

“The First Blow At The Chinese Question”

San Francisco Illustrated Wasp

December 8, 1877

Carlos Harris

First-Year Seminar (COLA 100) Cartoon Project
Fall 2012

Published as the cover story of “The San Francisco Illustrated Wasp” on December 8, 1877, “The First Blow at the Chinese Question” depicts the struggle between the American work force and the Chinese migrants. In front of a store in the middle of China Town, a protestor for the American “Working Men’s Procession” is shown punching a regular Chinese migrant man in his face. Inside the store, stands an angry crowd of Chinese migrants; behind the protestor, is more men supporting his cause against the Chinese. At first glance, the cartoon is straight forward, but there is deeper symbolism within the cartoon.

The picket sign the main protestor is holding reads “10,000 Strong” which is a representation of how many were against the Chinese. The other protestors are holding a sign with a Chinese man on the run, pointing out their intentions of running the Chinese out of the country. The image of the angry Chinese migrants is distorted and wavy; the front Chinese man is holding a gun as well. The portrayal of the Chinese in this way gives the idea that they are dangerous and will only cause grief for the nation.

