institution. The preceding passage is one of Locke's frequent attacks on that position. He made Nasby pastor to a congregation of these bigots in order to continually ridicule their position. Nasby's speech has much in common with that of the old circuit-riders. As Rourke points out, "within the rough texture of his satire he was likely to keep revivalistic rhythms and the rapsodic tone."[92]

Nasby's letters fell into six basic patterns: (1) the report of an adventure; (2) the interview; (3) the dream; (4) a report of a meeting; (5) the "wail," or lament; and, (6) the editorial monologue.[93] Although each letter has its own satiric thrust and functions as a complete unit, all do their part toward furthering the overall narrative scheme. Within the framing device of Nasby's misadventures, Locke wrote about abolition, reconstruction, women's rights, temperance, free trade, paper money, partisan politics, governmental corruption, the prominent political figures, and any other topic of current interest. There are inconsistencies, especially with regard to Nasby's age and marital status, but considering the time span over which the letters were written, these are hardly telling indictments.

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[91] Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 69.

[92] Rourke, American Humor, p. 222.

[93] Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 79-80.

Critics called Locke and his fellow humorists to task most frequently for their cacography. An anonymous critic for the Atlantic Monthly came to their defense:

> At the door of Mr. Thackaray must lie the charge of bastardy in question, for he was the first to create the merry monsters now so common in literature. . . . he caricatured the man of a certain calling, and by the rule of unreason gifted him with a laboriously fantastic orthography; and Artemus Ward and Nasby are merely local variations of the same idea. The showman [Ward's title] and the Confederate gospeller make us laugh by their typographical pleasantry; they are neither of them without wit, and for the present they have a sort of reality . . .[94]

For satirists, the spelling had greater significance than its humorous aspects. This overt illiteracy reinforces the character's ignorance. With Nasby, it also heightens the reader's feeling of ideological superiority.

Locke took great pride in Nasby's spelling. A reporter once asked him whether he or Josh Billings was the worse speller. Locke replied:

> Billings, by all odds. He does it on purpose. Mine is a scientific spelling, founded on phonetic principles, and, consequently, much in advance of the civilization of the age. It is constructed on a uniform principle.[95]

While working in New York, he sent this tongue-in-cheek dispatch to the Blade:

> Our philologists are in convention at Middletown, Conn., and have taken one step toward rectifying the wretched spelling now in vogue by substantially copying examples set years ago by Petroleum

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[94]"Review of The Bigelow Papers," Atlantic Monthly 19 (January 1867): 124.

[95]Hudson, Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872, p. 692.

> V. Nasby, who, I believe, is in some way connected with the Blade. . . . It will take the world a century to come up to such a standard.[96]

Regardless of Locke's progressive intentions to improve the English language, Nasby's spelling is not consistent overall. The word "democratic" and its variants are spelled in at least twenty-six different ways. Also, he generally misspells small commonplace words such as of ("uv"), what ("wat"), and which ("wich"), while correctly spelling difficult words. This treatment was rhetorically necessary because his audiences could determine small and familiar words without difficulty; unusual words might have been misinterpreted. For example, within the same sentence he correctly spells "ethnologists," a word unusual for Nasby's vocabulary, while misspelling shall ("shel").[97] Several prime examples of misspelling come from one letter: genuine ("ginooine"), constitutional ("constooshnel"), search ("sarch"), and, probably his most outlandish construction ever, miscegenation ("Missenegenegenashun"). In this same letter, he advises a student to go to school because "eddicashen hez bin a grate help to me."[98] The cacography of the earlier letters is so awkward that in many cases it disrupts the flow of discourse. Locke simplified the spelling as he refined his child, making the later letters read more smoothly.

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[96]Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 298.

[97]Locke, Ekkoes from Kentucky, p. 12.

[98]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 117.

One particularly interesting use of spelling and titles occurs in Locke's novel, The Demagogue. Early in the book, before his main character, Caleb Mason, received much education, he spoke in dialect, as do the less-educated characters who appear throughout the story. As Mason progresses in school, the dialect is dropped in favor of very fluent, polished language. Early in the work, Locke is sympathetic toward Mason and usually refers to him as Caleb or Cale. As the young man becomes more hard-hearted, Locke begins to call him Caleb Mason or simply Mason. After he becomes a confirmed criminal, he is referred to only as Mason or Mr. Mason. Locke has completely distanced himself from a character who disgusts him by formalizing his spelling and titles.

The mid-nineteenth century humorists and satirists were conscious artists who theorized about their work. They put a good deal of thought into developing distinctions between wit, humor, and satire. Twain defined wit as

> . . . the horizon-wide contrast between the solemnity on the one hand and that triviality on the other which makes a thing funny which could not otherwise be so. . . . solemn and grave, culminating in the riduculous.[99]

Eli Perkins, who was in reality the well-educated Melville D. Landon, described humor as a photograph, the actual rendition of an occurrence which pointed out the ludicrous and amusing elements of everyday life. Wit, on the other hand, was a sketch, an elaboration of actuality. These humorists and satirists classified satire as a form of wit because satire is an imaginative exaggeration of reality. Landon, in his Thirty

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[99]Quoted in Melville D. Landon, Thirty Years of Wit (New York: Cassell Publishing Co., 1891), p. 87.

Years of Wit, traces the history of satire from Juvenal to Swift to Cervantes to Locke. He felt that Locke was extremely successful in his attempts to use Nasby as a satiric persuasive tool. In Landon's estimation, "he [Locke] made the secessionist odious, and did more with his satire to kill salvery and rebellion than Wendell Phillips did with his denunciation."[100] He emphasizes the value of satire in campaigns such as those waged by Locke. He did not underestimate the value of straightforward editorials and reporting, but also realized that satire could be ". . . used in politics when people are tired of reading serious arguments."[101]

In all forms of humor there is an underlying element of truth. In the opinion of William Mathews, the true humorist is

> . . . a genial, loving reformer. People breathe more freely when such a man is "around"; for they know the wicked man will fear him, weak men will feel stronger, and quacks will no longer have things all their own way.[102]

Mathews considered Locke a true reformer. Speaking specifically of Locke's work, he observed,

> Who has forgotten the powerful aid rendered to the North in our late Civil War by "Petroleum V. Nasby," of the "Confederate Cross-Roads." Though he assumed the cap and bells, Rabelias was not more terribly in earnest. . . . Like the grave-digger in Hamlet, he made fun, but he kept digging the graves all the while. His rib-tickling irony cheered the patriots, as well as confounded the Copperheads and the Rebels.[103]

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[100] Ibid., p. 108.

[101] Ibid., p. 136.

[102] William Mathews, The Great Conversers, and Other Essays (Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1879), p. 162.

[103] Ibid., pp. 164-65.

In devices of style and in the manner of his rise to prominence, Nasby had much in common with the pure humorists of his day, but the thinking people of the period realized that, because of Locke's purposes, Nasby stood alone. Northerners, Unionists, reformers, and Abolitionists applauded his efforts. If there were those who thought Nasby was a real person and took him in earnest, that is testimony to the realism Locke achieved in those troubled times.

Nasby's usefulness during the Civil War has been documented, but the character's value did not end with Lee's surrender. Charles Richardson indicates the timelessness of Nasby's role:

> His unblushing candor of rascality, and his unswearving fidelity to his simple principles of personal and political selfishness, make him a perennial figure in politics; so Nasby, in the shifting scenes since the war of 1861, has not become a wearisome or unprofitable figure. In him we see vicious and low political motives stripped of their pretenses, and therefore we recognize a figure that points a moral as well as raises a laugh. Nasby . . . [pierces] to the heart of sham, and [makes] that heart reveal its own baseness.[104]

This, then, is the final reason for Nasby's vast popularity. Nasby met that highest criterion of value to the nineteenth century reader: he taught a lesson.

The very topicality which made Nasby such an effective tool in his own time has made him obscure and difficult for modern readers. Had Locke been less brilliant in handling current events, had he strived for universality with general topics, history might have given him the place of honor next to Twain which his contemporaries awarded him in recognition of his genius. But Locke was a man who aimed for immediate,

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[104]Charles F. Richardson, American Literature, 1607-1885 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891), pp. 522-23.

telling results; "it's [that] generashen [he was] goin for." The current generation does not know Locke, but few literary figures were so well loved in their own times. That popular admiration led to demands for Locke's appearance on the lecture circuit. On that forum, he explained straightforwardly the philosophies that had led him to create Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby.

CHAPTER III

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DAVID ROSS LOCKE'S LECTURES

Locke's unique combination of genius and purpose combined with the exigence of the times to produce Nasby. Nasby brought Locke widespread fame. Wide fame in the mid-nineteenth century almost inevitably led to invitations to lecture. When Lock's invitation came, the lures of large audiences, new adventures, and high fees were more than he could resist.

A Brief History of the Lecture Movement

The lecture movement in America began before the Revolutionary War.[105] Edward Everett Hale contends that "it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that half of the people who crossed the Atlantic in that year [1630] came because they wanted to hear lectures . . ."[106] Many of the early settlers came to America to secure their religious

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[105]Readers interested in the history of American public address should see William Norwood Brigance, ed., History and Criticism of American Public Address, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943; reprint ed., New York: Russell & Russell, 1960); and Robert T. Oliver, History of Public Speaking in America (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1965).

[106]Edward Everett Hale, "Introduction," in Modern Eloquence, Vol. 8, ed. Ashley H. Thorndike (New York: Modern Eloquence Corp., 1923), p. ix.

freedom. The Catholic Archbishops had forbidden Protestant lectures, so in America these lectures were prized as symbols of both religious and political freedom. As the country grew, Americans were increasingly hungry for news and information. They organized local societies, called lyceums, which were forums for general discussion and for speeches by local citizens and travelers.

Initially local lyceums functioned as independent units with no overall organization. Dr. Josiah Holbrook recognized the advantages which would accrue with cooperation; and, as summarized by Kenneth G. Hance, Holbrook began organizing in 1826

> the nucleus of a rapidly-growing institution. By 1828 there were approximately one hundred branches of the American lyceum; and by 1834 there were 3,000 town lyceums affiliated with county lyceums and with a national organization.[107]

Holbrook advocated regular courses of instruction designed to appeal to the entire community. As an academic institution under Holbrook's direction, reports Waldo W. Braden,

> the lyceum had as its objectives the popularization of the study of natural science, the improvement of teacher training, the advancement of the common schools, and the promotion of adult education.[108]

As an instrument for information dissemination, the lyceum was unusually successful. The movement played a large part in the development of a free public school system. Free education removed the major impetus of the lyceum and was the main factor leading to the movement's decline.

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[107]Kenneth G. Hance, "The American Lecture Platform Before 1930," Quarterly Journal of Speech 30 (October 1944): 274.

[108]Waldo W. Braden, "The Lecture Movement: 1840-60," Quarterly Journal of Speech 34 (April 1948): 206.

The lyceum was supplanted by the lecture movement. American society changed vastly between 1840 and 1860. Improved transportation and communication facilities, rising literacy, and increasing prosperity brought more leisure time which could be devoted to social and cultural pursuits. During the era the platform was invaded by speakers who were advocates by avocation. They were reformers and philosophers. While educational topics were still popular, social issues--abolition, women's rights, and temperance--commanded increasingly larger shares of the audience. Speakers during this period of the lecture movement spoke mainly from a desire to air their beliefs and with the intention of converting their audiences to their positions. This was, for them, a fortunate turn of mind since lecturing was not the quickest way to amass a fortune. Average fees were around $15.00 per lecture; a speaker of stature such as Ralph Waldo Emerson drew only $20.00. Noted temperance reformer John B. Gough could expect no more than $65.00, even in 1860.[109]

Lecturing was exhausting labor. A popular lecturer often gave six lectures a week in six different towns. In a letter to his mother, Bayard Taylor complained that he was

> fagged out, not with speaking, but with traveling, and with being shown up, introduced, questioned, visited and made to visit, handshaken, autographed, honorary membershipped, complimented, censured, quizzed, talked about before my face by people who don't know me, written about in the papers, displayed on handbills, sold

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[109]Ibid., p. 210.

> on tickets, applied to for charitable purposes, and the Lord knows what else.[110]

Taylor's lament indicates the general popularity of lectures and lecturing. Lecturers' appearances provided a social outlet for the populace as well as intellectual stimulation. Lecture attendance became very fashionable and the demand for lecturers increased. This led to increased variety in the types of presentations offered and gave many stage-struck performers of dubious talent an opportunity to try their luck before audiences. J. G. Holland, severe critic of all but the most lofty orations and orators, groused that the lecture season's program included

> all orations, declamations, dissertations, exhortations, recitations, humorous extravaganzas, narratives of travel, harrangues, sermons, semi-sermons, semi-demi-sermons and lectures proper, which can be crowded into what is called a course, but which might more properly be called a bundle, depending for its size on the depth of the managerial purse.[111]

The growing strength of the lecture movement between 1840 and 1860 gave only an indication of the boom times to come after the Civil War. A country exhausted by four years of deprivation and despair hungered for excitement and laughter. The earlier strictures of social and religious convention were loosened; pleasure for its own sake was no longer generally considered a sin.

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[110] Marie H. Taylor and Horace E. Scudder, eds., Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor, Vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1884), p. 275.

[111] J. G. Holland, "The Popular Lecture," Atlantic Monthly 15 (March 1865): 362-63.

As people flocked to hear lectures in ever increasing numbers, the lecture movement needed someone to do for it what Josiah Holbrook had done for the lyceum. James Clark Redpath was that man. With George L. Fall, he founded the Boston Lecture Bureau and became, in essence, the first talent booking agent. Heretofore speakers had arranged their own bookings; Redpath relieved them of this burden, for the usual ten per cent. His fee was money well spent for the lecturers. Average fees soared to between $200.00 and $500.00 per appearance, depending on the location of the town and the stature of the speaker. By the 1880's, when reformers regained popularity, stars such as the great lecture triumverate of Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, and John B. Gough sometimes earned up to $1,000.00 for a single lecture.[112]

Redpath's managerial skills accomplished miracles the reformers could not. Upton Close says that Redpath

> made the lecture platform a prime factor in creating tolerance when he trained northern audiences to listen to the "rebel" New Orleans author . . . George Cable, and got southern gentlemen and ladies to look up to platforms occupied by Negro orators Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. Only the lecturer's halo could have overcome prejudices to that extent.[113]

The subtle approach Redpath used in attracting audiences to hear these speakers was probably the only strategy which could have worked in the period immediately following the war. People had listened to reformers before and during the war; now they were tired of being reformed. Abolition advocates such as William Lloyd Garrison who had been in great

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[112]Hance, "The American Lecture Platform Before 1930," p. 274.

[113]Upton Close, "The Lecture Business," The Saturday Review of Literature 21 (January 13, 1940): 15.

demand in the 1850's and early 1860's could scarcely find audiences willing to pay them in the late 1860's. Reformers in general did not regain their popularity until the early 1880's when temperance and women's rights advocates entered their heyday.[114]

The success of Redpath's bureau naturally sparked a proliferation of other agencies, until, at the close of the century there were over one hundred in existence. They brought a new dimension to the platform, introducing singers, actors, opera troops, and foreign luminaries to the lecture movement. With the employment of advancemen, the development of vaudeville was only a step away. During the early twentieth century, theaters and the new mass media of film and radio began sapping the lecturers' audiences. Today, traditional lecturing is big business only on college campuses and in civic series.

