

Mark Twain, a Biography — Volume II, Part 2: 1886-1900 eBook

Mark Twain, a Biography — Volume II, Part 2: 1886-1900 by Albert Bigelow Paine

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BROWNING, MEREDITH, AND MEISTERSCHAFT

The Browning readings must have begun about this time. Just what kindled Mark Twain's interest in the poetry of Robert Browning is not remembered, but very likely his earlier associations with the poet had something to do with it. Whatever the beginning, we find him, during the winter of 1886 and 1887, studiously, even violently, interested in Browning's verses, entertaining a sort of club or class who gathered to hear his rich, sympathetic, and luminous reading of the Payleyings—"With Bernard de Mandeville," "Daniel Bartoli," or "Christopher Smart." Members of the Saturday Morning Club were among his listeners and others-friends of the family. They were rather remarkable gatherings, and no one of that group but always vividly remembered the marvelously clear insight which Mark Twain's vocal personality gave to those somewhat obscure measures. They did not all of them realize that before reading a poem he studied it line by line, even word by word; dug out its last syllable of meaning, so far as lay within human possibility, and indicated with pencil every shade of emphasis which would help to reveal the poet's purpose. No student of Browning ever more devoutly persisted in trying to compass a master's intent—in such poems as "Sordello," for instance—than Mark Twain. Just what permanent benefit he received from this particular passion it is difficult to know. Once, at a class-meeting, after finishing "Easter Day," he made a remark which the class requested him to "write down." It is recorded on the fly-leaf of *Dramatis Personae* as follows:

One's glimpses & confusions, as one reads Browning, remind me of looking through a telescope (the small sort which you must move with your hand, not clock-work). You toil across dark spaces which are (to your lens) empty; but every now & then a splendor of stars & suns bursts upon you and fills the whole field with flame. Feb. 23, 1887.

In another note he speaks of the "vague dim flash of splendid humming-birds through a fog." Whatever mental treasures he may or may not have laid up from Browning there was assuredly a deep gratification in the discovery of those splendors of "stars and suns" and the flashing "humming-birds," as there must also have been in pointing out those wonders to the little circle of devout listeners. It all seemed so worth while.

It was at a time when George Meredith was a reigning literary favorite. There was a Meredith cult as distinct as that of Browning. Possibly it exists to-day, but, if so, it is less militant. Mrs. Clemens and her associates were caught in the Meredith movement and read *Diana of the Crossways* and *the Egoist* with reverential appreciation.

The Meredith epidemic did not touch Mark Twain. He read but few novels at most, and, skilful as was the artistry of the English favorite, he found his characters artificialities—ingeniously contrived puppets rather than human beings, and, on the whole, overrated by their creator. *Diana of the Crossways* was read aloud, and, listening now and then, he was likely to say:

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“It doesn’t seem to me that Diana lives up to her reputation. The author keeps telling us how smart she is, how brilliant, but I never seem to hear her say anything smart or brilliant. Read me some of Diana’s smart utterances.”

He was relentless enough in his criticism of a literature he did not care for, and he never learned to care for Meredith.

He read his favorite books over and over with an ever-changing point of view. He re-read Carlyle’s French Revolution during the summer at the farm, and to Howells he wrote:

How stunning are the changes which age makes in man while he sleeps! When I finished Carlyle’s French Revolution in 1871 I was a Girondin; every time I have read it since I have read it differently—being influenced & changed, little by little, by life & environment (& Taine & St. Simon); & now I lay the book down once more, & recognize that I am a Sansculotte!—And not a pale, characterless Sansculotte, but a Marat. Carlyle teaches no such gospel, so the change is in me—in my vision of the evidences. People pretend that the Bible means the same to them at 50 that it did at all former milestones in their journey. I wonder how they can lie so. It comes of practice, no doubt. They would not say that of Dickens’s or Scott’s books. Nothing remains the same. When a man goes back to look at the house of his childhood it has always shrunk; there is no instance of such house being as big as the picture in memory & imagination call for. Shrunk how? Why, to its correct dimensions; the house hasn’t altered; this is the first time it has been in focus. Well, that’s loss. To have house & Bible shrink so, under the disillusioning corrected angle, is loss—for a moment. But there are compensations. You tilt the tube skyward & bring planets & comets & corona flames a hundred & fifty thousand miles high into the field. Which I see you have done, & found Tolstoi. I haven’t got him in focus yet, but I’ve got Browning.

