

"Unguarded Gates"
by
Thomas Bailey Aldrich

A Critical Edition

by

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Introduction

In *The Soul of America* (2018, pp. 117-8), historian Jon Meacham quoted Thomas Bailey Aldrich's notorious poem, "Unguarded Gates," without comment, offering it as a clear and obvious example of the anti-immigrant ethos that led up to Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (1920). Meacham may be the most recent writer to continue the view that Aldrich was violently opposed to non-white influence and immigration. Aldrich's poem first appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* 70 (July 1892): 57. He subsequently included it in his 1895 collection, *Unguarded Gates and Other Poems*.

This critical edition came into existence as I was working with manuscripts of the Sarah Orne Jewett correspondence and of the diaries of Annie Adams Fields. Of particular importance was Fields's "Diary of a West Indian Island Tour 1896." The trip she describes included, as passengers on a steam yacht, Jewett, Fields, and Aldrich. Taken along with their correspondence, a portrait of this group of close friends and literary colleagues emerges which was at odds with the generally received view of them in recent scholarship, especially concerning their views on race and immigration. This reading moved me to dig more deeply into a variety of sources that would reveal Aldrich's opinions more fully.

It is generally accepted that Aldrich and his two friends all were to some degree opposed to American open-borders after the Civil War, that they shared a nostalgia for an ante-bellum American society and genteel culture founded and sustained by white, northern Europeans. Repeatedly in the scholarship, writers have pointed to Aldrich's poem, "Unguarded Gates," as proof of his opposition to the waves of immigration in the later years of the 19th Century, the influx of peoples, particularly from southern Europe and Asia, who supposedly were adulterating what should be a white America.

This poem has become a main exhibit to support assertions about Aldrich's nativism, his belief that immigration to the United States should be restricted by race and national origin. All writers who comment on Aldrich seem agreed that he was an ardent nativist, as demonstrated by this poem and by his supposed membership in the Immigration Restriction League (IRL), which was founded in 1894 with the purpose of promoting legislation to bar or limit immigration by some racial and national groups, particularly those from southern and eastern Europe.

The biographical case for Sarah Orne Jewett's nativism that rests in part on this poem has been offered as evidence that American regionalism as a whole was complicit in various racist projects, including the new nativism, represented by the IRL.

This critical edition of "Unguarded Gates" includes three documents, an annotated edition of the poem in its two published states, a close reading of the

poem, and a report on my examination of Aldrich's relationship with the Immigration Restriction League. These materials call into question the contention that Aldrich favored racial and ethnic restrictions on immigration. While this work cannot establish finally what Aldrich and, by implication, Jewett thought about the new nativism, they do suggest strongly that more study is necessary. In Jewett's case, for example, it would seem essential -- before reaching conclusions about her thinking on nativism and immigration -- to follow the lead of Jack Morgan and Louis A. Renza, in *The Irish Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett* (1996), by examining how she represents immigrants and immigration in her fiction.

Earlier versions of these documents appear at the internet archive, The Sarah Orne Jewett Project, where they were originally published in November 2014. They have been revised for this publication, with the aid of commentary from fellow scholars, notably Ann Struthers.

April 2023

Chapter 1

"Unguarded Gates"

An Annotated edition of the 1892 *Atlantic Text*

Unguarded Gates

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

April 1892

In brackets appear Aldrich's revisions for his second publication of the poem, when he collected it in his book *Unguarded Gates and Other Poems* (1895).

WIDE open and unguarded stand our gates,
Named of the four winds, North, South, East, and West;
Portals that lead to an enchanted land
Of cities, forests, fields of living gold,
Vast prairies, lordly summits touched with snow,
Majestic rivers sweeping proudly past
The Arab's date-palm and the Norseman's pine --
A realm wherein are fruits of every zone,
Airs of all climes, for lo! throughout the year
The red rose blossoms somewhere -- a rich land,
A later Eden* planted in the wilds,
With not an inch of earth within its bound
But if a slave's foot press it sets him free!* [1895 text: him free.]
Here, it is written, Toil shall have its wage,
And Honor honor, and the humblest man
Stand level with the highest in the law.*
Of such a land have men in dungeons dreamed,
And with the vision brightening in their eyes
Gone smiling to the fagot and the sword.*

Wide open and unguarded stand our gates,* [1895 text: line is indented]
 And through them presses a wild motley throng --
 Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,*
 Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,
 Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav,
 Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;
 These bringing with them unknown gods and rites,
 Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.
 In street and alley what strange tongues are these, [1895 text: are loud,]
 Accents of menace alien to our air,
 Voices that once the Tower of Babel knew! *
 O Liberty, white Goddess!* is it well
 To leave the gates unguarded? On thy breast
 Fold Sorrow's children, soothe the hurts of fate,
 Lift the down-trodden, but with hand of steel
 Stay those who to thy sacred portals come
 To waste the gifts of freedom.* Have a care
 Lest from thy brow the clustered stars be torn*
 And trampled in the dust. For so of old
 The thronging Goth and Vandal trampled Rome,*
 And where the temples of the Cæsars stood
 The lean wolf unmolested made her lair.

Notes

A later Eden: The Garden of Eden appears in Genesis 2-3, as a place of fruitfulness and comfort, and of an original innocence, in which God places Adam and Eve, the first people.

if a slave's foot press it sets him free: Though slavery was legal and widely practiced throughout the United States from the founding until 1863, Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in the rebel states of the Confederacy during the Civil War (1860-1865), with his Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863. After the Union won the Civil War, the thirteenth amendment to the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution abolished slavery in the United States in December 1865.

the humblest man / Stand level with the highest in the law: The United States government takes as one of its principles Thomas Jefferson's statement in *The Declaration of Independence* (1776) that "all men are created equal." In legal terms this means that all individuals are entitled to due process of the law,

regardless of their ancestry, wealth or social position. The motto on the front of the United States Supreme Court building (1932-5) reads: "Equal Justice Under Law."

Gone smiling to the fagot and the sword: Aldrich says that people have willingly given their lives as martyrs (death by fire or by sword) and, perhaps, risked their lives in armed conflict, in service of the vision of a land like the United States, where the gifts of freedom are available to all.