David Ross Locke entered "the highway robbery business," as Twain called lecturing, during the golden days of the humorous lecturers. In 1867, he began to tour the circuit with "Cussid Be Canaan," by far the best of his three major lectures and his personal favorite. But this was not his debut in lecturing. He had been a temperance exhorter for The Fountain of Temperance, his first newspaper, during his journeyman printer days in Corning. Before marrying Martha Bodine he had been a religious exhorter. In 1864, he toyed with the idea of speaking at the Indiana state fair. During the next year, while he was briefly

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114 For discussion of the shifting of audience interest in major lecture topics, see Kenneth G. Hance, H. O. Hendrickson, and Edwin Schoenberger, "The Later National Period, 1860-1930," in History and Criticism of American Public Address, Vol. 1, ed. Brigance, pp. 111-152.

in the drug business, he did some lecturing on a local scale.[115] After moving to Toledo and before becoming affiliated with Redpath's bureau, he lectured at the request of local committees.[116] There is no record of his topics on any of these occasions.

In his three major lectures, "Cussid Be Canaan," "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question," and "In Search of the Man of Sin," Locke articulates all of his major social and political philosophies. As with almost everything he wrote, there is an overt message and a conscious persuasive intent in each lecture. Analysis of their content shows that Locke the lecturer said many of the same things that Locke the writer had said previously and would continue to say for the rest of his life, both directly in his novels, newspapers, and magazine articles, and indirectly through Nasby. Although much of the material in these lectures is written in a humorous manner, Locke was always in deadly earnest. These lectures are his best products, and remain pertinent over a century after they were produced.

"Cussid Be Canaan"

Since Nasby was born of the struggle for racial equality, that subject was naturally Locke's first topic when he began lecturing on a large scale.[117] Locke agreed with the leaders of the Abolition

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[115]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 121.

[116]Ransome, "David Ross Locke, The Post-War Years," p. 150.

[117]The complete text of this lecture is published in Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 629-659.

movement who felt that the Emancipation Proclamation, while a necessary first step, was not sufficient to remedy the problem. This lecture's title is derived from the Biblical account of the drunkenness of Noah after the flood. In these verses from the ninth chapter of Genesis, Noah cursed his son, Ham, and condemned Ham's son, Canaan, to serve his brothers as a slave. Supporters of slavery had long used this episode as justification for the institution. Although the war was over, Locke was well aware that prejudices still existed. The lecture is an attack on these prejudices and a plea for their eradication.

Although there are only a few references to Nasby and the Crossroads in the piece, Locke prepared much of the lecture in the vein of the rhetoric of indirection. He begins by explaining that Jefferson was clearly impractical in writing the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence. Had that gentleman been prudent, contends Locke, he would have inserted the word "white" as a necessary prefix to the word "man." This correction had already been made in the constitutions of several states, and should be made in the Bible and in literature. Examples of the improved passages are given.

Following this introduction, Locke sets forth this thesis for the remainder of his address:

> It is this Nigger which we shall investigate to-night. I am the more anxious that the people shall understand the nature of this being, and the absurdity of the attempt to elevate him into manhood, for the reason that an effort to that end is now being made.[118]

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[118] Ibid., p. 631.

He follows with a clarification of terms: the Negro is a man; the Nigger is an idea embodying vast contradictions. "For instance," he declared, "it is firmly believed that he could never provide for himself; but those so contending, also declare that the wealth of the country is dependent upon him . . . ."[119] He is too ignorant to be educated, yet laws are passed to prevent him from learning. Furthermore, he is repulsively ugly, but legal intervention is necessary to keep him from marrying white women.

Giving the history of his subject, Locke examines Noah's curse of Ham and its ramifications. Next he deals with its inconsistencies. First, some of Ham's offspring became very distinguished leaders, which is rather presumptious of slaves. Second, Ham's descendants migrated to Africa while their cousins went to Europe and Asia; obviously it is an inconvenient arrangement which places the servants on one continent and the masters on others. Faced with this problem in commuting, no doubt, the stronger members of the various tribes made slaves of their weaker brothers in total disregard of Noah's curse. Third, the Bible does not state the number of generations affected by the curse. Quite possibly it applied only to Canaan. Undoubtedly there was some time lapse involved because the curse was inoperative until conveniently rediscovered by American slaveholders. And finally, Canaanites are Jews, not blacks. These inconsistencies notwithstanding, an economy was build around the "Nigger." This curse of Noah was employed by the slaveholders to mitigate the curse of labor, until Lincoln intervened.

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[119] Ibid., p. 632.

During the Civil War, the newly freed black had proved himself an equal in battle, and expected thereafter to be treated as a man.

Having completed the history of the "Nigger," Locke began an examination of that race's fate after the war. In the words of Nasby's friend Deacon Pogram,

> The sense of gratitood the Fedrals feel will die out with the peals of the bells which celebrate the victrys the nigger allies helped win. They endured the nigger because they needed him; but now, thank the Lord, they don't need him no more, and, halleloogy, he'll be the same cussid nigger he alluz wuz.[120]

The Deacon was correct; although slavery was abolished, blacks were still denied equality. Locke described the inequitable laws which prevented black property ownership, legal redress, and education. This double standard was justified by the new theory that the black was not a man at all; rather, he was a beast because he differed physically from the Caucasian, he emitted a different odor, and his complexion was of a different hue. This new theory, however, was not without flaws. Some white men possessed the same alleged shortcomings as the black beast, which made the setting of standards on such criteria extremely difficult. The problem was further compounded by the existence of persons of mixed ancestry. Were these people part men and part beast? Answers to these questions and to the beast theory in general were formulated on a situational basis. At tax-paying time, the blacks and people of mixed blood were men. At voting time, they were beasts.

Throughout the lecture, Locke had attributed the curse theory and the beast theory to the Democratic Party. Now he turns his attention

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[120]Ibid., p. 648.

to the shortcomings of the Republicans. At this point Locke begins to discard his indirect pose. He denounces the Republicans because that party had adopted the correct position in working for emancipation, but its members lacked the courage to follow their philosophy through to its logical conclusion. They did not work to make the freedmen truly free men.

Locke completely abandons any pretense of indirection as he reviews his arguments, states his real positions clearly, and enters his conclusion:

> How shall we dispose of the negro. He was ever a disturbing element in American politics, and ever will be so long as left in the position he has occupied. The curse theory is worthless, and the beast theory leaks like a sieve. If there ever was anything in the curse it has all faded out, and if he is not a man, he is a most excellent imitation.[121]

By rights, he should be treated as a man. But "what stands in the way? Prejudice! Only this and nothing more, and that may be overcome."[122] The remainder of the oration is strong and direct. Taking the position that, "until this principle [racial equality] is adopted our republic is no republic, and our boasted freedom is a hollow sham," he declares, "we must have no more of this inequality."[123] He calls for definite action: "we must make him not only free in name, but in reality, and must give him that potent weapon, the ballot, that he may maintain and

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[121] Ibid., p. 655.

[122] Ibid., p. 656.

[123] Ibid.

defend his freedom."[124] Locke never endorsed reverse discrimination, because "if you return a man a horse that is his, it does not follow that you must give him also a silver plated harness and a carriage."[125] Simply, Locke "would let them make of themselves all that they may."[126] The speaker concludes with an eloquent statement on the equality of mankind and on human rights, ending by once again quoting the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence.

"Cussid Be Canaan" is powerful, well-written, and eloquent. The only real stylistic problem evident is the inconsistency of the indirect posture. While Locke pretends to speak as Nasby, mentioning the version of the Declaration of Independence "we use at the Confedrit X Roads," and referring to the views of "us of Kentucky," the device is transparent as soon as he utters it. Probably he only made this pretense because he was billed as Nasby. His inability to maintain his pose here is a manifestation of the same trait which made him an obtrusive narrator in his novels. Locke obviously did not trust his audiences to discover the morals for themselves. Only in his lightest works did he show any talent for subtlety. He was too persistent, too dedicated to his beliefs, too much the conscious advocate to leave anything to chance. His position on the race issue then, as now, must be considered moderate because he favored neither under-compensation nor over-compensation. He

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., p. 657.

[126] Ibid., p. 658.

knew that all people are not equal in intellect, ability, energy, or determination; but he also knew that these differences were no excuse for denying to anyone the opportunity to maximize the talents he or she possessed. Locke's statements on black rights and on women's rights stem from this strong moral conviction.

As previously mentioned, Locke was taught to detest slavery as a child. He proved himself a man who would act according to his principles while employed on the Cleveland Herald, his first newspaper job after completing his journeyman printer years. At that time, John M. Langston, a black man who later served as United States Minister to Liberia, was employed by the Herald. The white printers walked out on strike to protest the elevation of a black to a position of professional equality. Locke refused to join them, and stayed on the job in support of Langston.[127] Later, while editing the Plymouth Advertiser, he wrote an incensed editorial damning the Ohio Senate for refusing to allow a black reporter to cover its sessions.[128] According to Austin, Locke was active with the Underground Railroad.[129]

Throughout his career as an editor, Locke let his readers know exactly where he stood. When he, Robinson, and Brinkerhoff took over the Mansfield Herald, the trio vowed to run the paper in accord with the stance Brinkerhoff had taken in an editorial, declaring that

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[127]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, pp. 23-24.

[128]Ibid., p. 31.

[129]Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 31.

> . . . the great contest between freedom and slavery must be terminated. . . . there is but one position that any American, one who fears God and loves his fellowmen, can take, and that is on the side of freedom, and to dedicate to the cause, "his life (if needs be), his fortune, and his sacred honor."[130]

In his salutatory at Bucyrus, Locke declared straightforwardly:

> To the full extent of our abilities, we shall oppose the further extension of slavery, the admission of any more slave states--we shall advocate zealously and freely all measures which we think will result in the public good--in short, we shall, in all things, advocate and defend what to us seems right, and oppose and denounce the wrong.[131]

Locke's editorials were not merely assertion. He supported his views with facts. The lead story in the Daily Blade of January 1, 1867, titled "Negro Suffrage," gave a history of the black race's franchise.[132] Stating as his thesis that ". . . Negro suffrage was the rule rather than the exception until the South discovered the value of cotton . . . ," Locke discusses the constitutions of various Southern states. In his researches he had discovered that only South Carolina had originally made membership in the white race a qualification for the ballot. Blacks had voted in every other state and were allowed to do so in Tennessee and North Carolina until within twenty-five years of the Civil War. He mentions John Bell and Cave Johnson, both white Southern politicians who believed that they were elected on the strength of free blacks' votes. In the North, blacks had been able to vote before the Missouri Compromise became an issue. At that time, "black

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[130] Brinkerhoff, Recollections of a Lifetime, p. 96.

[131] Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 43.

[132] Toledo (Ohio) Daily Blade, 1 January 1867, p. 1.

laws" were enacted, withdrawing rights the blacks had been enjoying. Ohio had repealed those laws. Locke praised this action and urged further progress:

> Let her follow up the work, and enfranchise her negroes. The word "white" in the Constitution is a disgrace to the State, and should not stay there a moment longer than necessary to expurge it. We have aided in the destruction of slavery; let us be among the first to root up this offshoot of the curse.[133]

Locke is sometimes accused of being a Radical Republican with regard to Reconstruction.[134] This is not true. Harrison outlines the two opposing stances with regard to that issue:

> Many in the North at this time asked no more than guarantees that the principle of Negro suffrage be established, though full implementation might be postponed, plus the assurance of a few other basic rights to the freedmen, as the price of readmitting the rebel states to the Union. Ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment was commonly held to constitute the basis for reunion.
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> This was not enough for the Radicals within the Republican party . . . . They wanted retribution, military domination, suspension of constitutional rights in the states of the Confederacy.[135]

Locke stood firmly on the middle ground. He demanded ratification of the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, equal rights under the law for both races, and franchise guidelines laid down by the federal government rather than by the individual states. These are the positions he takes in "Cussid Be Canaan." Federal legislation was necessary, he felt, to prevent interminable delays and obstacles to black equality.

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Ransome, "David Ross Locke, The Post-War Years," pp. 5-19; Taft "David Ross Locke: Forgotten Editor," pp. 202-7.

[135] John M. Harrison, "David Ross Locke and the Fight on Reconstruction," Journalism Quarterly 39 (Autumn 1962): 492.

In the editorial, "Protection of Freedmen," in the Daily Blade of January 4, 1866, he explains this position:

> If the Southern States refuse to give freedmen the rights they are entitled to as Free men, their being readmitted into the Union does not prevent Congress from protecting them from oppression. To the amendment to the Constitution emancipating them was added a provision giving Congress the power to do this by legislation. It is a Constitutional duty imposed upon Congress to see that the Slaves are actually made free by necessary legislation, and the states trying to re-enslave them will find there is a higher power to appeal to.[136]

Locke is mistaken for a radical only because he consistently pushed for legal guarantees and became frustrated when these guarantees were delayed by political scheming.

Many modern Civil War historians believe that conflict was precipitated by more economic and political motivations than by an overwhelming concern for the rights of blacks. Had racial equality been the sole cause, there would have been no difficulty in enfranchising Northern blacks. Yet these difficulties existed in the North as surely as they did in the South, perhaps to a greater extent since martial law forced Southern whites to allow blacks to vote. Locke speaks to this point in "Cussid Be Canaan" when he calls the black the only capital the Democratic Party ever had and later when he denounces the Republicans for their delays in pushing through the necessary legislation. He dealt with the point editorially in the Weekly Blade of January 20, 1870, when he chastized the Ohio Democratic newspapers for their continued dwelling ". . . upon the failure of the people of Ohio to

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[136] Toledo (Ohio) Daily Blade, 4 January 1866, p. 2.

make Negro Suffrage a feature of the State Constitution, as proof that her people are irreconcilably opposed to negro suffrage any where."[137] The reason for this gloating is clearly identified through quotations taken from Southern Democratic newspapers and reprinted by Locke in this same editorial. He quotes the Columbus (Georgia) Index, which declared that "'we have given the negro a fair trial. He has voted solidly against us, and we hoist from this day the white man's flag, and we will never take it down so long as we have a voice in the government of the state'."[138] Quotations taken from several other Southern papers substantiate the position as one generally held by staunch Democrats. These Democrats believed that blacks would always vote with the Republicans and thereby insure continued Democratic defeats.

Nasby clearly stated this view on numerous occasions; in fact, it was a basic premise of his philosophy. Just as the positions Locke takes in "Cussid Be Canaan" are obvious in the Blade's editorials, they are also quite visible, albeit indirectly, in Nasby's commentaries. The letter of August 11, 1865, covers the major points of Noah's curse and deals with the interdependence of slavery and the Democratic Pary. A despondent Nasby related that he had reread the Biblical account of the drunkenness of Noah and the subsequent curse of Ham. Pondering this episode gave him insight into the Divine order of things:

> I seed a lite to-wunst--I realized the importance uv the nigger. He is the connectin link in the chain uv circumstances wich led to the formashen uv the Dimekratic party. He hez kept the blessid old macheen a runnin to this day. Observe:

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[137] Toledo (Ohio) Daily Blade, 20 January 1870, p. 1.

[138] As quoted in Toledo (Ohio) Daily Blade, 20 January 1870, p. 1.

> Whiskey (or wine, wich is the same thing) made Noah tight.
> Ham saw Noah inebriated.
> Noah cust Ham, wich turned him into a nigger and a servant.
> That the Skripters mite be fulfilled, the childern uv Ham wuz brot to America, to be servants here.
> Wicked men set themselves agin the Skripters, and tried to make men uv the niggers.
> The Dimekratik party ariz for the purpus uv keepin the nigger down, and that deliteful biznis hez given them employment for more than 30 years.
> Ez I shet the book I cood not help remarkin, in the words uv the sammist,--"Good Lord, upon what slender threads hang everlastin things!"
> Sposin Noah, instid uv plantin grapes, hed gone to practisin law, or into the grocery biznis, or buyin prodoose on commishn, or puttin up patent medicines--he woodent hev got inebriated; he woodent hev cust Ham; Ham woodent hev turned black; there woodent hev bin no niggers, no Ablishnists, and, consequently, no Dimekrats.
> Or, sposn all uv Ham's childern hed taken diptheria, and died; the same results wood hev follered.
> Whiskey made nigger--nigger made Dimokrasy. Take away whiskey and nigger, and Dimokrasy woodent be uv no more akkount than a one-armed man at a [barn] raisin.
> Whiskey! Nigger! Dimokrasy! O, savory trinity!
> We don't none uv us read the Skripters enuff.[139]

This letter directly foreshadows many of the ideas dealt with in the early passages of "Cussid Be Canaan."