In time the Browning passion would wane and pass, and the club was succeeded by, or perhaps it blended with, a German class which met at regular intervals at the Clemens home to study “der, die, and das” and the “gehabt habens” out of Meisterschaft and such other text-books as Professor Schleutter could provide. They had monthly conversation days, when they discussed in German all sorts of things, real and imaginary. Once Dr. Root, a prominent member, and Clemens had a long wrangle over painting a house, in which they impersonated two German neighbors.

Clemens finally wrote for the class a three-act play “Meisterschaft”—a literary achievement for which he was especially qualified, with its picturesque mixture of German and English and its unfailing humor. It seems unlike anything ever attempted before or since. No one but Mark Twain could have written it. It was given twice by the class with enormous success, and in modified



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form it was published in the Century Magazine (January, 1888). It is included to-day in his "Complete Works," but one must have a fair knowledge of German to capture the full delight of it.—[On the original manuscript Mark Twain wrote: "There is some tolerably rancid German here and there in this piece. It is attributable to the proof-reader." Perhaps the proof-reader resented this and cut it out, for it does not appear as published.]

Mark Twain probably exaggerated his sentiments a good deal when in the Carlyle letter he claimed to be the most rabid of Sansculottes. It is unlikely that he was ever very bare-kneed and crimson in his anarchy. He believed always that cruelty should be swiftly punished, whether in king or commoner, and that tyrants should be destroyed. He was for the people as against kings, and for the union of labor as opposed to the union of capital, though he wrote of such matters judicially—not radically. The Knights of Labor organization, then very powerful, seemed to Clemens the salvation of oppressed humanity. He wrote a vehement and convincing paper on the subject, which he sent to Howells, to whom it appealed very strongly, for Howells was socialistic, in a sense, and Clemens made his appeal in the best and largest sense, dramatizing his conception in a picture that was to include, in one grand league, labor of whatever form, and, in the end, all mankind in a final millennium. Howells wrote that he had read the essay "with thrills amounting to yells of satisfaction," and declared it to be the best thing yet said on the subject. The essay closed:

He [the unionized workman] is here and he will remain. He is the greatest birth of the greatest age the nations of the world have known. You cannot sneer at him—that time has gone by. He has before him the most righteous work that was ever given into the hand of man to do; and he will do it. Yes, he is here; and the question is not—as it has been heretofore during a thousand ages—What shall we do with him? For the first time in history we are relieved of the necessity of managing his affairs for him. He is not a broken dam this time—he is the Flood!

It must have been about this time that Clemens developed an intense, even if a less permanent, interest in another matter which was to benefit the species. He was one day walking up Fifth Avenue when he noticed the sign

*Professor Loisetle
school of memory*

The Instantaneous Art of Never Forgetting

Clemens went inside. When he came out he had all of Professor Loisetle's literature on "predicating correlation," and for the next several days was steeping himself in an infusion of meaningless words and figures and sentences and forms, which he must learn backward and forward and diagonally, so that he could repeat them awake and

asleep in order to predicate his correlation to a point where remembering the ordinary facts of life, such as names, addresses, and telephone numbers, would be a mere diversion.