Wide open and unguarded stand our gates: Aldrich refers to the general policy of the United States that all immigrants may freely enter the country, a policy that began to erode at the end of the 19th century. In general, business interests resisted calls for restrictions on the grounds that free immigration insured a plentiful labor supply. Further, Americans had long thought America was uniquely defined by its open borders, as expressed in the sonnet by Emma Lazarus (1849-1877), "The New Colossus," that was placed on a plaque at the Statue of Liberty in 1903. The poem concludes:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

However, in 1892, there *were* restrictions upon immigration, the main one being the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, renewed in 1892 and extended indefinitely in 1902. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says: "The Chinese Exclusion Act, formally Immigration Act of 1882, U.S. federal law that was the first and only major federal legislation to explicitly suspend immigration for a specific nationality. The basic exclusion law prohibited Chinese labourers -- defined as "both skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining"—from entering the country. Subsequent amendments to the law prevented Chinese labourers who had left the United States from returning. The passage of the act represented the outcome of years of racial hostility and anti-immigrant agitation by white Americans, set the precedent for later restrictions against immigration of other nationalities, and started a new era in which the United States changed from a country that welcomed almost all immigrants to a gate-keeping one."

John Higham, in *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955) notes that the first serious immigration control law after 1882, passed in 1891, included authority to deport undesirables, to prevent their arrival, and to exclude certain categories of immigrants on grounds of health or morality (99). The Ellis Island immigration station was opened in 1892 to aid in enforcing these controls.

Volga and the Tartar steppes: Aldrich lists national and racial groups of people who came to the United States, "Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn" and seeking the dreams of liberty, equality, and opportunity he describes in the first stanza. He identifies these groups as follows.

The *Volga* is the principal river of Western Russia.

Tartar steppes: *Britannica* says "Tatar, also spelled Tartar, any member of several Turkic-speaking peoples that collectively numbered more than 5 million in the late 20th century and lived mainly in west-central Russia along the central course of the Volga River and its tributary, the Kama, and thence east to the Ural Mountains. The Tatars are also settled in Kazakhstan and, to a lesser extent, in western Siberia." *Britannica* identifies the steppe: "belt of grassland that extends some 5,000 miles (8,000 kilometres) from Hungary in the west through Ukraine and Central Asia to Manchuria in the east. Mountain ranges interrupt the steppe, dividing it into distinct segments; but horsemen could cross such barriers easily, so that steppe peoples could and did interact across the entire breadth of the Eurasian grassland throughout most of recorded history."

Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho: *Britannica:* "Huang He, Wade-Giles romanization Huang Ho, also spelled Hwang Ho, English Yellow River, principal river of northern China, often called the cradle of Chinese civilization. It is the country's second longest river, with a length of 3,395 miles (5,464 km), and its drainage basin is the third largest in China -- an area of some 290,000 square miles (750,000 square km)."

In describing the Chinese as featureless, Aldrich apparently deploys the stereotype of the "inscrutable Oriental." In *The Stillwater Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1880), Aldrich presents a Chinese character who is described in Chapter 11 as a "featureless Celestial." In Chapter 17, he elaborates by saying that upon returning to the New England village of Stillwater after his laundry business was wrecked by strikers in his absence, he appears "with no more facial expression than an orange."

Malayan: *Britannica* identifies Malaysians as "any member of an ethnic group of the Malay Peninsula and portions of adjacent islands of Southeast Asia, including the east coast of Sumatra, the coast of Borneo, and smaller islands that lie between these areas. The Malays speak various dialects belonging to the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) family of languages."

Scythian: *Britannica* identifies the Scythians as members of "a nomadic people originally of Iranian stock who migrated from Central Asia to southern Russia in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. The Scythians founded a rich, powerful empire centred on what is now Crimea. The empire survived for several centuries before succumbing to the Sarmatians during the 4th century BCE to the 2nd

century CE. Much of what is known of the history of the Scythians comes from the account of them by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who visited their territory."

Teuton: Britannica says that Teuton is an alternate name for Germanic peoples, those Indo-Europeans who speak Germanic languages.

Kelt: Of Celtic languages, *Britannica* says: "also spelled Keltic, branch of the Indo-European language family, spoken throughout much of Western Europe in Roman and pre-Roman times and currently known chiefly in the British Isles and in the Brittany peninsula of northwestern France. On both geographic and chronological grounds, the languages fall into two divisions, usually known as Continental Celtic and Insular Celtic." The main western European language groups in the 19th century were Romance (Latin based), Germanic and Celtic. Modern Romance languages include Italian, French and Spanish. Modern Germanic languages include English, German and the Scandinavian languages. Aldrich's readers would certainly have identified the Irish as Celts, though most at that time were English speakers.

Slav: speakers of Slavic or Slavonic languages. *Britannica* says these Indo-European languages are "spoken in most of eastern Europe, much of the Balkans, parts of central Europe, and the northern part of Asia."

Voices that once the Tower of Babel knew: *Britannica* summarizes the Biblical story from Genesis 11: 1–9. The account of its construction "appears to be an attempt to explain the existence of diverse human languages. According to Genesis, the Babylonians wanted to make a name for themselves by building a mighty city and a tower 'with its top in the heavens.' God disrupted the work by so confusing the language of the workers that they could no longer understand one another. The city was never completed, and the people were dispersed over the face of the earth."

O Liberty, white Goddess: While it would seem common sense to assume that Aldrich refers to the "Statue of Liberty" in this line, this allusion is problematic. While it is true that Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi's monumental sculpture on Liberty Island in New York City had been dedicated in 1886, that bronze sculpture would never have been white. However, there were many other popular images of versions of the Roman goddess Libertas that *were* white or in which she was depicted as dressed in white. Perhaps the most familiar image in the 21st century is the logo for Columbia Motion Pictures. Reasonably familiar to Aldrich and his contemporaries would have been the Enrico Causici statue of "Liberty" (1817), now in the National Statuary Hall; this depiction once stood behind the speaker's desk in the old chamber of the House of Representatives.