Even Nasby was aware of the fragility of the relationship between "nigger" and the Democratic Party. The major danger to the arrangement was education, as explained by Nasby's fellow conspirator, Deacon Pogram:

> So soon ez a nigger masters the spellin book and gits into noose-papers, he becomes dissatisfied with his condishin, and hankers after a better cabin and more wages. He to-wunst begins to insist onto ownin land hisself, and givin his children educashen, and, ez a nigger, for our purposes, ain't worth a soo markee.[140]

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[139] Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 189.

[140] Locke, Ekkoes From Kentucky, p. 22.

Even education of the white Southerners should be carefully managed, according to Nasby and his cohorts, in order to insure a continually plentiful supply of Democrats. To this end, they proposed to set up an appropriate institution of higher education, "The Southern Classikle, Theologikle, and Military Institoot uv Confedrit X Roads (wich is in the Stait uv Kentucky)."[141] The instructional philosophy of the school was delineated:

> In the Scientific and Classikle Departments the text-books will be keerfully revised, and everything uv a Northern or levelin tendency will be scroopulously expergated. In the Theologikle Department speshl attenshun will be given to the highly necessary work uv preparin the stoodents for comin out strong on the holinis uv Slavery, and to this end the three years' course will be devodid thus:--
>
> 1st year--To the cuss uv Noer.
>
> 2nd year--To provin that the Afrikin nigger wuz reely descendid uv Ham.
>
> 3rd year--Considerin the various texts wich go to show that Afrikin slavery is not only permitted by the skripters, but especially enjoined.[142]

The college's revised mathematics text was equally enlightening. Two problems are illustrative:

> [1.] The Southern soljers, at the battle uv the first Bull Run, captured 18 Federals, one uv whom hed upon his person $12 in greenbax, and tothers $8 each. How many uv Johnson's Postmasters cood be bought with the proceeds uv the capcher?[143]
>
> [2.] A strikly conscienshus grocery keeper starts his biznis worth four hundred dollars in clean cash. He pays for his whiskey two dollars per gallon in Looisville, and hez for a reglar customer a Postmaster, wich drinks forty or sixty times per day,

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[141] Ibid., p. 24.

[142] Ibid., p. 25.

[143] Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 396.

> and alluz tells him to "jist chalk in down." Required the length uv time necessary to bust him under them afflictin circumstances?[144]

Nasby knew that without the "nigger," the Democratic Party would have no rallying cry because much of the party's platform had been built on the retention and expansion of slavery. Therefore the Democrats Locke satirized through Nasby sought to delay black enfranchisement for as long as possible. As previously mentioned, Democratic editors openly fought this battle in their newspapers. Nasby proposed his "Institoot" to perpetuate the myth of white supremacy and to indoctrinate young Southerns in the principles held by the coarsest element of the Democratic Party.

Locke was a great believer in the benefits of education and in the right of all citizens to attend school. In response to a movement to deny black children access to the Toledo public schools, Locke wrote, "the law should not allow the question of color, race, or creed to enter into its provisions in regards to schools. . . . colored children should be given equal opportunity for education."[145] If Locke favored education as a great equalizer, then, without question, Nasby had to oppose it. Locke establishes the link between the black race, education, and the Democratic Party in the Nasby letter of September 30, 1865. In this letter, Nasby recounts a conversation he had with the Devil in a dream. The Devil admitted to Nasby that he was despondent over the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation because

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[144]Ibid., p. 397.

[145]Quoted in Taft, "David Ross Locke: Forgotton Editor," p. 206.

it meant that blacks would be able to attend school, gain an education, and thereby escape his traps. Nasby was nonplussed:

> "Hold!" sez I; "do niggers go to hell?"
> "Uv course, when they die in their sins," sez he.
> "Farewell, hope!" exclaims I, in agony, "for all is lost! At the last end the entire Dimokrasy will be on a equality with the nigger, and will hev to mix with em."[146]

Many Democrats did not intend to mix with blacks in this life or in the next, and they did not want their children closely associated with progeny of darker complexions, hence the segregated school system which existed in this country until 1954. Locke deplored the segregated school system, but preferred it to a system which barred blacks entirely. In 1884, Locke wrote

> the Negro holds, and very properly, that knowledge is power and he believes that education is what gives the white man supremacy over him. He is therefore determined that while he may never reach the heights of an education, his children shall, and he will make any sacrifice that they may enjoy this boon.[147]

Nasby feared that blacks would succeed in this effort, and, in despair over the thought, enunciated what was for him one of the ultimate ironies: "My God! think uv it! Think uv yoor bein brot up on a charge of petty larceny, sich ez steelin sheep or chickens, before a nigger justice uv the peace!"[148]

This is the kind of fear which led to the development of the beast theory. Nasby, of course, had a letter to offer on this point. In

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[146]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 207.

[147]Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 300.

[148]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 210.

the Weekly Blade of July 19, 1867, he discussed his consternation at the overthrow of the theory of Noah's curse as the foundation of white supremacy. While casting about for a suitable replacement, he hit upon the notion of the black as an animal. Much capital had already been made by pro-slavery advocates of the physical differences between the races. Nasby felt that a new platform could be built by declaring these differences significant enough to prove that the black occupied a lower rung on the evolutionary ladder than the white. For the doubting Abolitionist who felt that this theory was unsound because some blacks could read and write, Nasby discussed the matter of instinct, declaring that a smart dog was still a dog. If this answer failed, Nasby had a ready rejoinder: "'Sir, wood you force yoor dawter to marry a nigger, even ef he cood reed and write?' [because] this hez alluz done good service, partikelerly ef yoo walk hurridly away before there is time for an answer."[149] Feeling that his theory was solid enough to be generally aired, Nasby called his congregation together for a meeting. The sermon was generously applauded, especially by Joe Bigler and Pollock, the Illinois storekeeper. This should have set Nasby on guard, since these two were his nemeses. They shouted their conversion to the Democratic principles and begged to put the theory to the test on the spot. An unsuspecting Nasby agreed, and Napoleon Jones, a black man, had his measurements taken. These figures were then compared with the measurements of Issaker Gavitt, son of one of Nasby's closest companions. Issaker's hands and feet were found to be shorter and

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[149]Ibid., p. 455.

narrower than Napoleon's, and his heel projected less. The congregation rejoiced at these results, until Bigler, in the name of thorough scientific analysis, asked the assembly if they would agree that both men were thoroughly typical specimens of their respective races. The group gleefully assented. Then Bigler closed in for the kill. He asked Napoleon if he could read and write; Napoleon proved that he was adept at both skills. Bigler asked the same question of Issaker; that young man was found wanting. Pondering this, Bigler announced:

> There's an error sumwher. The nigger's capassity uv skill is less by sevral cubic inches, but he seems to hev made a lively yoose uv wat he hez. . . . Possibly the seat uv the intellek is in the heel instead uv the brain, wich accounts for the nigger's hevin the most uv it.[150]

The beast theory was vanquished.

Even so, Nasby and the Democrats would not agree that blacks were ready for full citizenship. The Democratic Party proffered a gradual timetable for granting the blacks their rights, which Locke strongly opposed. Nasby endorsed the initial granting of limited rights only because he could not discover a way in which to deny rights altogether. Some of the rulings he advocated were:

> [1.] Their wages shel be sich ez they and the employers shel mutually agree; but . . . the sum shel never exceed $5 per month, . . .
>
> [2.] They shel be competent ez witnesses in cases in wich they are not interested, but their testimony is to go for nothin ef it is opposed by the testimony uv a white man or another nigger.
>
> [3.] No nigger shel be allowed to buy or lease real estate outside uv any incorporated city, town, or village.
>
> [4.] No nigger shel be allowed to buy or lease real estate inside uv any incorporated city, town, or village.[151]

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[150] Ibid., p. 459.

[151] Ibid., p. 270.

Nasby openly admitted that rights such as these were not rights at all. This approach was merely an attempt to maintain slavery under another name.

Locke kept fighting such attitudes until April 7, 1870, when he was able to announce in the Weekly Blade the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which closed, ". . . triumphantly for the cause of justice and humanity, one of the grandest and most momentous struggles for the deliverance of a race of men which has transpired in the history of the world."[152] In his gloating over the victory he showed no malice toward his foes:

> In the joy we feel at this completion of our hopes, in this glorious fruition of our most exhalted anticipations, there is, happily, not a single emotion of selfish or malignant feeling toward the oppressors or revilers of this race, who have also been the bloody and treacherous foes of the Republic. . . . We have every confidence that the boon now conferred upon the hitherto oppressed race, will be of as great benefit to the race which confers it, as to the one upon whom it is conferred. The interests and rights of humanity are essentially the same, and right and justice works good and not evil in human society.[153]

Every major argument advanced in "Cussid Be Canaan" had been advanced through Locke's editorials and the Nasby letters. The lecture was a restatement of principles Locke had followed consistently throughout his life. This continued and concentrated effort across the course of so many years should be sufficient evidence of Locke's sincerity and dedication to his cause.

Locke delivered "Cussid Be Canaan" during the entire 1867-68 lecture season. Although he wrote "The Struggles of a Conservative with the

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[152] Toledo (Ohio) Weekly Blade, 7 April 1870, p. 2.

[153] Ibid.

Woman Question" the next year, he continued to use "Cussid Be Canaan" more often than not until the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified, whereupon he retired his first lecture. Shortly thereafter, Mark Twain asked Locke to accompany him on a joint lecture tour of the West. Twain had suggested that Locke deliver "Cussid Be Canaan," but Locke declined, explaining:

> You see, friend Twain, the Fifteenth Amendment busted "Cussid Be Canaan." I felt all that I said and a great deal more; but now that we have won our fight, why dance frantically on the corpse of our enemy? The Reliable Contraband is contraband no more, and I speak of him no more.[154]

This battle being won, it was time for Locke to turn his attention to other problems.

"The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question"

"The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question" was Locke's second major lecture.[155] Since women were also a repressed class, Locke was in sympathy with many of the goals of the women's rights reformers. Once again, his position was between the extremes; he did not wish to see women act in all ways the same as men, yet he did not wish to see them remain man's legal chattel. His position on the woman question was basically the same as it had been on the race issue. He felt that all people had the right to do everything in their

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[154]Quoted in Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 70.

[155]The complete text of this lecture is published in Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 660-86.

power to improve themselves and that such opportunities should not be blocked by legal restrictions.

Structurally, this lecture has much in common with "Cussid Be Canaan." Although there is no mention of Nasby, Locke again adopts an indirect pose throughout much of the lecture, and in this case he is fairly successful in maintaining it until the conclusion of his message. He opens with the declaration that he is a conservative born and bred. As such, the only ideas he approves of are those which are old; anything new he considers heresy. He will follow precedent.

Having given his philosophical credentials, he launches into his subject with a tribute to the traditional romantic role of woman, giving his indirect thesis statement: "I adore woman, but I want her to keep her place. I don't want woman to be the coming man!"[156]

"From the beginning," says the conservative, "woman has occupied a dependent position, and has been only what man has made her."[157] Adam and Eve are given as examples. The conservative believes in the superiority of the sex created first. At this point, a schoolmistress is introduced into the lecture as an antagonist. Several times during the lecture, Locke mentions observations this schoolmistress had made to him in earlier conversations. Her purpose is equivalent to that of Joe Bigler and Pollock, the Illinois storekeeper, in the Nasby letters. She is Locke's mouthpiece and brings up arguments Locke himself would

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[156] Ibid., p. 662.

[157] Ibid.

introduce if he were not using the indirect pose. She contends that practice should bring improvement, and that the second sex created should, therefore, be superior. She further supports this position by reminding the lecturer that man was made from the dust of the earth while woman was made from the rib of man, a better material. The lecturer dismisses this as mere sophistry.

He conjectures about Adam's and Eve's home life, contending that she did all the domestic labor, as was fitting, because he has found no record to the contrary.

> I have searched the book of Genesis faithfully, and I defy any one to find it recorded therein that Eve ever made a public speech, or expressed any desire to preach, practice law or medicine, or sit in the legislature of her native State.[158]

Her one fault was in her craving for a specific variety of fruit. The Devil chose her to tempt rather than Adam because of her inferiority. The weak woman then tempted the strong man who succumbed and, who, then, when questioned by the Lord, denied responsibility for his own actions. The conservative finds further analysis uncomfortable, and goes on to his next point.

Women's rights advocates point to outstanding women in history as emblematic of the achievements which may be made by women. The conservative acknowledges that Jezebel, Pocahontas, Deliah, Queen Elizabeth I, and Joan of Arc made striking accomplishments, but he feels that the world would have been better off had they stayed in their traditional sphere.

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[158]Ibid., p. 665.

Having finished his historical review, Locke begins analyzing contemporary business and political policies as they apply to women. He claims that "the feminine habit of thought is not such as to entitle them to privileges beyond those they now enjoy."[159] Women do not carry hods, drive horses, or labor on the public works. The schoolmistress asks if those activities provide the proper intellectual training for political participation. Many men, she alleges, including the lecturer, lack such experiences. The lecturer is not swayed by this; traditionally hod carriers and drivers of horses vote, which means that it is right that they continue do to so.

At this point, the lecturer realizes that his antagonist is scoring some hits, and he decides to rebut her. He argues:

> My friend is learned. She has a tolerable knowledge of Greek, is an excellent Latin scholar, and as she has read the Constitution of the United States, she excels in political lore the great majority of our representatives in Congress. But nevertheless I protest against her voting for several reasons.
>
> 1. She cannot sing bass! Her voice . . . is pitched higher than the male voice, which indicates feminine weakness of mind.
> 2. Her form is graceful rather than strong.
> 3. She delights in millinery goods.
> 4. She can't grow whiskers.[160]

She concedes these points, yet reminds him of men who have the same shortcomings, excepting point three. She argues that the sexes are similar in their needs for food and clothing and that both are answerable before the law. She resents being labeled "man's angel," because her needs are human; she did not want to cultivate tastes which could not be satisfied.

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[159] Ibid., p. 670.

[160] Ibid., p. 671.

The lecturer acknowledges this paradox, but still maintains that woman should be cared for by man. If there are more women than men, or if some men do not marry, or if married, die before their wives, leaving some women unprovided for, it is a pity.

It is precisely these women for whom the schoolmistress is concerned. She demands that they, and she, be given ". . . employment at anything she was capable of doing, and pay precisely the same that men receive for the same labor, provided she does it as well."[161] The lecturer was appalled. Women had not the strength to be office clerks or piece goods salespersons. As for salary, since the supply of women who would fill the few positions open to them far outstripped the demand, naturally the wage was low, and, through economic laws, bids fair to continue so. It is the fault of the system if women are forced to work at starvation rates, and only pride prevents them from being quietly content with their situations. This sinful attitude is illustrated by the story of Jane Evans, orphan, who made shirts in a garrett, at the wage of eighteen cents apiece. Sixteen hours of labor per day provided her with a crust of bread, yet she was discontent. When her employer faulted her work and refused to pay, she brazenly stole a loaf of bread, and was jailed, thus bringing disgrace upon her brother, the bartender. She threw herself off a wharf, all because she had not the dignity to bear her situation gracefully.

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[161] Ibid., p. 674.

Having dealt with the actual position of women in the world, Locke proceeded to attack indirectly the philosophical barriers to the betterment of their lot. He overtly presents the platform of the moderate women's rights advocates:

> The women who fancy they are oppressed, demand, first, the ballot, that they may have power to better themselves; and, second, the change of custom and education, that they may have free access to whatevery employment they have the strength and capacity to fill, and to which their inclination leads them.[162]

He protests against these demands on the grounds that women would lose their self-respect if they became involved with politics. Society could not stand the blow.