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It was another case of learning the multitudinous details of the Mississippi River in order to do the apparently simple thing of steering a boat from New Orleans to St. Louis, and it is fair to say that, for the time he gave it, he achieved a like success. He was so enthusiastic over this new remedy for human distress that within a very brief time he was sending out a printed letter recommending Loisetette to the public at large. Here is an extract:

. . . I had no *system*—and some sort of rational order of procedure is, of course, necessary to success in any study. Well, Loisetette furnished me a system. I cannot undertake to say it is the best, or the worst, because I don't know what the other systems are. Loisetette, among other cruelties, requires you to memorize a great long string of words that, haven't any apparent connection or meaning—there are perhaps 500 of these words, arranged in maniacal lines of 6 to 8 or 9 words in each line—71 lines in all. Of course your first impulse is to resign, but at the end of three or four hours you find to your surprise that you've *got* them and can deliver them backward or forward without mistake or hesitation. Now, don't you see what a world of confidence that must necessarily breed? —confidence in a memory which before you wouldn't even venture to trust with the Latin motto of the U. S. lest it mislay it and the country suffer. Loisetette doesn't make memories, he furnishes confidence in memories that already exist. Isn't that valuable? Indeed it is to me. Whenever hereafter I shall choose to pack away a thing properly in that refrigerator I sha'n't be bothered with the aforesaid doubts; I shall know I'm going to find it sound and sweet when I go for it again.

Loisetette naturally made the most of this advertising and flooded the public with Mark Twain testimonials. But presently Clemens decided that after all the system was not sufficiently simple to benefit the race at large. He recalled his printed letters and prevailed upon Loisetette to suppress his circulars. Later he decided that the whole system was a humbug.

CLXIII

LETTER TO THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND

It was one day in 1887 that Clemens received evidence that his reputation as a successful author and publisher—a man of wealth and revenues—had penetrated even the dimness of the British Tax Offices. A formidable envelope came, inclosing a letter from his London publishers and a very large printed document all about the income tax which the Queen's officers had levied upon his English royalties as the result of a report that he had taken Buckenham Hall, Norwich, for a year, and was to become an English resident. The matter amused and interested him. To Chatto & Windus he wrote:

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I will explain that all that about Buckenham Hall was an English newspaper's mistake. I was not in England, and if I had been I wouldn't have been at Buckenham Hall anyway, but Buckingham Palace, or I would have endeavored to have found out the reason why . . .

But we won't resist. We'll pay as if I were really a resident. The country that allows me copyright has a right to tax me.

Reflecting on the matter, Clemens decided to make literature of it. He conceived the notion of writing an open letter to the Queen in the character of a rambling, garrulous, but well-disposed countryman whose idea was that her Majesty conducted all the business of the empire herself. He began:

Hartford, November 6, 2887.

Madam, You will remember that last May Mr. Edward Bright, the clerk of the Inland Revenue Office, wrote me about a tax which he said was due from me to the Government on books of mine published in London—that is to say, an income tax on the royalties. I do not know Mr. Bright, and it is embarrassing to me to correspond with strangers, for I was raised in the country and have always lived there, the early part in Marion County, Missouri, before the war, and this part in Hartford County, Connecticut, near Bloomfield and about 8 miles this side of Farmington, though some call it 9, which it is impossible to be, for I have walked it many and many a time in considerably under three hours, and General Hawley says he has done it in two and a quarter, which is not likely; so it has seemed best that I write your Majesty.

The letter proceeded to explain that he had never met her Majesty personally, but that he once met her son, the Prince of Wales, in Oxford Street, at the head of a procession, while he himself was on the top of an omnibus. He thought the Prince would probably remember him on account of a gray coat with flap pockets which he wore, he being the only person on the omnibus who had on that kind of a coat.

"I remember him," he said, "as easily as I would a comet."

He explained the difficulty he had in understanding under what heading he was taxed. There was a foot-note on the list which stated that he was taxed under "Schedule D, section 14." He had turned to that place and found these three things: "Trades, Offices, Gas Works." He did not regard authorship as a trade, and he had no office, so he did not consider that he was taxable under "Schedule D, section 14." The letter concludes:

Having thus shown your Majesty that I am not taxable, but am the victim of the error of a clerk who mistakes the nature of my commerce, it only remains for me to beg that you will, of your justice, annul my letter that I spoke of, so that my publisher can keep back

that tax money which, in the confusion and aberration caused by the Document, I ordered him to pay. You will not miss the sum, but this is a hard year for authors,



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and as for lectures I do not suppose your Majesty ever saw such a dull season.