Perhaps more familiar would have been Thomas Gast's 1872 painting that was widely distributed as an engraving, "American Progress."

waste the gifts of freedom: Aldrich has enumerated the gifts of American freedom in his first stanza: access to a rich land, where slavery is outlawed, where one's work is rewarded, where what is honorable is recognized, where all are equal before the law.

Lest from thy brow the clustered stars be torn: Representations of the Goddess Liberty with stars upon her brow also are abundant, though perhaps the best known of these also is bronze, Thomas Crawford's (1814-1857) "Statue of Freedom" which appears at the top of the Capitol dome in Washington, DC. In the Gast painting, Liberty wears a single star upon her brow.

Goth and Vandal trampled Rome: Of the Goths, *Britannica* says they were: "a Germanic people whose two branches, the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths, for centuries harassed the Roman Empire. According to their own legend, reported by the mid-6th-century Gothic historian Jordanes, the Goths originated in southern Scandinavia and crossed in three ships under their king Berig to the southern shore of the Baltic Sea, where they settled after defeating the Vandals and other Germanic peoples in that area. Tacitus states that the Goths at this time were distinguished by their round shields, their short swords, and their obedience toward their kings. Jordanes goes on to report that they migrated southward from the Vistula region under Filimer, the fifth king after Berig and, after various adventures, arrived at the Black Sea. This movement took place in the second half of the 2nd century CE, and it may have been pressure from the Goths that drove other Germanic peoples to exert heavy pressure on the Danubian frontier of the Roman Empire during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Throughout the 3rd century Gothic raids on the Roman provinces in Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula were numerous, and in the reign of Aurelian (270–275) they obliged the Romans to evacuate the trans-Danubian province of Dacia.

Britannica describes the Vandals as "a Germanic people who maintained a kingdom in North Africa from AD 429 to 534 and who sacked Rome in 455."

Chapter 2

"Unguarded Gates": A Close Reading

Barbara Solomon in *Ancestors and Immigrants* reads Thomas Bailey Aldrich's 1892 poem, "Unguarded Gates," as expressing "a racial venom, prophetic of things to come" (88).¹ Joining Solomon is every other interpreter of this poem that I have encountered. Solomon's emphasis on prophecy is not typical, but most readers agree about the poem's racial venom. All paint Aldrich as in sympathy with the new manifestation of American nativism that began to emerge near the end of the 19th century in response to the "new immigration," in which patterns of European immigration to the United States shifted from dominance by northern and western Europeans, to dominance by southern and eastern Europeans. This new nativism sought to distinguish among European "races," and to argue that the southern and eastern races were not amenable to assimilation as Americans. "Unguarded Gates" is a main piece of evidence supporting the general agreement that Aldrich spoke for these new nativists. With trepidation, then, I will argue that all of these interpreters have mistaken Aldrich's thesis.

Aldrich opens with a description of the United States as:

A later Eden planted in the wilds,
With not an inch of earth within its bound
But if a slave's foot press it sets him free!
Here, it is written, Toil shall have its wage,
And Honor honor, and the humblest man
Stand level with the highest in the law.

In the second stanza he notes that the gates of this Eden stand wide open to all, welcoming those who share in the ideals of freedom, hard work, recognition of the good, and equality. He then specifies the many peoples who have responded to this welcome:

Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,
Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,
Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav,
Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;
These bringing with them unknown gods and rites,—
Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.

The consensus reading is that this is Aldrich's list of undesirable immigrants, of peoples he wishes to exclude from the United States. It may be significant that

he does not mention Africans, but this may cut more ways than one. He includes groups, such as Celts and Chinese, already on popular lists of undesirable immigrants, and such as Russians and Slavs, who would begin to appear among the undesirables as the Immigration Restriction League (founded in 1894) began to develop and bring forward legislative proposals.

However, Aldrich also includes Teutons on his list, the one group virtually every New Englander and many other Americans agreed was the foundational American race.² Teutons comprise all speakers of Teutonic languages, including *English*. Tim Prchal recognizes that this is a problem.³ If Aldrich is offering a list of races to be excluded from future immigration because at least some of them have unknown gods and rites and tiger passions that are destructive of American ideals, why does he include Teutons on this list? Prchal's solution is that Aldrich must want to end all immigration, to close the United States to all but the native born (41-2). While this conclusion is possible, the more reasonable explanation is that Aldrich means that representatives of all of these peoples have flown from "the Old World's poverty and scorn" and have sought out "the later Eden." Therefore, he counsels the "white Goddess" to take in *all* of them: "On thy breast / Fold Sorrow's children, soothe the hurts of fate, / Lift the down-trodden." His grammar seems to make clear that he means literally what he says, that *all* immigrants, *whatever their origins*, who share these American ideals should be taken into the arms of the white goddess. Even though many readers contrast Aldrich's poem with the famous Emma Lazarus sonnet that appears on a plaque at the base of the Statue of Liberty, when it comes to welcoming and comforting "your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," the two poems are in basic agreement.

Still, it is clear that Aldrich must want someone to be excluded from the United States. If not the peoples on his list, then whom? I believe Aldrich's transition from those to be welcomed to those to be turned away is somewhat muddled, and this may be the reason so many have misunderstood his intent. After listing peoples who have fled poverty and scorn, he seems to divide these immigrants into two groups:

These bringing with them unknown gods and rites,
Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.

Given the content of his list of immigrant peoples, it would appear obvious that many bring religious beliefs and practices that differ from each other. That is to be expected. Not to be expected are savage predators, come to do harm. These the goddess should hold back "with hand of steel": "In street and alley what strange tongues are these, / Accents of menace alien to our air, ..." These he says, "to thy sacred portals come / To waste the gifts of freedom." Aldrich says that he wants to restrict immigration, but he does not specify any group for exclusion except those who fail to value America's unique gifts. What is he talking about? Who are these people?

A minor point provides an introduction to dealing with this question. Between the *Atlantic Monthly* publication of this poem (July 1892: 57) and collecting it in his 1895 volume, *Unguarded Gates and Other Poems*, Aldrich changed one word: "what strange tongues are these" became "what strange tongues are loud." Between these two publications, Aldrich wrote to his friend George E. Woodberry, clarifying the identities of those whom he would bar from citizenship. This clarification suggests that the anger that motivated the poem grew between the two publications, spurring him to add emphasis to his condemnation of strange tongues of menace that would advocate the building of a new tower of Babel and that would trample what is sacred in America as did the Goths and Vandals in the Roman Empire.