With the arguments for and against woman suffrage on the floor, Locke repeats his strategy in "Cussid Be Canaan" by abandoning his indirect pose and concluding with a straightforward plea for sexual equality before the law. He declares that:

> There are hundreds of thousands of women who have suffered in silence worse evils by far than the slaves of the South, who, like the slaves of the South, have no power to redress their wrongs, no voice so potent that the public must hear. In the parlor, inanity and frivolity; in the cottage, hopeless servitude, unceasing toil; a dark life, with a darker ending. This is the condition of woman in the world to-day. Thousands starving physically for want of something to do, with a world calling for labor; thousands starving mentally, with an unexplored world before them. One half of humanity is a burden on the other half.[163]

This burden could only be relieved through the granting of the ballot. Enfranchisement would demand of woman an interest in the world beyond

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[162] Ibid., pp. 680-81.

[163] Ibid., p. 684.

the home; it would strengthen her, and through her, humanity. Custom should not bar the way. Kings, false religions, and slavery were all customs overturned to advantage. The change of one more custom would make the female half of humanity ". . . none the less women, but stronger women, better women."[164]

This last statement is Locke's true position. He often chided the more radical arm of the women's rights movement because he did not like to see women acting in masculine ways. He knew that a woman could vote and do honest labor without losing her feminity, and that is what he hoped she would do.

Locke did not devote nearly so much newspaper space to the women's rights struggle as he did to the slavery issue. While he occasionally made direct comments, his stance is most readily observable in his treatment of women in his novels, in the purposes he set forth for his newspapers, and in the tone of articles relative to the equality of the sexes. This is the only topic to which he devoted any amount of attention where he achieved any degree of subtlety. Perhaps this is because he viewed this battle humorously as well as seriously; many of his articles are tongue-in-cheek. For example, in 1870 the New York Post examined customs duty logs to determine which of the sexes was the more extravagant. That paper used the results to chastise women for their frivolity. Locke commented on that article in the April 14, 1870, issue of the Weekly Blade, itemizing part of the report to show that

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[164]Ibid., p. 686.

almost eight million dollars was spent on beads, fans, ribbons, silks, and other items of that class.[165] Locke pretended to be shocked. Then he mentioned the paltry five and one half million dollars paid for brandy, wine, and other liquors, and the one and one half million levied on cigars, luxuries consumed by men. In light of the evidence, Locke concluded that the matter appeared relatively even.

The motivations for Locke's attitude toward women are open to conjecture. Since the statements of purpose for all of his newspapers contain promises that extensive women's and family departments will provide useful, uplifting, and instructive material, he evidently believed that women had minds worth cultivating. This attitude was probably formed during his youth. Both Locke's mother, Hester Locke, and his stepmother, Phila Amelia Locke, were hard-working women who were better than his father, Nathaniel Locke, at a business deal. By Nathaniel Locke's own admission, the family would not have been able to survive economically without the monies contributed by his wives. Nathaniel respected his wives for their business sense, and often sent them to conduct the trading. He records having sent Hester Locke to procure a cow because "she was the best at a bargain."[166] Young David would have learned this same respect from his father's example. He married a woman who was similar in temperament to his mother and stepmother. The years before the move to Toledo were financially difficult

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[165] Toledo (Ohio) Weekly Blade, 14 April 1870, p. 2.

[166] Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 9.

for Locke's small family. Often when he took over a new newspaper, he left his wife and children behind and sent for them when he was able to afford to move them to the new town.

Possibly Locke did not speak out as strongly on this issue in his newspapers because it did not seem as pressing or as immediate as the other changes he espoused. The issue was not championed by the Republican Party, nor by the Democrats, for that matter. The Abolitionists had promised the women's rights advocates that, if the women helped them in the anti-slavery cause, when that battle was won, the Abolitionists would return the favor by helping them in their drive for suffrage. As previously mentioned, however, after the Civil War the country was tired of reform, and the women were left to carry on their fight alone. Very few men actively championed women's rights. Most of the powerful male figures on the lecture circuit seem to have acknowledged the validity of this cause, but they left the actual work to the Susan B. Anthonys, the Elizabeth Cady Stantons, and the Lucy Stones. Being male, it was probably more difficult for them to identify with the women's problems than it had been for them to understand the feelings of the slaves. David Ross Locke went a step farther than most of his male contemporaries in devoting a whole lecture to the topic.

Two points of speculation may help to explain the creation of this lecture. First, there is ample evidence that the Lockes were not the closest of couples. Several critics believe that the narrative poem, Hannah Jane, was biographical. There may be no significance in the selection of the heroine's name, as both were common appellations, but

it is interesting that Mrs. Locke's middle name was Jane. After Locke began lecturing and while he actively participated in his New York business interests, he spent the bulk of his time away from home. His two European tours kept him away from home completely for months. The second point of speculation deals with the possibility that Locke had another romantic interest. According to Mark Twain, Locke was attracted to Anna Dickinson, a women's rights advocate and platform star.[167] Perhaps Dickinson convinced him of the need to write this lecture. Whether or not there was any extramarital liaison, Locke probably felt guilty about neglecting his wife. The lecture shows that he had given extensive thought to the plight of single women who were forced to provide for themselves. This, too, might indicate Dickinson's influence, as she never married. While he does not say as much about married women whose husbands provided adequately for them, he does grant that these women might want some activity or interest outside the home. Martha Locke, well-provided for, may have been bored in her Toledo mansion. David Ross Locke was a man possessed of a gnawing conscience. Locke's later fight against liquor was precipitated by guilt; it is not impossible that this lecture was the result of the same emotion.

Locke was a great moralist and a champion of the oppressed. He admired upright conduct in both sexes and did not like to see honest people mistreated. For example, in his editorial campaign against the conduct of the C. H. Coy bank failure, he dealt with sufferings of both

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[167] Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit, p. 70.

the male and female depositors. In his "Pulverize the Rum Power!" campaign, he made it clear that, although men did most of the drinking, women did as much if not more of the suffering. His advocacy of the woman suffrage cause was the advocacy of fairness. All three of his novels are illustrative of his views. His heroines are strong, intelligent, and noble women unjustly treated by the male figures central to each novel. Locke the novelist made it clear in each case exactly where his sympathies lay.

Emeline Butterfield, in A Paper City, was the daughter of a poor and worthless farmer. In spite of these less than fortunate beginnings, she had managed to gain an education and a feeling for the better forms of human conduct. She worked for the Burts in order to help support her mother and younger brother and read and studied at every opportunity. She is the type of woman Locke supports in "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question," capable and intelligent, yet compassionate, domestic, and feminine. He makes it clear that she was ill-used by Burt and unfairly stigmatized through no fault of her own. He also shows Jim Gardiner's abandonment of Emeline as an act of cowardice. In both cases she handles the situation with dignity. Despite these abuses, she remains honest. Years after the major events of the book had passed, the author concocted a meeting between Emeline and Jim. Only then, in accounting for herself since leaving New Canton, did she reveal any of the bitterness she had the right to feel:

> I was a teacher in a primary school until I fitted myself for something better. Then I taught music, and I have had more success than I expected. . . . I worked very hard. I had everything to contend with . . . . I owe no one for what I am and have. . . . I

> have my little ambitions to employ my time; my books, my music, my friends, my brother and mother; and, I suppose, I am happier than most people.[168]

Jim at last realized the stature of the woman he had abandoned, and was ashamed.

"Strong Heart and Steady Hand" also features a woman mistreated. Locke obviously felt it unfair that a scandal linking a man and a woman should ruin her socially while leaving him untainted. The hero's friendship to her marks him, in Locke's view, as a superior man.

Sarah Dunlap, of The Demagogue, had much in common with Emeline Butterfield. Although she was born into relative ease instead of poverty, she had the same sort of intelligence, grace, and nobility as Locke's earlier heroine. She saw the potential in young Caleb Mason and befriended him despite the wide gulf in their social positions. When he deserts her, she is, at first, bitter. With the passage of time, however, she forgets her grudge. After Sam had finished piecing together the receipt for cash and bonds that Mason had destroyed, the young lawyer asked Sarah if she preferred to settle the matter publicly or privately. She told him to do it privately, if possible. She wanted the money that was rightfully hers, but had no specific desire for revenge. Even Helen Mason recognized Sarah's fairness and compassion. Late in the story, when Helen decides to leave Caleb, she goes to Sam and Sarah for refuge. Sarah was vindicated by the return of her money, the maintenance of her good reputation, and, finally, marriage to the honest and upright Sam.

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[168]Locke, A Paper City, p. 428.

These three heroines all encountered misfortunes not of their making while they were single women forced to provide for themselves. Each did an exemplary job of triumphing over adversity in spite of the obstacles society had placed in their way in the form of custom and lack of educational and employment opportunities. The underlying message is, if they could do this well under these circumstances, what could they do if they were given equal status with men? Probably Locke's clearest statement on this point is found in The Demagogue. After Sarah's marriage, he described her at home one typical afternoon, when "her chubby baby was rolling upon the floor, and everything about her showed that the woman was entirely happy--at least, as happy as women generally are."[169] This may be taken to mean that, if society had allowed women greater opportunities, they might find greater happiness.

In his novels, Locke also dealt with women who were the products of prominent families and had no training for life outside that sphere. Mary Lewis, in A Paper City, and Helen Harvey Mason, in The Demagogue, exemplify opposite extremes within this class. Mary had been a china doll and was, accordingly, naive and unsophisticated. Had she been more imaginative or stronger of will, she would have refused her parents' demand that she reject the suitor she loved, Jim Gardiner, in favor of a brute who had nothing to offer but wealth. Tom Paddleford's money could keep her in the style to which she had become accustomed, but he could offer her nothing in the way of companionship and intellectual

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[169]Locke, The Demagogue, p. 455.

stimulation. After her divorce from Tom and her subsequent marriage to Jim, she was perfectly happy. Jim made enough money to provide her with some luxuries, and he was good to her. That was all she asked. But she did not understand him, and was puzzled by the distant looks she saw on his face. She assumed he was thinking of business and went on with her domestic duties. What she did not know was that Jim was thinking of Emeline, and wishing that his wife had more of Emeline's perception and interest in the affairs of the world since he wanted to talk about his law practice and the events of the day. According to the standards of the period, this was a fortunate marriage, but Jim felt something was lacking.

Helen Mason was also a domestic ornament, but of another sort. She was the hostess for her husband's and father's political gatherings. Because she was intelligent and curious, she asked questions about their affairs, and they discussed their plans with her on occasion. She was, however, never taken into their complete confidence because she was a woman and could not exert any political influence on her own. This did not mean she could not be a valuable partner, and Locke indicts Caleb Mason for his failure to discuss his activities with his wife, as her judgment was often superior to his. Her advice might have saved Caleb from a great deal of trouble. She left him largely because he deceived her and kept her in the dark. This move on her part was the final ingredient which ensured his political downfall. After Mason's suicide, she married her original suitor, Dr. Blanchard, and was happy. Blanchard was wise enough to talk to her.

Passages in "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question" were addressed to the Marys and Helens of the world. To them he said,

> I know, O, ye daughters of luxury, that you do not desire a change. There is no need of it for you. Your silks could not be more costly, your jewels could not flash more brightly, nor your surroundings be more luxurious. Your life is pleasant enough. But I would compel you to think, and thinking, act. I would put upon your shoulders responsibilities that would make rational beings of you. I would make you useful to humanity and to yourselves. I would give the daughters of the poor, as I have helped to give the sons of the poor, the power in their hands to right their own wrongs.[170]

Helen was aware of needs she could not fulfill, and would gladly have welcomed Locke's proposal. She had the strength but lacked the opportunity. Mary, in her innocence, did not realize how much of life she missed. Her husband would have welcomed an increase in her horizons. Surely both women, while caught in their first, unhappy marriages, wanted the chance to right their own wrongs that Locke was willing to give them. Locke's treatment of the female figures in his novels clearly reveals his true attitudes toward that sex. Each of the five major female characters is treated sympathetically; for his heroines he shows open admiration. In every case he shows a woman who could have been more than she was if society had only given her the opportunity.

With regard to newspaper commentary, Locke's inclusion of an article without negative comment generally meant that the topic had his support. Considering that the Daily Blade consisted of only four

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[170]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 684.

pages, and the Weekly Blade of a mere eight, Locke was working with a very limited amount of space. On the average, advertising occupied roughly one-fourth of each edition's columns, and various types of literature took another one-third to one-fourth. Articles from correspondents in Washington, D. C., and around the country commanded another fourth of the available space. This meant, then, that Locke had one page in the Daily Blade and two in the Weekly Blade for coverage and commentary upon all other events, and, just like every other metropolitan editor, had to be extremely selective in his inclusion of stories. His commentary on the situation of women, then, often took the form of what are currently known as fillers, but occasionally he printed a longer piece.

One of these longer pieces was a reprint from an unspecified Missouri newspaper. This article took a very unusual view of the woman's suffrage issue. Bert Todd, a St. Louis attorney, had addressed a meeting of the Missouri Woman's Suffrage Association. Locke reprinted part of the speech:

> The passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, necessitates a new infusion of the intelligent educated American element into our canvasses, or the country will suffer great injury. Our population is estimated at 40 millions. Of this, 30 millions are American descendants of original stock or of foreigners. Of the remaining 10,000,000, 6,000,000 are foreign born and 4,000,000 are negroes. As long as we had only this foreign blood of our own origin, though of different languages and reared under different forms of government, we got along very well; but now comes 4,000,000 new brethren, with an estimated vote of 800,000, which in some States will be the controlling vote, and which, it must be conceded, is an ignorant vote: in fact little better than brute force. We must have a remedy for this additional ignorant vote, and it can only be found in extending the franchise to

> women. By this means we acquire four millions intelligent voters, and the noxious ingredients are overcome.[171]

Locke followed this report with the comment that "Mr. Todd dwelt upon this point with much emphasis and considered female suffrage indispensably necessary for the welfare and prosperity of the country."[172]

Locke reported on two speeches in the March 24, 1870, issue of the Weekly Blade. The first was given by Mrs. Robert Dale Owens to a women's group in New York. Mrs. Owens found fault with the American labor system because it did not recognize the amount of work done by women. Contending that "every thousand dollars in money that comes into a house, has two thousand added to it by her labor," Mrs. Owens outlined the tasks involved in the preparation of food and the manufacture and care of clothing.[173] She felt that this labor should be respected and that women who did not want a career should not be ashamed of household labor. She believed that

> no young woman should be willing to marry unless she were able to support herself, and could feel that she did not choose a husband that she might become dependent. She did not approve, however, of married women earning their own living. She thought it would ruin all the men in America if their wives supported themselves; their domestic duties, properly performed, were enough for them, and should be recognized at their proper value.[174]

In the next column, Locke reported on Henry Ward Beecher's remarks to

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[171] Toledo (Ohio) Weekly Blade, 17 March 1870, p. 6.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Toledo (Ohio) Weekly Blade, 24 March 1870, p. 7.

[174] Ibid. The emphasis is Locke's.

the Young Men's Christian Association of New York. His topic was "The Household." Most of Beecher's remarks had to with love and marriage, but he dealt also with the idea of granting to women a larger place in society than that which they had been occupying. He explained his position:

> It is for the sake of the household that I plead a larger liberty, and a nobler power to be conferred upon women. It is not to drive out women into public spheres, and make her walk upon the platform eternally. If some have no care of the household, let them have their liberty, but there will always be abiders at home, and we plead for their larger culture, because at home the children will reap the advantages that follow.[175]

Both of these speeches support Locke's position that a woman should be able to choose for herself whether she wanted employment outside the home and that an educated woman would be a better wife and mother.