In the letter of May 14, 1892 to George E. Woodberry, Aldrich elaborates his motivations and intentions for "Unguarded Gates."⁴ Though he jokingly says that he was moved to write the poem by his failure to bid successfully for a rare copy of Edgar Allan Poe's *Tamerlane* (1827), his more important motivation appears when he reports recently attending an anarchist meeting, where he heard speakers who seemed to want to destroy American democratic institutions for purely selfish reasons:

I went home and wrote a misanthropic poem called "Unguarded Gates" ..., in which I mildly protest against America becoming the cesspool of Europe. I'm much too late, however. I looked in on an anarchist meeting the other night, as I told you, and heard such things spoken by our "feller citizens" as made my cheek burn. These brutes are the spawn and natural result of the French Revolution; they don't want any government at all, they "want the earth" (like a man in a balloon) and chaos. My Americanism goes clean beyond yours. I believe in America for the Americans; ..., and I hold that jail-birds, professional murderers, amateur lepers..., and human gorillas generally should be closely questioned at our Gates.

He says nothing about excluding immigrants on the basis of religion or race or nationality. Those who would "waste the gifts of freedom" include anarchists, whom he sees as espousing an anti-American ideology. He also wants to filter out criminals and two other groups. By "amateur lepers," he may mean beggars. By "human gorillas," he may mean people who, for some reason, function at a subhuman level, perhaps the mentally incompetent. When he says he believes in "America for the Americans," he echoes a rallying cry of nativists throughout the nineteenth century, but Aldrich does not seem to mean that only the American-born and the easily assimilated should form the population of the future. Rather, as the poem says, he is willing to welcome all honest and reasonably competent immigrants who desire to become Americans ideologically. He wants to filter out those individuals who cannot or will not become good citizens. Of course, excluding individuals because of their political beliefs or even because they have a criminal record is deeply problematic, but it is far different from excluding groups of people on the basis of race or nationality, as new nativists began to advocate in the mid-1890s. This may seem like a minor distinction, but it is important.

Whatever Aldrich thought about dividing humanity into races and hierarchizing racial groups, in neither the poem nor the letter does he offer race as a rationale for restricting immigration. Aldrich goes on in his letter to express his characteristic pessimism. He shares his fear that a tipping point has passed, and he goes on to prophecy despairingly that America is destined to become, in words he attributes humorously to a "certain Arabian writer," Rudyard Kipling, "a despotism of the alien, by the alien, for the alien, tempered with occasional insurrections of decent folk." Presumably he was somewhat gratified by the Immigration Act of 1901, which attempted to filter out potential immigrants on the grounds of anarchist ideology and criminality, along with other restrictions. It is somewhat odd that Aldrich does not mention in his letters to Woodberry, the Immigration Act of 1891, which had set up immigration inspection stations and authorized turning back certain undesirable candidates on the basis of morality, or the Geary Act to extend the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which was discussed in Congress in the spring and passed in May of 1892.⁵ Such omissions may lead one to wonder whether Aldrich kept up with legislation about immigration.

Though Aldrich includes no Africans on his list of immigrant groups who have realized their dreams of freedom and equality in America, peoples of Africa still appear in the poem. When his speaker notes that there is no slavery in the United States, he implies that African-Americans are to be included as American citizens, and this entails that future *voluntary* Black African immigrants would have reason to expect the benefits of citizenship as long as they accept the values he has listed. It is not clear in the poem or letter that Aldrich has given this aspect of his poem any thought. His view of African Americans may be glimpsed in an 1889 essay, "Odd Sticks," that he revised for inclusion in *An Old Town By the Sea* (1893).⁶ There he recalls fondly the African American barber, Sol Holmes, who was one of the few "exotics" in the Portsmouth, NH of his boyhood. While the portrait he offers draws upon stereotypes -- e.g. in his noting that the man "possessed his race's sweet temper, simplicity, and vanity," -- there is nothing here to suggest that Black Africans should be excluded from future immigration. Also missing from this text and the poem is any awareness of the true position of African Americans in the decade leading up to *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1898), the Supreme Court decision that established legal racial apartheid in the United States.

Another people Aldrich mentions in the poem is Arabs, when he names the date-palm as a characteristic Arab tree, which marks one extreme in the various American climate. This at least suggests that Arabs who come from where date palms grow would find a familiar landscape in America. There seems to be nothing in the poem to suggest that he meant to exclude either Africans or Arabs from America, even though they are not included on a list that is meant to suggest the variety of successful American immigrants, without naming every actual immigrant group.

A reader may wonder about Aldrich's handling of Teutons. They make a somewhat surprising second appearance at the end of the poem, when Aldrich

compares the danger America faces from hostile immigrants to the catastrophe Rome experienced as the Goths and Vandals invaded the empire. The Goths and Vandals were Teutonic peoples, and when the Vandals sacked Rome in the fifth century, their kingdom was based in North Africa. Did Aldrich intend the ironies that arise from considering that the same Teutonic peoples who supposedly established the American institutions Aldrich admires were once the barbarians who overthrew the most successful empire in the western world? How does this idea comment upon his main argument? In his Woodberry letter, he uses a quite different comparison, asserting that the anarchists who inspired his poem want to bring about a French Revolution in America, which seems mad, given what the American system offers to anyone who understands its institutions and is willing to toil for his or her wage. What Aldrich means in his comparison of the fall of Rome with his foretold decline of America seems unclear, but these complexities and ironies lend support to the view that Aldrich's main concern in the poem is that America find ways of filtering out *individuals* who cannot or will not make reasonable use of the gifts of freedom. Teutons destroyed a great nation before reaching what Aldrich sees as even higher levels of civilization themselves. As a race, then, they were not doomed to inferiority or barbarism. But fomenting a French Revolution in America, which in Aldrich's mind, already has realized the best ideals of that revolution, provides evidence that allowing anarchists to immigrate to America is a mistake.

This new interpretation of "Unguarded Gates" challenges more than a century of consensus about the poem's meaning and its significance. The poem presents an apparent contradiction between its intentions and the cultural work which it has accomplished. While I believe that readers have been mistaken about the *meaning* of "Unguarded Gates," this may not greatly alter its *significance*. I argue that Aldrich's thesis is *not* that groups of peoples or nations should be prevented from immigrating, but that individuals who are seriously incompetent, criminal, or ideologically opposed to core American values should be excluded from immigrating. There is, in my view, no obvious racial venom in the poem, and it does not prophecy the racist projects of the new nativism. However, this reading of the poem focuses upon Aldrich's apparent *intentions* as expressed in the poem and in his letter to Woodberry. Accepting this reading has important consequences, for it requires that we do greater justice to Aldrich, instead of condescending to him, as we long have, as benighted on the topics of race and immigration. While his degree of enlightenment may not match that of twenty-first century literary figures and editors, in his own time, he was a thoughtful and largely generous moralist.⁷

Still, the significance of this poem may change only a little as a result of this new reading. The fact remains that *everyone* to date seems to have read the poem as advocating racial exclusions. It has been used as an example of this point of view by those who deplore it, but it also has served those who thought they saw in Aldrich a prominent supporter of their racist programs for restricting immigration. For one example, the first legislative proposal by the Immigration Restriction League (IRL) was to exclude people who were not literate in their

native language. According to John Higham, this bill passed through Congress for the first time in 1896, but was vetoed by President Grover Cleveland (99-101).⁸ Solomon points out that this legislation was not successful until 1917, when Congress passed it over the veto of President Woodrow Wilson (202). Even if the IRL interpreted "Unguarded Gates" as I have, the organization could have used the poem as evidence that a widely respected American literary figure would support their effort to exclude people who lacked a competence that may indicate their inability to assimilate and earn a living. Furthermore, it is possible that, if Aldrich was aware of this proposal, he might well have supported it.

Aldrich's 1880 novel, *The Stillwater Tragedy*, presents a New England village with a large population of immigrant laborers, in which all of the immigrant nationalities are represented with considerable respect, though he also is critical of them, mainly because they are so easily led into a labor strike by an immigrant socialist demagogue.⁹ "Unguarded Gates" was Aldrich's only direct public statement on the topic of immigration. His letter to Woodberry seems to be the only posthumously published document in which he elaborates on the poem and on immigration.⁹ If Aldrich was a new nativist or even an old-fashioned descendant of the Know-Nothings, there seems to be no direct evidence in his writings to support this view. Still, this does not mean that he harbored no sympathies for nativism. No search, no matter how diligent, is assuredly exhaustive. Furthermore, what may be inferred from Aldrich's literary work may yet yield indications that he shared at least some ideas with American nativists of the 19th century. By itself, though, "Unguarded Gates" provides no apparent evidence for connecting Aldrich with contemporary nativists.

Notes

¹ Barbara Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.

² Solomon offers a summary history of late nineteenth-century Teutonism in England and the United States (60-69). For more detail, see Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963, 84-122.

³ Tim Prchal, "Reimagining the Melting Pot and the Golden Door: National Identity in Gilded Age and Progressive Era Literature," *MELUS* 32:1 (Spring 2007), 29-51.

⁴ Ferris Greenslet, *The Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1908, 167-70.

⁵ *Immigration Act of 1891*: Wikipedia says "Section 1 of the 1891 Act relisted categories of excludable aliens, adding some new categories.[3] The new types of excludable aliens included persons likely to become public charges, persons suffering from certain contagious disease, felons, persons convicted of other crimes or misdemeanors, polygamists, aliens

assisted by others by payment of passage." See Wikipedia for "The Geary Act."

⁶ Thomas Bailey Aldrich, "Old Sticks," *Scribner's Magazine* 5,1 (January 1889): 124-128;

and *An Old Town By the Sea*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1893.

⁷ See for example, Rebecca Walsh, "Sugar, Sex, and Empire: Sarah Orne Jewett's 'The Foreigner' and the Spanish–American War," in *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, edited by John Carlos Rowe (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 303-319. Walsh recounts Aldrich's support of the Anti-Imperialism League and his angry reaction to American suppression of democratic revolution in the Philippines (311).

⁸ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955.

⁹ Thomas Bailey Aldrich, *The Stillwater Tragedy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1880.

⁹ There is at least one other letter to Woodberry related to the poem, dated April 21, 1892, in which Aldrich says: "I dropt into an anarchist meeting for a moment the other night, and I have written some verses in which I don't take a rose-colored view of 'the grand-republic of the [foam?]'. "Thomas Bailey Aldrich to George E. Woodberry, 21 April 1892. The Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Am 1587, Folder 4.

Chapter 3

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

and the Immigration Restriction League

Among Sarah Orne Jewett scholars, there is virtually universal agreement that her close friend, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, was an active and prominent member of the Immigration Restriction League (IRL). The IRL was a nativist organization founded in 1894 to change American immigration policy toward excluding classes of immigrants for reasons of race and national origin. The consensus about his membership is important because his association with the IRL is offered as a main part of the case that Aldrich and Jewett shared with their class of New Englanders and with New England regionalist authors in general a deep discomfort with post-Civil War social and economic changes that led them to yearn for a nostalgic vision of America as racially pure. This consensus is problematic because of the paucity of documentary evidence that Aldrich had *any* relationship with the IRL. While exhaustive research on this topic may be impossible, I have diligently searched in both published and unpublished materials for evidence of any sort of material connection between Aldrich and the IRL. Not only have I found no such evidence, but what I have discovered suggests fairly strongly that, if Aldrich had shown awareness of IRL policy proposals, he would have opposed nearly all of them. This lack of factual evidence does not prove that Aldrich harbored no nativist sympathies, but it does require reexamining Aldrich's writing as a precondition for making any new case concerning his beliefs about race and immigration. It cannot be regarded as established by evidence uncovered as of 2023 that Aldrich was an avowed nativist.