Locke specifically reported on the activities of women who made significant contributions outside the home. In the May 5, 1870, issue of the Weekly Blade, he recounted at length the outstanding service of a woman who, as a teenager, had served over two years with the Union army during the Civil War.[176] The tone of the article is highly complimentary. The Daily Blade of July 18, 1867, reports on Mrs. Lucy Stone Blackwell's efforts in Washington, D. C., to secure signatures for a women's rights bill.[177] He specifically names six senators and four representatives, among others, who had signed. This article was

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[175] Ibid.

[176] Toledo (Ohio) Weekly Blade, 5 May 1870, p. 3.

[177] Toledo (Ohio) Daily Blade, 18 July 1867, p. 1.

placed at the top of column one on page one of this issue, which shows that Locke considered this development most important. In 1872, he praised the successful attempt of two women to vote in Toledo.[178]

Locke also touched upon the position of women in his comic fiction. The story, "A Fictitious Fact," was originally printed in the Bucyrus Journal on October 29, 1858, and subsequently reprinted in several other newspapers under his management. He gives the history of his heroine:

> The Maloneys, proud as they are, have always recognized the eternal necessities. Bridget was a true Maloney. Food was a necessity. She would rather have dwelt in marble halls, but she was a woman. Women have no votes, consequently, they are not useful to politicians. Being a woman, she could not get on the police force. To accomplish her necessity, she went into a kitchen. Inscrutable are the decrees of fate.[179]

The tone in this story is the same as that used by the conservative in the lecture when he recounts the misfortunes of Jane Evans. The detached humorous treatment of a tragic incident is funny upon first reading. Then the contrast between the light tone and the serious message strikes the reader, and the pathos of the situation under discussion makes an even deeper impression.

Women did not play a large part in the activities of the "Confedrit X Roads." Occasionally they raided Bascom's Saloon. They appeared in church or on the street and were introduced into dialogue so that they could be embarrassed with their husbands' activities in consolidating the races through amalgamation. Nasby would mention the breaking up of black

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[178] Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 56.

[179] Ibid., p. 123. The entire story is reprinted on pp. 123-26.

families through the sale of one member, or comment on the desirability of a female octoroon.[180] The Crossroads was a traditional, conservative settlement, and the women of that neighborhood occupied the traditional sphere. The only exception is the occasional reference to a New England schoolteacher who would appear with the intention of educating the black residents of the area. Invariably the white residents made sure that this troublemaker was promptly shown out of town.

Nasby reports that, as a young man, he had realized that "thro woman a cuss come into the world, which cuss wuz labor; and I wuz determined that ez woman hed bin the coz uv requirin somebody to sweat for the bread I eat, woman shood do that sweatin for me."[181] He proposed marriage to several women who had trades in succession, and was rejected by each. He says he married a black laundress who, after the ceremony, sold the tools of her trade and insisted that he go to work to support her.[182] When the authorities supported her position, he left her in disgust. Although Nasby's comments about women are rare, they make it clear that he viewed them only as servants whose main goals should be to run their households, to add as much money to the family coffers as possible, and to trouble their husbands as little as possible.

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[180] In the slang usage of that day, an octoroon was a person who was seven-eights white and one-eight black. On the basis of that one-eighth, the person was considered a member of the black race.

[181] Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 37.

[182] Ibid.

If this was Nasby's attitude, then without doubt Locke's was the opposite.

Locke enjoyed the battle of the sexes; many of his writings show that he viewed social interaction between men and women from a healthy and humorous perspective. This did not mean, however, that he could not see a woman as a person with needs and desires that were just as great as men's. He castigated the militant members of the women's rights movement because he felt that they wanted to emasculate the entire sex, but the more moderate advocates and the movement in general had his complete sympathy. He did not live to see the end of this battle in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, but he did his share to call attention to the problem.

"In Search of the Man of Sin"

In 1870, Locke began delivering his last major lecture.[183] "In Search of the Man of Sin" differs considerably from "Cussid Be Canaan" and "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question" in organization, style, and tone. Unlike "Cussid Be Canaan," he does not even allude to Nasby in this lecture. Unlike "The Struggles of a Convervative with the Woman Question," there is no introduction of an argumentative protagonist. The indirect pose becomes a framing device rather than a guise to be dropped at the end of the lecture. The indirect portions of the lecture are more consistent, subtle, and

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[183]The complete text of this lecture is published in Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 687-715.

ironic. And, while the problem areas are indicted thoroughly and specifically, there is no overt call for a specific political solution. Indeed, the lecture is almost entirely exposition. Locke was personally less pleased with this effort than with its predecessors probably because he did not have a specific remedy to recommend other than personal attention to self-improvement. He does more overt moralizing in this lecture than in any of his other works. In fact, the lecture is a veritable catalogue of sins according to Locke, and its content confirms inferences on his philosophies drawn from his other writings. The only real humor here comes from the framing device--his contention of his own purity. Otherwise, any laughter evoked by "In Search of the Man of Sin" is the result of irony and sarcasm.

Locke opens the lecture by presenting himself as a Vermonter who is the perfect man: "I am a most excellent man--indeed, I know of no one who has more qualities to be commended, and fewer to be condemned."[184] In proof thereof, he cites examples from his childhood when he adopted George Washington's performance with the cherry tree as a moral model. His emulations did not procure such charming results, but, undaunted, he strove on toward perfection. As emblematic of his success, he swears that he lived two years in Illinois without becoming divorced (Chicago at that time was something like Reno, Nevada, is today in that respect). While living in Illinois, he did not fall victim to

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[184]Ibid., p. 687.

land speculation; and he paid a substitute to fight in his place during the war so that there would be only good men at the front.

He felt that his own village (population, 600) was pure,

> but I was aware that outside of our little world wickedness had a vigorous existence and was rampant. "There are," I said to myself, "1,000,000,000 of people in the world, my village included, of whom 999,999,400 are morally bound to share the fate of the wicked; five hundred and ninety-nine may possibly get through by a close shave, and one will be certain of a blissful future."[185]

That one, of course, was himself.

Distressed by the presence of so much wickedness in the world,

> I determined to reform the world, or at least do something towards it. Knowledge of what one is to do is essential to success, and that I might get that knowledge I deliberately left my home and wandered out in search of the man of sin.[186]

This, then, is Locke's thesis: to discover all the major varieties of sin.

Desiring to find the worst sins first, and thus be done with the shock, he went to New York. Here he found a corrupt railroad manager busily ruining brokers, exploiting a theater, and controlling justice through bribery. Next he saw Commodore Vanderbilt's leaky steamships which were used to exploit western-bound travelers. From there he went to Wall Street and discovered James Gordon Bennett manipulating the stock market. He met politicians Fernando and Ben Wood. Nasby has frequently praised the Wood brothers. The lecturer said of them:

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[185]Ibid., p. 689-90.

[186]Ibid., p. 690.

> It requires an intellectual man to be a very bad man. The stupid bad man who merely drifts, will strike occasionally some rich nuggets of sin; the quick intellect knows where to go for them and how to unearth them. The great bad man must have sense enough to distinguish between right and wrong, cussedness enough to choose the latter, and brains enough to do something startling in that way. The brothers Wood possess all these qualities in an eminent degree. There may be some sins that they have not committed, but if there are, it is only because they could not reach them, and they doubtless experience the pangs of remorse as they are made aware of their inability.[187]

He finished his New York tour with a review of various scandals of the Boss Tweed variety.

Going to Washington, D. C., he inspected the morals of Congressmen. Cadetships were sold with all the finesse of horse-trading. Judges practicing in Southern courts were on hand; they had learned their law as prisoners in the North, graduating as carpetbaggers, first class. Drunkenness, graft, and bribery filled the legislature. Particularly condemned were men who had been elected because of their strong and politically expedient stances on slavery. Five years after the war was over they were still dancing to the same tune, having no more idea of other issues than a turkey does of Tuesday. Locke saw the introduction of the Civil Service bill, which mandated that only qualified people be given government appointments. The measure went down ingloriously to defeat becasue Congressmen knew that they could not survive without pork-barrel patronage. Another bill was introduced to end the franking privilege. The defeat was prearranged by the member who introduced the bill; the whole sham was a bone thrown to deceive the public. Partisan

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[187] Ibid., p. 692.

politics and maintaining office were the Congressmen's only concerns. "'Why'," asked the lecturer, "'doesn't some honest member expose these scoundrelly practices?' 'Where will you find the honest member?' was the pertinent interrogatory in answer."[188]

In disgust, Locke went on to Trenton, New Jersey, believing that state politics would show more honor. Instead, he found the same crimes on a smaller scale.

He stopped by a reformer's convention, feeling sure he would see great good being done. To his horror, personal aggrandizement was the main concern.

Having done with the male half of the population, he turned to an examination of the vices of women. Here, he felt, there would be no vice to speak of. But, upon close examination, he found vanity, avarice, duplicity, extravagance--in short, all the faults of humans.

On returning home, the habit of observation he had acquired during his travels showed him his village in a new light. The Deacon, a merchant, was greedy. Another merchant gave to charity for the good name it would bring him. The lady who wrote beautiful hymns had tried all other genres before making a success in religious compositions. The Reverend wore his religion on his sleeve. Another Deacon was a drunkard. The lecturer saw his own cousin offering bribes to secure an election.

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[188]Ibid., p. 700.

He went to his house and chided his wife for her vanity and extravagance in costume. She immediately removed all cosmetics, hairpieces, and ruffles. Aghast at the difference in her appearance, he asked her to resume her normal garb, admitting that

> I was compelled to confess that, after all, we, the stronger sex, who rail at the extravagance of women, are in the main responsible for it; that the average woman dresses herself more to please the average man than to please herself; and further, that the average man likes her a thousand times better for the additional beauty and grace that dress gives her, all of which she perfectly understands.[189]

Then he took a look at himself. Again he found vanity, greed, coveting, petty theft, and gluttony. The crowning blow

> and what humbled me was the fact, that the knowledge that I had all these moral blemishes was not confined to myself. My discovery of the fact was recent--my neighbors had always known it.
>
> I at last found the man of sin. I was the man.[190]

In this, the conclusion of the lecture, he enters upon a program of self-improvement, convinced that reforming, like charity, must begin at home. Yet he betrays the failure of his efforts at curing false modesty; his last few sentences show every bit as much conceit as those in his introduction.

Although "In Search of the Man of Sin" deals with business and social corruption, it is primarily a scathing denouncement of political corruption. All of the Nasby letters are written on this theme. Any one of them is illustrative of Locke's views toward graft, incompetence,

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[189] Ibid., p. 713.

[190] Ibid., p. 715.

and self-aggrandizement in office. When Nasby, the rascal incarnate, is awarded the postmaster's position at the Corners, all political appointees are satirized. Having spent his life as an editor, Locke was thoroughly familiar with the seamier side of politics, and he had no sympathy for the politician who abused the public trust. Historians amply document the extreme governmental corruption which characterized the Reconstruction era. Seen in this context, Locke's remarks do not seem overly harsh. If he exaggerated at all in his denunciation, he did so only to make his points perfectly clear to his audiences. Locke was always merciless to those he perceived as villains. If this lecture were given today and the names of modern figures were inserted in the place of those of Commodore Vanderbilt and the Wood brothers, libel suits would result; but, however, no record shows that Locke was ever sued for anything he wrote or said. Either only innocent people sued for libel in the nineteenth century, or Locke only attacked people who were cognizant of their own misdeeds and knew that the public would not believe that anything said against them was untrue. Locke delivered this lecture in the earlier days of yellow journalism and muckraking. His audiences were accustomed to harsh tones and personal attacks. The writers and speakers who came after him would make him seem mild indeed.

Corruption is a central theme in each of Locke's novels. The Demagogue is a treatise on political corruption. Caleb Mason is, in

Joseph Jones' opinion, "an Alger boy gone sour."[191] As previously mentioned, Mason was making an excellent start in life until he formed his ideas about the power of money. His observations of the local political machine in action confirmed his notion that political position also gave power and influence beyond their due. This opinion was confirmed by his experiences in serving as a temporary secretary for Judge Rainey, a Congressman who had come to canvass the district in favor of the local political hack's re-election. During the week, he saw votes bought for money and for promises of future political patronage. He listened often to an excellent stump speaker who swayed his audience with sophistry rather than substantive argument. He saw party loyalty triumph over principle. Self-interest was invariably put ahead of the good of the country and its people. He accepted Rainey's contention that "the mass of the people are fools,"[192] and decided to take advantage of it. Mason linked himself with the Harvey political machine because that was the quickest route to influence. He bought his way into this group with part of the money he had stolen from Sarah Dunlap after he had done his part to hasten her father's death. Helen, his wife, came as a part of the package deal. His career in office was a continual exercise in manipulation; he never committed an act solely for the good it would bring. When he is unmasked in the end and commits suicide, he is given more mercy than his author felt he deserved.

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[191]Joseph Jones, "Petroleum V. Nasby Tries the Novel: David Ross Locke's Excursions into Political and Social Fiction," Texas Studies in English 30 (1951): 205.

[192]Locke, The Demagogue, p. 106.

A subplot in The Demagogue deals with the fruits of economic corruption. The money Caleb gave the Harveys was used to cover irregularities in the county treasury. Jack Harvey, Helen's brother, had failed in business previous to Sarah Dunlap's father's death. Helen's father had appropriated county funds to cover Jack's expenses. The money was never really replaced; funds were juggled in order to give the appearance of regularity. Maintaining the secret meant that the Harvey family and its hangers-on had to retain the county treasurer's office. This meant that they had to strengthen the machine's control of local politics. Much money is required to oil a political machine. In order to insure the availability of this money, the Harveys fronted the operation of Crefield's bank. Bank funds and county funds were juggled so that auditors would not detect the manipulations which were constantly occurring. This operation had gone undetected for years and was in good working order until the day before the meeting of the last county political nominating convention which would be troubled by the presence of Caleb Mason. Because of a string of unrelated circumstances and poor timing, both the bank and the county treasury were short of money when an idle rumor spread the false information that the bank was insolvent. There was a run on the bank which could not be covered because of the temporary over-extensions, and the bank closed its doors.

Sam Gleason and Dr. Blanchard had been laboring to defeat Mason at the convention, but they had only succeeded in weakening Mason's strength and lessening his lead. Mason's close involvement with the Crefield bank was widely known; any scandal touching it touched him. With the bank's failure, the nomination race was deadlocked. At this point, Helen

walked out on Mason, and revealed all that she knew of his misdeeds. These factors worked together to produce the public outcry for his arrest that prompted Mason's suicide. Certainly Locke contrived a set of circumstances which are not exactly plausible, but he did so for the same reasons which produced the didacticism of "In Search of the Man of Sin." He wanted his audiences to understand that business and political irresponsibility deserve harsh punishment. Another bank failure ruined the land speculation scheme that formed the major narrative thrust of A Paper City. The responsible parties in that venture also met ignominious ends. The traveling party in "Strong Heart and Steady Hand" was infected by greed when they were caught up in a gold rush; their actions brought them only disappointment. Lesser characters in both major novels are portrayed as victims. For some, their injuries were the result of their own greed and small scale schemes. Others suffered because they placed their trust in the wrong people. In either case, these people sustained losses which could not be completely repaired by the downfall of the characters who had misused them.

Locke's newspaper campaign against Cyrus Coy, "The Busted Banker," stemmed from his contempt for Coy's blatant mismanagement of the funds intrusted to him. His attacks against liquor dealers and saloon keepers in the "Pulverize the Rum Power!" series show that he was disgusted by those men's efforts to encourage habitual drinking, a condition which would ruin the drinkers physically and financially. Their actions, he felt, were just as immoral as those committed by political and economic scoundrels. In this lecture, then, as in the two

lectures which preceded it, Locke was dealing with issues he had been treating repeatedly for years.

The light tone found in the framing device of "In Search of the Man of Sin" was the same as that Locke used in the Sniggs letters and in the misadventures of Abou Ben Adhem. Abou, the caustic commentator on social, economic, and political practices, usually gave good advice that he himself was incapable of heeding. In the Abou story entitled "Wealth," the conclusion of "In Search of the Man of Sin" is directly paralleled. Abou gives this advice to the young man who wanted to make money:

> "Strive to be like me. You probably never will reach the height of philosophical virtue on which I repose, but you may come something near it. Despise money; do not waste a life in pursuit of it. Do as I do,--learn to live without it, to care nothing for it, and be happy."
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> And Abou, having finished his homily, sold a Durham heifer to the young man at a bargain, and a hundred shares in a Texas railway. And chuckling at the ease with which he had taken him in for a thousand dollars, he turned to his labor.[193]

Abou did not object to being a man of sin, but David Ross Locke would come to mind it very much. He had not yet begun his personal war against alcohol and did not know the amount of guilt he would feel before he died. Had he written this lecture ten years later, it would have been vitriolic indeed.

Locke was not personally pleased with this lecture and delivered it less often than either of the other lectures. His audiences shared this feeling. Doubtlessly the indirect pose in "Cussid Be Canaan" and "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question" provoked more humor. Locke and his audiences were sharing a joke. They could laugh

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[193] Locke, The Morals of Abou Ben Adhem, pp. 124-25.

together at the folly of Nasby and the conservative. The strong moral instruction Locke gave his auditors in concluding both these lectures would only increase their enjoyment of his message because audiences at that time wanted some moral with their amusement. But they did not want instruction only. An unspecified critic for Harper's Weekly observed that

> . . . an audience will waive the instruction if the lecturer will raise a cry or a laugh. A lecture of pure instruction is one of the most doleful performances in which a speaker and an audience can engage.[194]

"In Search of the Man of Sin" comes much closer to being a lecture of pure instruction than either of the other two works. Had he been more satisfied with this piece, and had his audiences reacted more favorably to it, Locke might have continued to lecture on a large scale for several more years. Probably the most important factor in Locke's decision to retire from large-scale lecturing was the amount of time lecturing consumed. Locke's expanding and diverse business activities demanded increasing attention which he was unable to give them while he was traveling. He did not, however, entirely abandon the lecture platform. He wrote occasional lectures, although no texts survive, and took at least two of them on the road briefly. Rowell reports that one of these lectures was concerned with temperance advocacy.[195] The choice of topic is hardly surprising; equality of the races and sexes, public and private morality, and temperance were Locke's major lifelong

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[194] Harper's Weekly 1 (October 30, 1857): 627.

[195] Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent, p. 262.

themes. The second lecture dealt with republicanism and drew "heavily on his European experiences."[196] Locke's strong belief in the republican form of government is an underlying theme in many of his works.

With three different lectures Locke had proved himself a man who was consistent in his positions and committed to his principles. While he spoke on the pressing issues of his day, he selected issues of broad scope. The magnitude of the changes he espoused is evident because sexual and racial equality and public and private morality are problems which contemporary society has yet to resolve. Modern America would do well to listen to the messages delivered by one particular grandfather's grandson over one hundred years ago. Locke's lectures need only minor rewriting to correct dated references to be equally as instructive and effective today. David Ross Locke's effectiveness and popularity with his original audiences are not diminished because the evils he fought have not yet been fully remedied.

Modern advocates who wish to treat these same issues should not content themselves with an examination of the arguments and ideas Locke championed. The student of speech must also consider the other aspects of Locke's lecturing career--his attitude toward speech, his lecturing style, the reactions of his audiences, and the stature he achieved as a public man--in order better to understand the factors that make his speeches more than merely fascinating pieces of literature. Literature is written to be read; speeches are prepared so that they may be

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[196]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 259.

delivered to audience members who gather for the event. The next chapter treats Locke's concepts of the speech process, his delivery of the lectures, and the reactions of his audiences.

CHAPTER IV

DAVID ROSS LOCKE: SPEAKER AND PUBLIC MAN

David Ross Locke was a man motivated by strong principles and a need to share his ideas with the public. Even as a newspaper editor, his writing was more often intended to be persuasive than objective. That his dedication to his principles was sincerely inspired by strong moral convictions is beyond question. While the extent of his effectiveness with his audiences cannot be proven, the wide circulation of his newspaper, the numerous editions of his books, and his vast popularity as a lecturer show that he was a man who reached huge numbers of people. To the extent that people buy what they like, Locke was evidently a powerful spokesman for a large segment of the population. What may audiences have expected from Locke, the lecturer? How did he increase the likelihood that these audiences would understand his positions? What were his ideas about speech? How did he deliver his lectures? How were his efforts received by his contemporaries? The answers to these questions will help the current generation evaluate Locke's place within the history of ideas.

Locke the Lecturer and His Audiences

What expectations of Locke's speeches did his audiences bring with them to the lectures? Obviously, many of those people who chose to

attend his lectures knew Locke's writing and anticipated something in the Nasby vein. Locke was billed as Nasby because the pseudonym had greater name recognition than the legal appellation. Thus, the advertising for the lectures would seem to indicate that the arch Copperhead of the Crossroads would appear on stage. Locke, however, was evidently not completely comfortable with the idea of bringing Nasby to the platform. "Cussid Be Canaan" contains few references to Nasby and his cronies, and neither of the other two lectures mention Nasby at all. Even though some people may have been disappointed by Locke's decision not to lecture in character, that choice was probably a sound one. The previously noted failure of Locke's play, Inflation, which was a dramatization of life at the Crossroads, demonstrates the difficulties of bringing Nasby to the stage.

People who understood the point behind the Nasby letters should have been expecting to hear political satire. Mark Twain was appalled that people expected anything else. He reported having overhead

> . . . people talking acrimoniously about Nasby having given them an offensive political lecture instead of one upon some inoffensive subject. I wonder what on earth did they expect Nasby to talk about? Poetry, no doubt.[197]

Nasby had never talked about inoffensive subjects; Locke had made it Nasby's business to be as offensive as possible in order to ridicule everything Nasby approved of. Perhaps the people Twain overheard had fallen into the trap of confusing Locke with the humorists. The pseudonym does suggest a character, and Locke's sloppy habits of dress

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[197]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, "Letter from 'Mark Twain'," p. 6.

added to this impression. Locke's use of these devices, however, was more in keeping with the tradition of the court jester than with that of the mid-nineteenth century American humorists. Locke appeared in the motley which was Nasby, but that motley covered a wit as biting as that of Chaucer or of Shakespeare's John Falstaff. The court jester was often an astute political observer who could be blunt in giving advice because that advice was cloaked in humor or satire. America has long approved of this approach. In fact, according to Rourke, "in a sense the whole American comic tradition has been that of social criticism . . . ."[198]

Locke enjoyed his ability to inspire laughter but he never allowed that talent to interfere with his primary purposes as a persuader. Rather, he used laughter as a tool which helped him make his points. To this extent, his lectures were very similar to the Nasby letters; he merely made his points more indirectly in the letters. The differences in these two media necessitated adaptations on Locke's part if he were to succeed in both. Nasby was a propaganda tool. The essence of effective propaganda is constant repetition; the Nasby letters were usually written on a weekly basis. Nasby indulged in slurs rather than in complicated arguments both because that is the nature of propaganda and because the inherent brevity of letters to the editor precludes complex argumentation. The lectures were similar to Locke's novels in that each situation was a single persuasive effort. If he

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[198]Rourke, American Humor, p. 211.

were to persuade in either forum, his message had to be clear. Rhetorically, therefore, Locke could not allow his audiences to believe Nasby was speaking. As Austin notes, "in the lecture, it was necessary to make clear from the beginning that the pose was a pose; [Locke] could not have his audience feeling toward him the contempt they were supposed to feel toward Nasby."[199]

Locke's lectures clarified the positions which underlay his Nasby letters; they were distilled statements of Locke's social philosophy. Locke's purposes in the lectures were in keeping with those of the reform advocates who filled platforms so often during the nineteenth century. His overt moralizing was a reaction against the Gilded Age. Locke preached for a pure ideal in human conduct as he sought to expose shallow and self-serving motivations, prejudices, injustice, and lies. Locke spoke from a righteous indignation, an indignation his audiences were accustomed to hearing from reform advocates. Those listeners who realized Nasby's true purposes and came to hear Locke the satirist undoubtedly were not disappointed.

Locke's Basic Rhetorical Strategies and His Philosophies of Speech

All three lectures are presented in story form. Each lecture is a series of stories which move forward the logical progression of the overall narrative framework. For example, the overall narrative framework of "Cussid Be Canaan" is the history of slavery in America.

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[199]Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 113.

Rather than debating the relative merits of the black's position in American society in 1867, Locke chose to explain to his audience the factors responsible for the evolution of this position. By dealing thoroughly with the story of the cursing of Canaan in all its ramifications, Locke could exemplify very clearly the attitudes which he opposed. His treatment of these episodes and his choice of words show the disgust he felt toward people who relied on the Bible to prove the validity of slavery, but this treatment allowed the audience to draw this conclusion for themselves. This reductio ad absurdum technique is an effective tool of internal refutation whereby a speaker deals with and demolishes each opposing argument by reducing it to absurdity before presenting his own position. If the audience accepts the invalidation of each of the opposing positions, they are left with no choice except the position espoused by the speaker. An audience may, of course, reject the speaker's position, but this rejection, if it occurs, should be in favor of a position not previously demolished by the speaker. Providing that the speaker has carefully selected all the major opposing positions and has refuted each one thoroughly, this approach will probably be an effective persuasive strategy.

By using these stories, Locke could indicate the folly he saw in proslavery arguments without really alienating any auditor. Locke was well known for his support of abolition; thus his audiences, since they had paid to hear him speak, were probably composed of people who also supported abolition. This does not mean, however, that all his auditors were people who were willing to support the Constitutional

guarantees of full racial equality that Locke advocated. Some listeners may have felt, for example, that enfranchisement of the blacks should be delayed until the members of that race had been educated. To these listeners Locke said:

> . . . we [of the Crossroads] proposed to give them the ballot, in time. Of other men we required no preparation, but we felt it necessary of these. We only required them to pass a creditable examination in Greek, Latin, embroidery, French, German, and double-entry book-keeping, and to facilitate their acquiring these branches we burned all their school-houses.[200]

This story about the Crossroaders' method of preparing their black residents for the privilege of voting illustrates the pitfalls in allowing local governments to decide on an individual basis the prerequisites for the ballot. It also underscores the unfairness of the double standard. How many white men could pass such an examination? This story might induce a proponent of delayed enfranchisement to reconsider his position. Locke was more likely to bring about this reconsideration on the part of the auditor because he had not directly attacked the auditor or his viewpoint. The auditor who agreed with Locke could share a laugh with the speaker, and yet be reminded that there were people who would resort to such tricks in order to prevent blacks from voting. Thus, Locke could remind listeners that, although the war was over, the fight for true racial equality was not. In either case, the story presents a moral.

By dealing with a series of such stories, Locke makes his major points clear long before he discards his indirect pose prior to the conclusions of his first two lectures. He might even have been able

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[200]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 649.

to dispense with his overt statements in these two lectures, as he does with "In Search of the Man of Sin," for each is a complete unit without the conclusion. There is no doubt about his position in either case. The conclusions do serve a valuable function, however, because they allow Locke to unify the points he had made through his episodic structure. This unification is achieved in "In Search of the Man of Sin" by the framing device of the Vermonter's travels in search of sin. When the Vermonter returns home and discovers sin in his own village and in himself, he demonstrates that no one is perfect and that accountability begins at home. Probably any overt commentary that Locke might have added to his third lecture at this point would have detracted from, rather than added to, the effect of his lecture.

Locke was asked to write an article about Abraham Lincoln's sense of humor. In this article, Locke made observations about his hero, Lincoln, that are equally applicable to Locke himself:

> His wit was entirely illustrative. He used it because . . . at times he could say more in this way, and better illustrate the idea with which he was pregnant. He never cared how he made a point so that he made it . . . . He was a master of satire, which was at times as blunt as a meat-ax, and at others as keen as a razor; but it was always kindly except when some horrible injustice was its inspiration, and then it was terrible. Weakness he was never ferocious with, but intentional wickedness he never spared.[201]

Locke's lectures illustrate his capacity to make his points through stories. They also show how ferocious his satire could be because he was motivated to speak in response to social evils that he deplored.

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[201] David Ross Locke, "David R. Locke," in Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, 7th ed., ed. Allen Thorndike Rice (New York: North American Review, 1888), p. 442.

This narrative structure would help a listener to grasp quickly each of Locke's ideas as it unfolds. Locke's works as a whole are remarkable for their clarity, a factor which is especially important in speech. In his choice of language, Locke selected words which would be generally understood by the average listener, but in so doing he did not sacrifice eloquence. He preferred the active voice; his sentences are directly and forcefully put. He does not ramble or digress, rather, he goes straight to the point. For example, when, in "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question," he declares that historical precedent is no reason for denying women the ballot, he says:

> In this do we outrage custom? Why, we have been overturning customs six thousand years, and there are yet enough hideous enormities encumbering the earth to take six thousand years more to kill. In the beginning, when force was the law, there were kings. The world tired of kings. There were false religions. Jesus of Nazareth overturned them. Luther wrecked a venerable system when he struck the church of Rome with his iron hand; your fathers and mine stabbed a hoary iniquity when they overturned kingcraft on this continent, and Lovejoy, Garrison, and Phillips struck an institution which ages had sanctioned when they assaulted slavery. The old is not always the best.[202]

This passage has nothing in common with the horrid grammar of Nasby, and is added insurance that Locke's listeners did not attribute his remarks to the character.

Clarity of expression is to be expected of an author who moralized so overtly. Locke distrusted vague discourse, as is shown in an "Abou Ben Adhem" sketch. A young man who wanted to become a writer came to ask the Persian philosopher's advice. Characteristically, Abou responded with a story:

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[202]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 685.

> We always look up to that which we cannot understand. In Persia, my young friend, were once a set of illuminati, very like those you have in your country, who spake only in six-syllabled words. I cursed myself for an idiot one day because I could not comprehend a speech that one of them made. After hammering on it for two weeks, I thought I smelt something. I took my dictionary and tackled the great words; I translated it, in short, into the Persian of every-day use, and found what? It was an article of my own that I had written for the "Ispahan Morning Herald," nothing more or less. The metaphysical fraud had merely clothed it in words of six syllables.
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> Remember this: There is nothing like words of six syllables to hide commonplaces and platitudes.[203]

Locke equated lack of clarity with lack of sincerity and substance.

Locke was an untrained speaker, but during his career as a reporter, he had observed enough orators to form some strong ideas about the nature of speech. He had no use for the speaker who would not deal squarely with the issues. Judge Rainey, of The Demagogue, was the type of speaker who favored shadow over substance. Rainey is a minor character whose sole function is to contribute to the downfall of Caleb Mason by giving him bad advice about the nature of politics and politicians and to encourage young Mason to follow his negative example. Rainey had come to town to speak in favor of the local Democratic candidate for Congress, a thoroughly worthless incumbent who was expected to lose in his bid for re-election. Rainey considered the candidate an idiot, but wanted him re-elected because he knew he could use the man's vote as he chose. Mason was assigned to act as secretary to Rainey during Rainey's speaking tour of the county. In that capacity, he ". . . noted closely the very simple means by which the

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[203]Locke, The Morals of Abou Ben Adhem, pp. 109-10. The emphasis is Locke's.

judge produced the results he desired, and wondered that the honest farmers who listened so attentively did not also discover it."[204] Rainey concentrated heavily on building ethos and pathos; he considered logos unnecessary. Once on the platform, Rainey first directed his efforts toward developing ethos, beginning

> . . . with some complimentary allusions to the class of people forming the bulk of his audience. With a crowd of farmers, he would make some neat remarks about the antiquity of agriculture, speak of the free, unhampered life of the tiller of soil, compliment his hearers on belonging to "that honored class who are the foundation of national greatness, the corner-stone on which our free institutions are built . . . ."[205]

After continuing in this vein at some length, Rainey made passing mention of the party platform before beginning his real mission. Rainey knew the candidate could not stand on his own merits, therefore he never raised the issue of qualifications. Instead, he dwelt on party loyalty, telling his listeners that they should vote for the candidate because he had been nominated by the party and that "if the policy of that party were to rule in the halls of legislation, it could only be done by electing Democrats."[206] Mason observed that this approach had great success, which shows how little Locke thought of it.