Sandra Zagarell, in "Country's Portrayal of Community and the Exclusion of Difference," argues that post-Civil War, elite New Englanders felt besieged by social unrest and that shifts in political and social power threatened their position of national leadership.¹ An important source of this threat, they came to believe, was immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Prominent among those who shared this fear was Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who was editor of *Atlantic Monthly* (1881-1890), and who was within the inner circle of friends of Jewett and Annie Fields from the early 1880s. Aldrich was "vehemently opposed to the unchecked influx of foreigners. Along with Henry Cabot Lodge, he was one of the most prominent proponents of the Immigration Restriction League." Zagarell is not alone in connecting Aldrich with the IRL. Ellery Sedgwick, in his history of *Atlantic Monthly*, says that Aldrich was generally uninterested in politics; his "only political association was a lifetime membership in the Immigration Restriction League" (168).²

Zagarell and Sedgwick are so certain of Aldrich's association with the IRL that neither cites a supporting documentary source. These critics and those who agree with or accept their assertions have pointed to just one piece of existing documentary evidence of Aldrich's connection with the IRL, his poem "Unguarded Gates," which first appeared in *Atlantic* in July 1892.³ This poem, says Zagarell, provides an outline of IRL beliefs, with its list of undesirable immigrants and its warning to the "white Goddess," Liberty, against allowing this threatening throng into the United States (40-2). To the contrary, I argue in "An Interpretation of Thomas Bailey Aldrich's 'Unguarded Gates,'" that the poem, while it *does* advocate for restricting immigration, does not propose that race or nationality become a basis for exclusion. Aldrich's infamous list of *undesirable* immigrants proves, upon close reading, to refer to the variety of peoples who have *successfully* assimilated to what Aldrich considers core American values. He does not specify a people or race to be denied access, mentioning only those individuals who would "waste the gifts of freedom." In an 1892 letter, Aldrich explains that he particularly had anarchists in mind for exclusion, but he adds as well that he would like to exclude criminals, beggars, and, perhaps, the mentally incompetent. Since the IRL's program was aimed quite specifically at controlling the immigration of particular European "*races*," Aldrich's poem supports the IRL only insofar as the organization, in practice, backed almost any restriction that might have the effect of reducing the influx of those who belonged to wrong races. While excluding individuals because of their political beliefs or even because of a criminal record is deeply problematic, still this is radically different from using race or nationality as a standard. As I am the only reader I know of to offer such a contrarian reading of the poem, my interpretation should not be accepted without careful examination. But if I am right about the poem, then Aldrich probably has published not a single word in which he openly befriends nativism, which in its post-Civil War forms argued for racial and national restrictions on immigration.⁴

When one searches for other corroboration of Aldrich's relationship with the IRL, one soon encounters problems of chronology. Therefore, a brief chronology will be helpful.

A Chronology of Aldrich's Relationship with the Immigration Restriction League

1890 Aldrich (1836-1907) leaves his editorial position at *Atlantic Monthly*, and this turns out to be the beginning of his retirement from magazine work.

1891 Immigration Act of 1891 establishes border stations to inspect immigrants and authorizes exclusions on several grounds.⁵

1892

April. Aldrich attends an anarchist meeting and is so appalled at what he observes that he writes "Unguarded Gates" in response.

May. Passage of the Geary Act, extending the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

May. Aldrich writes to his friend, George E. Woodberry, explaining that "Unguarded Gates" soon will appear in *Atlantic Monthly* and describing his purpose and motivation.

July. "Unguarded Gates" first appears in *Atlantic*, p. 57.

1894 Spring. "... a handful of Brahmin young people formed a committee which became the Immigration Restriction League of Boston," says Barbara Solomon.⁶

1895 "Unguarded Gates" is included in Aldrich's collection, *Unguarded Gates and Other Poems*.

1901 Aldrich's son, Charles, develops tuberculosis; Aldrich devotes himself to his care, which significantly limits his public life.

1903 Immigration Act of 1903 adds, among others, restrictions on anarchists. (See Zolberg, 228-9).

1907 Death of Aldrich on 19 March.

One minor implication of this chronology is that Sedgwick's assertion about Aldrich's "lifetime membership" in the IRL, even if it were accurate, proves virtually trivial. His membership could have lasted only through his final thirteen years, beginning after he had retired from his influential position at the *Atlantic*, and including that period of his life when his public visibility waned rather quickly. Still, public knowledge of Aldrich's membership in or sympathy for the group could have added to its respectability.

A more important implication of the chronology arises from noting that Aldrich's poem precedes the founding of the IRL by two years. Thomas F. Gossett says that in 1894:

A serious campaign was initiated for the restriction of immigration. The Immigration Restriction League, formed in Boston in 1894, advocated federal laws to stem the tide. John Fiske was the first president, and the executive committee consisted of a number of conservative and wealthy New Englanders. The next year Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in a widely discussed poem, "Unguarded Gates," published in the *Atlantic*, expressed the typical fears of the conservative restrictionist. (306)⁷

Gossett suggests that Aldrich's poem is connected with the founding of the IRL, that the league burst upon the public view in 1894 and the next year, Aldrich published his poem expressing his agreement with IRL analysis of immigration as a threat to America and restriction by race as the solution. This is problematic in several ways. Most obviously, Gossett misstates the *Atlantic* publication date of 1892; he has substituted the date of the book publication in 1895. Second, as a result, it appears to Gossett that Aldrich's poem is connected materially with the founding of the IRL, at least as a sign of Aldrich's active support. Solomon's overall account of the IRL, which squares on the whole with Higham's Chapter 4 of *Strangers in the Land*, shows that Gossett also is misleading in the above quotation about the IRL's activities. Though it was formed in 1894, the league did not exactly spring into action with proposals for racial limitations on immigration. About Aldrich, Solomon says "Unguarded Gates" expresses "a racial venom, prophetic of things to come" (88). That is, she reads the poem not as written somehow in concert with the IRL, but as a precursor event, pointing toward the ideology the IRL would gradually disseminate. While Solomon believes the poem shows Aldrich was sympathetic to imposing racial and national restrictions upon immigration, she does not associate him with the IRL or any organized nativists.

In Chapter 5 of *Ancestors and Immigrants*, on the founding of the IRL, Solomon says that Aldrich's generation, though expressing a variety of anxieties about perceived changes in the American population, was not ready to take action. Active policy advocacy fell to the younger generation, specifically to the group of Harvard graduates of 1889, who became the founding members of the IRL (99-102). In Solomon's three chapter history of the IRL, she emphasizes how difficult it proved for the league to gain support for the idea of restricting immigration on racial grounds. This is a difficult, but crucial point to grasp.

From a twenty-first century perspective, it is easy to assume that, in the decade leading up to the legal establishment of racial segregation by the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision (1898), all white Americans shared the same set of beliefs about the racial inferiority of non-whites. Therefore, one might easily assume that proposals for racial restrictions on immigration would face little opposition among power elites in the 1890s. Solomon argues that, in fact, opposition to IRL proposals was strong and complex.

A major complication in the accounts of Solomon and Higham, for example, was that a main goal of the IRL was to limit immigration from southern and eastern Europe, and these immigrants were officially white. Not until the years just before World War I did a convincing rationale for distinguishing among different white "races" gain popular attention. For another example, Henry Cabot Lodge, the Republican senator from Massachusetts (1893-1924), was a firm supporter of the IRL and an advocate in Congress for its legislative proposals, yet in the 1890s he avoided becoming publicly associated with the league, and he evaded public acknowledgement that the policies he supported were designed to impose racial limits on immigration (111-20). The first legislation put forward under IRL guidance was a revival of a late 1880s proposal for a literacy test: immigrants should be rejected if they are not literate in their own languages. Lodge sponsored this bill in 1896, in the hope that it would at least slow down immigration of undesirables, and it passed both houses of Congress. Solomon says that President Grover Cleveland understood that the bill's effect would be to reduce immigration of some nationalities and, denying its implicit "racial distinctions between the old and new Americans," he vetoed it (118-9, also Zolberg, 228-9). Another attempt to pass such legislation failed in 1898, helping to push the IRL into stasis for several years.

Aldrich sometimes commented on American politics in the letters that appear in Greenslet's biography, but he seems generally unaware of recent legislation on immigration. He says nothing in his May 1892 letter, for example, about the Immigration Act of 1891 and the 1892 Geary Act. The first actually had enacted some of the restrictions he recommends in his poem, and the second was in Congress even as he was writing to Woodberry. Had he been aware of the 1894 immigrant literacy proposal, he might well have supported it. However, like most Americans, he probably was unaware that this proposal was a discreet effort by Lodge and the IRL to move the country toward the idea of racial immigration restrictions. Because the IRL took pains to remain in the background and to conceal its ideology from a public known to be unsympathetic, it is unlikely that Aldrich became aware of the organization's goals (Solomon 201-2). Solomon points out that the IRL really came into its own after 1901, as the league began to work systematically to build a popular following on its foundation of mainly academic supporters (Chapter 7).

Chronology again is important. Solomon's account of the history of the IRL

shows that Aldrich was not directly connected with the founding of the league and that he was unlikely to have been aware of its ideology and its true policy goals before 1901. After 1901, Aldrich's participation in public life became severely restricted as he dedicated himself to caring for his afflicted son, and only then did the IRL undertake to "market" its ideas to the general public.

It seems highly unlikely that Aldrich ever was a member of the IRL or knowledgeable about its ideology and policy proposals. If my interpretation of "Unguarded Gates" is persuasive, then Aldrich almost certainly would have opposed IRL ideas and, had he understood the intent of the literacy restriction, he probably would have opposed that as well. However, that Aldrich is unlikely to have been associated with the IRL does not reveal much of importance about his attitudes toward immigration. My reading of "Unguarded Gates" shows that he supported immigration restrictions like those that were enacted in 1891 and 1901, to filter out individuals for reasons of ideology, health, wealth and criminality, but that he presented no rationale for controlling immigration by race. However, others have argued that, at various points in his career, Aldrich expressed *indirect* sympathy for nativist ideas.

John Tomsich, in *A Genteel Endeavor*,* says that Aldrich was the most radical opponent of free immigration among the genteel intellectuals of the Gilded Age whom he profiles (82), a case he builds mainly upon "Unguarded Gates."⁸ He points out that in his fiction, Aldrich routinely draws negative portraits of immigrants, for example the Italian labor unionist, Torrini, in *The Stillwater Tragedy** (1880).⁹ However, a careful reading of *The Stillwater Tragedy* shows that, while Aldrich was critical of political exploitation of immigrants and of the importation of socialist ideas, his portrait of the many immigrants in Stillwater is mainly sympathetic, even including Torrini. Still, Aldrich also could write negatively of immigrant groups. He seems quite critical of Irish and, perhaps, other immigrants in Boston. They presumably are among the participants at the anarchist meeting that sparked his poem. In the May 1892 letter to Woodberry he strikes at immigrants while mourning the passing of Trip, his beloved dog:

The dear little fellow! he had better manners and more intelligence than half the persons you meet "on the platform of a West-End car." He was n't constantly getting drunk and falling out of the windows of tenement houses, like Mrs. O'Flaharty; he was n't forever stabbing somebody in North Street. Why should he be dead, and these other creatures exhausting the ozone? (Greenslet 167-170)

Aldrich rails against immigrants in the slums, whom he also characterizes in the same letter, as manipulated by unscrupulous politicians in ways that degrade democracy, but his animus does not extend to those immigrants of the same nationalities whom he considers respectable. For example, Annie Fields recounts stories of Aldrich's genial relationship with the Irish servant, Bridget, who accompanied Aldrich and his wife on an 1896 Caribbean cruise that

included Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett.¹⁰ At the end of an unpublished letter to Woodberry of 15 May 1894, Aldrich reports reading "The Kearsarge,"¹¹ by the Irish immigrant poet James Jeffrey Roche (1847-1908), and thinking it better than anything by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow or John Greenleaf Whittier. He reflects, "It's funny, though, to have an Irishman writing our best national poems."