Rainey regarded his speech as an exercise in ". . . tickling the ears of a lot of wooden-headed farmers and country jakes with a pack

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[204]Locke, The Demagogue, p. 101.

[205]Ibid.

[206]Ibid., p. 103.

of worn-out yarns."[207] He was the sort of politician Locke attacked in "In Search of the Man of Sin." When, in that lecture, Locke made the Vermonter talk about his visit to Washington, D. C., he discussed the fate of a proposed Civil Service bill. The principle behind that measure was, Locke felt, ". . . so clearly right--so necessary indeed--that I supposed, in my innocence, that it would become law at once."[208] The bill was soundly defeated. Locke had the Vermonter discuss this defeat with a Representative who had voted against the bill. When the Vermonter

> intimated that the interests of the people demanded it, he promptly replied, with a show of much indignation, that take away his patronage, which this bill did, and he couldn't hold his position at all--indeed, without it he couldn't be renominated.[209]

This politician, and others described in the lecture, had no concern for the welfare of their constituents. Indeed, they seemed to give no attention to the people of their districts whatsoever, except occasionally to throw them a bone in order to secure their own renominations. Because their shams generally produced the desired results, they came to have the same low opinions of the voters as those voiced by Rainey.

Because Rainey felt confident that he could continue to dupe the electorate, he did not bother to discuss with the people the party platform which he asked them to support. As he told Mason,

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[207] Ibid., p. 104.

[208] Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 698.

[209] Ibid.

> you can make up your mind that the mass of the people are fools. They have not the ability to frame opinions of their own, and so want them ready-made; a fellow with the gift of gab, who can think when he is on his feet can do as he likes with them.[210]

This sophist was successful because, in Locke's analysis, he

> . . . watched his audiences as a doctor watches his patient while administering some powerful medicine. First he got them into a good humor with themselves and with himself; he stirred up their party loyalty until it was at a white heat . . . .[211]

Then he urged the re-election of the candidate on grounds of party loyalty. His emotional arguments had been so effective that the audience, for the moment, did not notice the neglect of logic and reason. As is usual in such cases, the audience did realize the lack of substance some time after the speech. Due to party patronage and machine politics, the candidate was returned to office. The people, however, began to suspect that the machine was using them unfairly, and grew dissatisfied. This dissatisfaction was unleashed in the movement which forced Mason from power a few years later. Mason's disgrace and suicide were, in his author's opinion, small punishment for his neglect of his responsibilities to his constituents. Locke put his faith in the ability of the audiences to detect the truth, even if they were initially fooled by calculating manipulators such as Rainey.

Because he believed in dealing honestly with an audience, Locke filled his own lectures with solid arguments which were clearly explained in terms that would be readily comprehensible to all of his listeners. His creation of pathos was dependent largely on the

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[210] Locke, The Demagogue, p. 105-6.

[211] Ibid., p. 102.

evocation of sympathy for those who suffered undeservedly from oppression. This sympathy was coupled with the resentment that Locke sought to build against the sources of this repression. Both emotions grew out of his unstated appeals to fairness. For the creation of ethos, Locke evidently relied on his reputation and the reasonableness of his demands. Only once within a lecture did he make any remark that called attention to his own record. In the conclusion of "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question," he said, "I would give the daughters of the poor, as I have helped to give the sons of the poor, the power in their hands to right their own wrongs."[212] Only in this one phrase did Locke the lecturer remind his audiences that Locke the man had been fighting for these ideals long before he began to tour the lecture circuit.

Locke's Delivery

Locke was committed to his ideals, and he had strong ideas about his responsibility to his listeners. Partially because of these factors, this man who had spent his life as a writer produced manuscripts for his lectures that stand up under content and literary analysis. But good writers do not necessarily make good speakers. How did Locke fare in the actual moments of delivery from the platform?

Locke did have some limited formal speaking experience before he became a lecturer for the Redpath bureau. He had been a temperance advocate, a religious exhorter, and a lecturer on a local scale. But

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[212]Locke, The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 684.

these audiences did not compare with the ones he faced as a lyceum star. In spite of this, he evidently was not much troubled with stage fright, except in Boston, where lecturers usually opened their seasons. Opening night in what was then known as the Athens of America,

> . . . frightened them all, even . . . Nasby, who quailed at the thought of standing before an audience in the Music Hall. Mark Twain said that a full house there was composed of "4,000 critics," and he believed that "on the success of this matter depends my future success in New England."[213]

Most of the people who are aware of Locke today know of him because he has been mentioned several times in literature by and about Mark Twain, who supplied the information about Locke's dread of the Boston Music Hall. Many of Twain's observations about Locke are very helpful in gaining an understanding of Locke as a lecturer. Others, however, have been taken out of context by critics who knew a good deal about Twain but very little about Locke. Two of these misinterpretations have been reprinted several times and given an inaccurate impression of Locke the lecturer. They arose from Twain's record of his reactions to "Cussid Be Canaan," and are best explained in terms of the relationship which developed between the two men.

Those lecturers who were in high demand filled heavy schedules which often had them speaking six nights a week. This meant that most of them rarely, if ever, heard the lectures of their colleagues. When they were able to listen to other lecturers, especially those who were

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[213]Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit, p. 127.

not already their close friends, they sometimes went in a less than sympathetic frame of mind. When Twain went to the Opera Hall in Hartford to hear Locke for the first time, the two men had not previously met. Twain, by his own admission, was prepared to fault Locke's performance. Much to his surprise, he was completely won over. Thirty years later, he recalled that Locke's

> . . . appearance on the stage was welcomed with a prodigious burst of applause, but he did not stop to bow or in any other way acknowledge the greeting, but strode straight to the reading desk, spread his portfolio open upon it, and immediately petrified himself into an attitude which he never changed during the hour and a half occupied by his performance, except to turn his leaves--his body bent over the desk, rigidly supported by his left arm, as by a stake, the right arm lying across his back. About once in two minutes his right arm swung forward, turned a leaf, then swung to its resting-place on his back again--just the action of a machine, and suggestive of one; regular, recurrent, prompt, exact. . . .
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> . . . he went right on roaring to the end, tearing his ruthless way though the continuous applause and laughter, and taking no sort of account of it. . . . The moment he had finished his piece he turned his back and marched off the stage with the seeming of being not personally concerned with the applause that was booming behind him.[214]

Twain was impressed by Locke. He told his wife, Livy, that he ". . . took a strong liking to this fellow, who has some very noble qualities."[215] In Twain's opinion, Locke's success was due to his content alone, ". . . for his delivery was destitute of art, unless a tremendous and inspiring earnestness and energy may be called by that name."[216]

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[214]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. 2, pp. 148-49.

[215]Dixon Wecter, ed., Mark Twain to Mrs. Fairbanks (San Marino, Cal.: Huntington Library, 1949), p. 85.

[216]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. 2, p. 149.

Twain always spoke highly of the Nasby letters, but he believed that "Cussid Be Canaan" was Locke's masterpiece. He gave this evaluation in a letter he wrote to the Alta California: "The lecture is a fair and logical argument against slavery, and is the pleasantest to listen to I have ever heard upon that novel and interesting subject."[217] Twain and Locke admired each other immensely and became great friends who swapped yarns and tall tales whenever they could find the opportunity.

One critic who recounts Twain's report of Locke's lecture is Paul Fatout. In summarizing Twain's remarks, Fatout adds that Locke was "a devotee of the bottle [who] was sometimes too drunk to see his audience," and that Locke was "unable to remember a line of his lecture despite hundreds of repetitions . . . ."[218] Fatout does not attribute either charge. The issue of Locke's drinking has been previously discussed. Rowell testified that Locke ". . . made a great deal more of a pretense of drinking than he did of the actual demonstration of it."[219] But he did make a great pretense, and often gave casual acquaintances the opinion that he was a confirmed drunkard. George W. Cable, who did not care for Locke, is at least partially responsible for setting into print the charge that Locke drank extensively before delivering his lectures. Cable and Twain made a joint lecture tour. One of their performances was in Toledo, where they visited Locke. Twain and Locke spent a very lively evening, but Cable was miserable,

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[217] Samuel Langhorne Clemens, "Letter from 'Mark Twain'," p. 6.

[218] Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit, p. 119.

[219] Rowell, Forty Years an Advertising Agent, p. 262.

as he generally was when the conversation left a refined plane. In the course of the evening, Locke said to Twain, "I've given that lecture when I was so drunk that the audience was invisible; and I knew it was going right only by the laughter coming out of that rayless gulf at the proper intervals."[220] Cable took this comment at face value, which was probably imprudent of him, for several reasons. First, Locke was known to embroider his stories when in the presence of his cronies. Second, any man who is sober enough to be able to tell that the laughter is coming at the proper places is sober enough to be able to see at least a part of his audience. Third, if Twain's account of Locke's delivery is accurate, Locke paid no attention to the audience's reactions, never pausing in his delivery, but tearing straight through. If that was the case, he would not have known which comments produced laughter, drunk or sober. Fourth, Twain said that Locke never looked at his audiences, in which case he could not have seen them, regardless of his blood alcohol level. And finally, a moralist of Locke's stature would hardly have taken his messages lightly enough to risk giving them in an advanced state of intoxication. Locke had his paradoxes and flaws, and he enjoyed good company, but he was committed to his positions and his efforts to advance them. The actual extent of Locke's drinking during his younger days cannot now be ascertained, but it is highly improbable that he was ever as thorough a drunkard as the assertion Cable relays would indicate.

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[220] Turner, Mark Twain and George Washington Cable, p. 75. The emphasis is Cable's.

The second misinterpretation has to do with Locke's inability to deliver his lectures from memory. Twain said that, in spite of the fact that Locke had delivered "Cussid Be Canaan" several hundred times, ". . . he could not deliver any sentence of it without his manuscript--except the opening one."[221] After that much practice, even a person with an extremely poor memory should have a few of his ideas comfortably fixed in his mind. But Fatout denies Locke mastery even of his introduction. Cyril Clemens furnishes an anecdote which demonstrates that Locke could at least begin a lecture without reference to his notes. He says that Locke returned from a long lecture tour one evening when his wife had guests. Locke struggled to stay awake, but finally dozed off, until the clock struck 8:00. He then immediately jumped up and proclaimed, "We are all descended from grandfathers!"[222] His performance startled the guests considerably, but they realized that he knew at least a part of his material.

Quite probably he knew a good deal more of it. This was the same man who had set his editorials directly into type without bothering to write guiding copy, the same man who frequently reused old material, the same man who said essentially the same things in all his major media, a quick and prolific writer. These accomplishments suggest that he had at least a normal capacity to remember detail. Perhaps he relied on the manuscript because he was uncomfortable as a speaker.

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[221] Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. 2, p. 148.

[222] Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 73.

Perhaps he wanted to be sure he did not omit an argument. Perhaps he was exaggerating for his friend Twain. But probably he had a better memory than this myth gives him credit for.

Testimony from other auditors supports this contention. A Mr. Don Seitz told Cyril Clemens that he had heard Locke speak in Norwalk, Maine. On that occasion, Locke ". . . sat in a chair and talked humorously to the crowd."[223] A Mr. Henry Nelson wrote to Cyril Clemens about Locke's lecture at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1871. He said that Locke ". . . had a written lecture which he referred to occasionally to refresh his memory, but he spoke mostly from memory, and in a conversational tone of voice."[224] He agreed with Twain that Locke made no attempt at polished delivery, but he did stand beside the reading desk rather than leaning upon it, which shows some improvement. Nelson also agreed with Twain's overall assessment of the lecture, saying that Locke ". . . had a message to deliver, and he delivered it with telling effect. His lecture was punctuated with sarcastic humor and he was frequently applauded. The lecture was a decided success."[225]

David Mead also furnished accounts of Locke's performance. He quotes the reviewer for the Springfield (Ohio) Republic, who listened to "Cussid Be Canaan" on March 12, 1868. In the reviewer's opinion,

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[223]Quoted in Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 76.

[224]Ibid., p. 71.

[225]Ibid.

the lecture was delivered ". . . in a straightforward, unambitious, yet not ungraceful manner, distinctly, somewhat rapidly, but on the whole with a more successful elocution than that of many public speakers of larger oratorical pretension."[226] With regard to content, this reviewer added that those people who had expected that the lecture ". . . might be simply funny and grotesque, [had] an agreeable disappointment."[227] Mead also reproduces a review from the February 24, 1870, edition of the Athens (Ohio) Messenger. Of "The Struggles of a Conservative with the Woman Question," that writer said that the audience, which came to be amused, was not disappointed, since "Nasby concealed many 'pungent witticisms' amidst his 'drapery of elegant verbage'."[228] He described the conclusion of the lecture as ". . . one of the most grand, beautiful, and eloquent tributes to woman which it has ever been our fortune to listen to."[229]

In light of these varying accounts of Locke's method of delivery, critics today can be certain only that Locke was not a polished speaker. The reviews do, however, prove that Locke's messages were exceptionally clear and that his lectures were well received by his audiences. His lack of oratorical skill may even have helped him in conveying his ideas by underscoring his sincerity.

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[226] Quoted in David Mead, Yankee Eloquence in the Middle West (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State College Press, 1951), p. 232.

[227] Ibid.

[228] Ibid., p. 233.

[229] Ibid.

Evidently many audiences shared Locke's belief that content was more important than form because they paid well and often to hear him. Twain said that "Beecher, Gough, Nasby, and Anna Dickinson were the only lecturers who knew their own value and exacted it. In towns their fee was $200 and $250; in cities, $400."[230] Twain is not likely to have exaggerated on this point. The subject of fees was a sore spot with him. Before he would return to the lecture circuit in 1871, Twain laid down seventeen conditions which he demanded be met. One of these conditions was a fee equal to Locke's. Fatout says there is no reliable evidence to suggest that Twain was ever paid that well.[231] Of Locke's first year on the lecture circuit, Pond reports, "he lectured every secular night for nine or ten months, and made over $30,000 by the tour."[232] Many a polished speaker wished in vain for a salary that high.

The Significance of Locke's Career as Evaluated by His Contemporaries

David Ross Locke reached vast audiences through a variety of media. Most of his listeners and readers recognized Locke's true positions even when he presented them indirectly through Nasby. Much of Locke's genius as an advocate stemmed from his ability to be both amusing and instructive at the same time; he could preach without being condescending.

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[230] Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. 2, p. 157.

[231] Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit, p. 150.

[232] Pond, Eccentricities of Genius, p. 193.

Because Locke elected a career as a communicator, and because the public reaction to his writing and lecturing was so favorable, Locke became a public figure. Comments from Locke's contemporaries have already been mentioned in connection with the effectiveness of the Nasby character. But Nasby was not the sole achievement of Locke's career. His national reputation was based also on his lecturing, his novels, and his newspapers. The best assessment of Locke's contributions to his era is found in the tributes his contemporaries paid to him.