An especially interesting example of Aldrich showing a positive attitude toward immigrants is a revision he made to his memoir-essay "Odd Sticks" (1889) before including it in *An Old Town by the Sea* (1893).¹² In the final chapter, he recalls the African American barber in the Portsmouth, NH of his childhood, reflecting condescendingly that the man "possessed his race's sweet temper, simplicity, and vanity." He goes on to say that there were "few exotics" in Portsmouth during his youth, and, then, he inserts text that did not appear in "Odd Sticks": "The situation is greatly changed. I expect to live to see a Chinese policeman, with a sandal-wood club and a rice-paper pocket handkerchief, patrolling Congress Street." While it is possible that Aldrich expected his readers to understand this future as deeply disturbing, there is nothing obvious in his text to suggest this. Though he expresses nostalgia, he seems on the whole genially reconciled to changes that bring even Chinese immigrants into respectable positions in American society. This example is doubly interesting because Aldrich added this revision close to the time he published "Unguarded Gates." One would expect that he would seize this opportunity to complain about Chinese immigration, if his listing Chinese among supposedly undesirable immigrants shows that he favored the Chinese Exclusion act that was renewed in 1892.

Though this final example does not concern immigrants directly, still it sheds a provocative light upon Aldrich's attitudes toward other races. Rebecca Walsh recounts Aldrich's support of the Anti-Imperialism League and his angry reaction to American suppression of democratic revolution in the Philippines (311).¹³ She quotes Aldrich's 27 April 1899 letter to R. W. Gilder in which he describes Filipinos as "an unoffending people fighting for freedom and self-government -- as we did in 1776" (Greenslet, 204). Aldrich's ability to sympathize with distant non-white foreigners, enriched perhaps by his world travels, contrasts sharply with the views of nativist Henry Cabot Lodge, who characterized Filipinos as "excluded from those to whom 'the free consent of the governed' should apply" (Solomon, 120). Aldrich appears confident that Filipinos are capable of governing themselves democratically. This would imply that he did not share the nativist panic that the American annexation of the Philippines would initiate a new wave of inferior immigrants.

These examples should make clear that we critics and biographers have not yet understood Aldrich well enough to speak authoritatively about his attitudes toward immigration and nativism. While there is little doubt that Aldrich wanted to restrict immigration, I have found no unqualified evidence that he

made common cause with the racist nativism that was percolating at the end of his career and that gushed into public awareness after his death. While we have long thought that we had him securely labeled as an avowed nativist, in fact, we have not yet successfully characterized him. We owe him the simple justice to a fellow human being of getting his character right. But perhaps more important to literary study, we need to develop a more nuanced understanding of how Aldrich, Jewett, and New England regionalists thought about race, immigration, and nativism.

Notes

¹ Sandra Zagarell, "Country's Portrayal of Community and the Exclusion of Difference," in *New Essays on The Country of the Pointed Firs*, edited by June Howard, New York: Cambridge UP, 1994, 39-60.

² Ellery Sedgwick, *The Atlantic Monthly, 1857-1909*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.

³ Ferris Greenslet, *The Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1908, 167-70.

⁴ For a full history of American nativism in this period, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955). Aristide Zolberg, in Chapter 7 of *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), elaborates this history by developing a careful explanation for why it took 30 years from the first proposal of a literacy restriction to its enactment in 1917. His account emphasizes the complex international and American political, economic and social factors that determined the course of this proposal, and he notes that, though racial arguments played a role throughout, they only gradually came to carry significant weight in the debate, coming more openly into public discussion after Theodore Roosevelt's election in 1901.

⁵ Wikipedia says "Section 1 of the 1891 Act relisted categories of excludable aliens, adding some new categories. The new types of excludable aliens included persons likely to become public charges, persons suffering from certain contagious disease, felons, persons convicted of other crimes or misdemeanors, polygamists, aliens assisted by others by payment of passage."

⁶ Barbara Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956, 102. John Higham says that five "young bluebloods," recent Harvard graduates, became the founding members of the IRL (102-3).

⁷ Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. Dallas:

Southern Methodist University Press, 1963.

⁸ John Tomsich, *A Genteel Endeavor: American Culture and Politics in the Gilded Age*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1971.

⁹ Thomas Bailey Aldrich, *The Stillwater Tragedy*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1880.

¹⁰ Mark Antony De Wolfe Howe, *Memories of a Hostess: A Chronicle of Eminent Friendships Drawn Chiefly from the Diaries of Mrs. James T. Fields*. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1922, 292.

¹¹ Thomas Bailey Aldrich to George E. Woodberry, 15 May 1894. The Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Am 1587 (7), folder 5.

¹² Aldrich's representation of the immigrant Chinese laundry owner in *The Stillwater Tragedy* is an interesting mixture of stereotyping for humorous ends and sympathy for the plight of Han-Lin, who, like the local Black barber, is harassed by out-of-work laborers, when their prolonged, mainly unsuccessful strike leads them to seek scapegoats on whom to inflict their anger (Chapter 17). Also, the novel's protagonist, Richard Shackford, expresses his deep confidence in the power of assimilation in America, offering the prophecy that within 500 years, the United States will have a Chinese-American President (Chapter 11).

While it is easy to fault Aldrich for using stereotypes, it is appropriately humbling to note that this is a trap into which even enlightened citizens of the 21st century easily fall. Stereotyping is a slippery slope, at the peak of which one may find Harriet Beecher Stowe, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), with her characterization of whites as "naturally" rational and cold and blacks as "naturally" emotional and warm. In her world, society would be better were the races valued equally, benefiting from the strengths of both. But from that peak, all directions are down. Benevolent, well-meaning attribution of supposedly positive characteristics as "natural" to a race or ethnic group too quickly and easily devolves to what may be Aldrich's more neutral acceptance as fact that what he observes about his Portsmouth barber's natural "sweet temper, simplicity, and vanity" is shared by all Africans. From there the distance down is short to establishing a hierarchy of races based on their supposed "natural" characteristics, and hierarchies too easily become rationales for "special" treatment and exclusions.

¹³ Rebecca Walsh, "Sugar, Sex, and Empire: Sarah Orne Jewett's 'The Foreigner' and the Spanish-American War," in *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, edited by John Carlos Rowe (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 303-319.