Any study of Locke must mention his relationship with Lincoln. Although Lincoln was assassinated before Locke became a lecturer, Lincoln's widely publicized admiration of Locke is one of the factors which contributed to Locke's rise to prominence. The two men met several times while Locke was reporting Lincoln's speeches and debates, and Locke became an early champion of Lincoln's positions. Lincoln considered the Nasby letters invaluable to Northern war efforts, and invited Locke to the White House on more than one occasion. Before issuing the first invitation, Lincoln told a group of Congressmen, "I am going to write to 'Petroleum' to come down here, and I intend to tell him if he will communicate his talent to me, I will '<u>swap</u>' places with him."[233]

Lincoln did not go quite that far in the letter he wrote, but he was very generous in saying, ". . . I will give you any place you ask

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[233]Francis B. Carpenter, <u>Six Months in the White House with Abraham Lincoln</u> (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1866), p. 151. The emphasis is Carpenter's.

for--that you are capable of filling--and fit to fill."[234] Locke was not interested in a position in the government, but he did go to Washington and was very pleased with the conversation he had with the President.

Carl Sandberg feels that the mutual regard Locke and Lincoln had for one another grew out of an affinity of temperaments.[235] They were similar types of men, from similar backgrounds, laboring toward the same goal. Lincoln was made a frequent target of Nasby's ridicule, which was a direct index of the regard in which Locke held the President. Lincoln welcomed Nasby's attacks. Many members of his administration wrote that Lincoln often read the Nasby letters to visitors, and that he was in the habit of carrying clippings with him.[236] Sometimes when Lincoln was awake late at night, he would wander through the White House in search of someone to read the letters with him.[237] Lincoln regarded the Nasby letters as a pressure release; he told Congressman Ashley of Ohio, "If it were not for [Locke's] occasional vent I should die."[238]

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[234]Quoted in Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln, vol. 4: The War Years II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 52.

[235]Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln, vol. 5: The War Years III, p. 356.

[236]Ibid., pp. 274, 354-56.

[237]Ibid., p. 356.

[238]Quoted in Carpenter, Six Months in the White House with Abraham Lincoln, p. 151.

President Grant also thought highly of Locke, and declared that ". . . he couldn't get through a Sunday without one [of the Nasby letters] . . . ."[239] He offered to appoint Locke ambassador to a select foreign mission, but Locke declined.[240]

Only once did Locke decide to become a public official. In 1886, he became the Republican candidate for Alderman from the third ward of Toledo.[241] Because of his strong stance in favor of prohibition, Locke was opposed vigorously by the liquor interests. Prohibition, however, was not an issue in that election, and Locke won, receiving 63 per cent of the votes cast. Locke was an active Alderman who served on several committees, until his health began to interfere. Twenty-two months into his two-year term of office, Locke died of tuberculosis.

The announcement of Locke's death, on February 15, 1888, occasioned many sincere and eloquent tributes from around the country. Harrison says that many Blade readers ". . . wrote to express what seemed to them an intensely personal loss. They found it hard to believe their beloved Nasby was dead."[242] Rutherford B. Hayes, then President, wrote to express his sympathy, expressing his belief that

> with his pen Mr. Locke gained for himself a conspicuous and honorable place among those who fought the good fight in the critical years of the anti-slavery conflict before the war. During the war and after it, he was surpassed by no writer in

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[239]Quoted in Blair, Native American Humor, p. 110.

[240]Austin, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 50.

[241]Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, pp. 316-17.

[242]Ibid., p. 318.

> the extent and value of his influence in the march of events until its great results were substantially secured. He had the satisfaction of receiving from Mr. Lincoln himself the first meed of praise for his matchless service in the hour of his country's trial.[243]

Newspapers around the country published Locke's obituary. The St. Louis Globe praised the Nasby letters

> as a specimen of purely political satire . . . never equalled by the production of any other American before or since. Underneath and independent of the quaintness of expression and strangeness of orthography they possess a clearness, vigor, and incisiveness which gives them a singular strength and effectiveness. For in America between 1861 and 1876 the author that loomed largest in the public eye was David Ross Locke.[244]

The New York Tribune's obituary indicates the primary reason for the regard in which Locke was held:

> to his honor it is to be said that he always exerted his rare gifts of humor and satire in behalf of principles in which he believed with all his heart essential to the welfare of his countrymen. The influence of his pen was always on the right side . . . .[245]

These evaluations are echoes of the praises Locke received during his lifetime. In 1876, Edwin P. Whipple did a study of the first one hundred years of American literature. He praised Locke's abilities and achievements as a humorist and a persuasive political force.[246] Marshall Jewell, U. S. Ambassador to Russia, wrote to Thomas Nast in 1873, saying that he valued ". . . your pencil and [Locke's] pen more

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[243]Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, pp. 318-19.

[244]Quoted in Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 133.

[245]Quoted in Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. 134.

[246]Edwin P. Whipple, "The First Century of the Republic: American Literature, II," Harper's Monthly 52 (March 1876): 526.

than all the other makers of warfare which exist in our party."[247] Josiah Holland, the critic for Scribner's Monthly who disapproved of all but the most straightforwardly serious lecturers, made a cutting remark about Locke. Twain, enraged, wrote to Redpath that one of the Nasby letters, had ". . . done the country more good, than the entirety of Mr. H.'s commonplace existence. He to talk of buffoons!"[248] George S. Boutwell, a cabinet official under Lincoln, declared in a speech at the Cooper Union that "three forces--the army, the navy, and the Nasby Letters--caused the fall of the Confederacy."[249] In 1882, John Werner, a Swiss friend of Locke's, received a report of Locke's lecture on republicanism. He wrote to Locke congratulating him on his success and positing this explanation for it:

> your [Locke's] inborn talent for conveying your ideals and thoughts, the striking manner in which you excel in drawing scenes and characters, together with an ardent love for liberty, make you one of the very best advocates of any oppressed people's cause. As an agitator for republicanism you are simply unrivaled . . . .[250]

Locke's contemporaries realized his worth.

An Evaluation

Locke's efforts as a communicator gained him a vast following and widespread praise. Do these facts alone make Locke worthy of study?

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[247] Paine, Th. Nast, His Period and His Pictures, p. 281.

[248] Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit, p. 143. The emphasis is Twain's.

[249] Quoted in Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, p. xiii.

[250] Quoted in Harrison, The Man Who Made Nasby, p. 259.

Many people are popular or dedicated or both without being worthy of inclusion in the history of events and ideas. Other people are popular and dedicated, but spend their energies working for ends which are reprehensible by modern standards. Adolph Hitler serves as an example of this type. If some people are to be selected from the past as worthy of study while others are excluded, some standards for inclusion or exclusion must be set. If some figures are selected as positive examples while others are designated negative examples, some value judgments are implied. The debate over the setting of such standards and values has been raging since the times of the ancient Greeks; no concrete, universally accepted judgmental criteria exist. Yet historians and critics make such judgments whenever they engage in the explication or evaluation of rhetorical events. Even if the historian or critic makes no explicit argument for or against the person under examination, the judgment is implied.

How, then, should Locke be judged? Because Locke had such great popularity, it follows logically that he was in a position to exert influence over a large segment of the population. He must be judged according to the worth of the ideas he advocated.

Ernest Wrage defines ideas in the ". . . inclusive sense [which] refers widely to formulations of thought as the product and expression of social incentives . . . . the product of social environment . . . possessing social utility."[251] If a speaker's ideas are examined across

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[251]Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," Quarterly Journal of Speech 33 (December 1947): 451.

the totality of his career, a pattern should emerge. This pattern represents the speaker's philosophical belief system. The analysis done in order to discover this belief system focuses on the speaker's assumptions as well as on his overt positional statements. Joseph Blau feels that the listener and the critic should examine these assumptions and positions in order to determine their logical consistency and their logical extensions before deciding whether or not to accept the proposals the speaker advocates.[252] Blau also believes that, in fairness to the speaker, this analysis should be conducted in terms of a logic that the speaker would accept.[253]

This study of Locke has been concerned primarily with the discovery of Locke's belief systems. Analysis of Locke's works reveals that his advocacy was the advocacy of fairness. Each of his major positions results from a belief in the basic right of men and women, regardless of race or class, to the opportunity to make the best of their talents and abilities according to their own ambitions. The corollary to this position is a belief in the right of each person to be treated fairly by his or her fellow beings. This basic moral position is founded on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, hence Locke's belief that the government had the responsibility to safeguard the rights of its citizens. He had tremendous faith in the government's ability to cure social ills so long as that government

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[252]Joseph L. Blau, "Public Address as Intellectual Revelation," Western Speech 21 (Spring 1957): 18-28.

[253]Ibid., p. 21.

was in the hands of honorable men. Much of the anger expressed in "In Search of the Man of Sin" is directed at people who, in Locke's opinion, had subverted the public trust. Locke saw this issue in black and white; the official who did not operate entirely out of a concern for the public good was odious to Locke. Such men could only be kept out of office by an educated public, in Locke's view, because an educated public would be wise enough to spot a demagogue when it saw one. Locke's staunch support of education, then, was doubly motivated: the educated individual would be able to better his own lot and at the same time help safeguard the common good. Equal suffrage is a necessary part of this philosophy because, if each person was entitled to equal benefits under the law, then each person was also responsible for participating in the government at least to the extent of casting an informed ballot. Locke would not allow one person to play the tyrant to another, whether this tyranny was expressed in slavery or demagoguery.

Inherent in Locke's view of individual freedom is the doctrine of individual accountability. Thus, Locke felt, the individual had the right to make of himself what he would, but he did not have the right to expect other people or the government to give him things that he did not have the ability to earn for himself. Locke, therefore, would not endorse reverse discrimination. Tokenism implies the favoring of one group of people at the expense of another. Locke believed that the individual should be judged on his own merits without regard to other considerations. If all citizens were made equal under the law and given an equal chance to gain an education, then differences in income

level and social class would probably result from differences in individual citizen's abilities. This, Locke felt, was just.

All of these views are logically consistent; they all flow from the premise that the individual has the right to begin life on an equal footing with all other individuals. Locke spoke and wrote about each of these points, always explaining carefully exactly what he meant; and he practiced what he preached. Locke evaluated other people according to the logic of their positions and the morality of their actions. He would accept a judgment of himself rendered on these same principles.

According to Edwin Black, "discourses contain tokens of their authors."[254] The author reveals his philosophical and psychological positions through his choice of words. Due to the clarity of Locke's works and his thorough discussion of his positions, no extra insight into Locke's motivations is gained by painstaking attention to the subtle shadings of his phrases, no contradictions are implied, no ulterior motives are detected. Only in the Nasby letters is such an examination profitable. The shadings of Nasby's words reveal Locke, by Locke's own design. He intended that his true positions should be revealed. That is one reason why the letters are heavy-handed satires instead of the humorous pieces they might have been if Locke had written them for amusement.

Black contends that discourses also contain implied auditors, and that "the critic can see in the auditor implied by a discourse a

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[254]Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," Quarterly Journal of Speech 56 (April 1970): 110.

model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become."[255] Locke's implied auditor is a thinking adult who is capable of abstract reasoning and logical deduction. This auditor is also capable of emphathic response. The implied auditor is middle or upper class with some education, otherwise the literary allusions in the lectures might not be comprehended. Lower class listeners would be able to understand everything Locke said except for these few references. The universality of Locke's positions implies a universal audience, but since only white males were capable of taking political action to implement the changes Locke advocated, they are the implied target audience. Locke would have his auditors adopt the Biblical Second Commandment, to love their fellow men as themselves. He would also have his listeners implement the legal changes he advocated. Black says that "actual auditors look to the discourse they are attending for cues that tell them how they are to view the world, even beyond the expressed concerns, the overt propositional sense, of the discourse."[256] Locke explicitly indicated a viewpoint of fairness, equality, and honor.

Locke also indicated this viewpoint implicitly through his indirect arguments. The laughter Locke evoked was the laugher of moral judgment. While the psychological nature of volitional laughter is not yet understood, Black posits that ". . . this laughter of moral

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[255] Ibid., p. 113.

[256] Ibid.

judgment is the principal behavioral effect of comedy."[257] Black believes that comedy is enthymematic, and that the moral judgments rendered are invariably adverse.[258] If the auditor who listened to "Cussid Be Canaan" laughed at the Crossroaders' uncomfortable experiences in trying to apply the beast theory, that auditor was laughing at the folly of the theory and the individual who adopted it. In this case, the lecturer and the auditor would be proceeding from the same frame of reference, the belief that the black man was indeed a man, not a beast. The application of this general conviction to the specific case of the Crossroaders' attempts to prove the beast theory produced a moral judgment: the inferior man was not the black; the inferior man was the white man who attempted to prove that the black was not a man at all. In comprehending this, the auditor felt superior, and the moral judgment rendered was adverse for the Crossroaders. They were being laughed at, not laughed with. Readers who laughed at the Nasby letters were laughing because of this same moral judgment. They saw the folly in Nasby's positions and, feeling superior, laughed. People who did not see the humor in Nasby, or thought that Nasby was only humor, probably did not share Locke's frame of reference. Because they were not working out of the same general convictions, they would not draw the same conclusions from the given case. Hence, comedy would not be effective in persuading people who did not share the speaker's frame

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[257] Edwin Black, "Frame of Reference in Rhetoric and Fiction," in Papers in Rhetoric and Poetic, ed. Donald C. Bryant (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1965), p. 33.

[258] Ibid., p. 34.

of reference; these people would not follow the argument presented. The moral judgments elicited in people who did share frames of reference could have been persuasive to the extent that they strengthened and reinforced the auditors' general convictions regarding the overall issue.

In Lloyd Bitzer's view, the speaker finds himself in a rhetorical situation.[259] This rhetorical situation is composed of three elements: the audience, the exigence, and the constraints. Within this orientation, the audience consists of every listener who is capable of being influenced by the discourse and, as a result, promoting change. The exigence is the need for speech in a given situation. Within the rhetorical situation, this need refers to a condition existing within society that can and should be altered if, as a result of discourse, the audience takes action. The constraints include all elements which tend to hinder the speaker or the audience or both in their efforts to modify the exigence.

For Locke the lecturer, the true rhetorical audience was composed of white males because they had the power of the ballot and through it could effect political change. The exigence was the need for a change in societal attitudes and laws with regard to each of Locke's topics. If Locke could enjoin his audiences to act, they could remove the exigence. The existing laws and attitudes with regard to these issues were constraints which had to be overcome if the exigences were to be modified or eliminated.

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[259]Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric 1 (January 1968): 1-14.

Throughout his life, Locke was an advocate who was primarily concerned with his exigences. He saw situations existing in society which he felt were wrong, and he sought to bring about their elimination. Constantly he thundered at the constraints which blocked the achievement of his goals. He was not concerned with seeking only his true rhetorical audiences because to him all audiences were rhetorical. He wanted every person to share his beliefs, even if every person could not directly produce legal change.

Locke was not a polished speaker, but he was a sincere advocate. This, to Wrage, was the important thing because "the techniques of . . . speakers are often highly individualized and perish with their bones; their ideas live after them."[260] Locke's ideas had social utility. The very fact that able and dedicated advocates still concern themselves with these issues demonstrates the timelessness of these basic human values. No argument need be made concerning the worth of Locke's ideas. To any person who believes in human dignity, the merit of Locke's thought is obvious.

Carlyle once said that "he who would move and convince others must first be moved and convinced himself." John Killits wrote that Locke's

> . . . most dominating characteristic was his thorough sincerity. He had no patience with the man not actuated by sincere motives. . . . He worked hard himself, demanded the utmost of others,

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[260]Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," p. 453.

> though this by no means interfered with the exercise of an active sympathy and a tendency to credit each man as he deserved.[261]

The ideas spread by this dedicated reform advocate eventually led to the passage of five Constitutional Amendments. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments all deal with the race issues and were passed within Locke's lifetime. He did not live to see prohibition mandated by the Eighteenth Amendment or woman suffrage enacted by the Nineteenth, but he worked for both.

Locke's advocacy was the advocacy of fairness. The hallmarks of his works were their clarity, consistency, and sound logic. The underlying tone throughout this study has been one of approbation of a man whose sincere dedication to worthy principles was beyond question. David Ross Locke was a consistent advocate.

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[261]Quoted in Cyril Clemens, Petroleum V. Nasby, pp. 121-22.

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