With always great and ever-increasing respect, I beg to sign myself
your Majesty's servant to command,
mark Twain.

Her Majesty the Queen, London.

The letter, or "petition," as it was called, was published in the Harper's Magazine "Drawer" (December, 1889), and is now included in the "Complete Works." Taken as a whole it is one of the most exquisite of Mark Twain's minor humors. What other humorist could have refrained from hinting, at least, the inference suggested by the obvious "Gas Works"? Yet it was a subtler art to let his old, simple-minded countryman ignore that detail. The little skit was widely copied and reached the Queen herself in due time, and her son, Prince Edward, who never forgot its humor.

Clemens read a notable paper that year before the Monday Evening Club. Its subject was "Consistency"—political consistency—and in it he took occasion to express himself pretty vigorously regarding the virtue of loyalty to party before principle, as exemplified in the Blaine-Cleveland campaign. It was in effect a scathing reply to those who, three years, before, had denounced Twichell and himself for standing by their convictions.— [Characteristic paragraphs from this paper will be found under Appendix R, at the end of last volume.]

CLXIV

Some further account of Charles L. Webster & Co.

Flood-tide is a temporary condition, and the ebb in the business of Charles L. Webster & Co., though very deliberate, was not delayed in its beginning. Most of the books published—the early ones at least—were profitable. McClellan's memoirs paid, as did others of the war series.

Even The Life of Pope Leo XIII. paid. What a statement to make, after all their magnificent dreams and preparations! It was published simultaneously in six languages. It was exploited in every conceivable fashion, and its aggregate sales fell far short of the number which the general agents had promised for their first orders. It was amazing, it was incredible, but, alas! it was true. The prospective Catholic purchaser had decided that the Pope's Life was not necessary to his salvation or even to his entertainment. Howells explains it, to his own satisfaction at least, when he says:

We did not consider how often Catholics could not read, how often, when they could, they might not wish to read. The event proved that, whether they could read or not, the

immeasurable majority did not wish to read *The Life of the Pope*, though it was written by a dignitary of the Church and issued to the world with sanction from the Vatican.

Howells, of course, is referring to the laboring Catholic of that day. There are no Catholics of this day—no American Catholics, at least—who do not read, and money among them has become plentiful. Perhaps had the Pope's Life been issued in this new hour of enlightenment the tale of its success might have been less sadly told.

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A variety of books followed. Henry Ward Beecher agreed to write an autobiography, but he died just when he was beginning the work, and the biography, which his family put together, brought only a moderate return. A book of Sandwich Islands tales and legends, by his Hawaiian Majesty King Kalakaua, edited by Clemens's old friend, Rollin M. Daggett, who had become United States minister to the islands, barely paid for the cost of manufacture, while a volume of reminiscences by General Hancock was still less fortunate. The running expenses of the business were heavy. On the strength of the Grant success Webster had moved into still larger quarters at No. 3 East Fifteenth Street, and had a ground floor for a salesroom. The force had become numerous and costly. It was necessary that a book should pay largely to maintain this pretentious establishment. A number of books were published at a heavy loss. Never mind their titles; we may forget them, with the name of the bookkeeper who presently embezzled thirty thousand dollars of the firm's money and returned but a trifling sum.

By the end of 1887 there were three works in prospect on which great hopes were founded—'The Library of Humor', which Howells and Clark had edited; a personal memoir of General Sheridan's, and a Library of American Literature in ten volumes, compiled by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson. It was believed these would restore the fortunes and the prestige of the firm. They were all excellent, attractive features. The Library of Humor was ably selected and contained two hundred choice drawings by Kemble. The Sheridan Memoir was finely written, and the public interest in it was bound to be general. The Library of American Literature was a collection of the best American writing, and seemed bound to appeal to every American reading-home. It was necessary to borrow most of the money required to build these books, for the profit made from the Grant Life and less fortunate ventures was pretty well exhausted. Clemens presently found a little drift of his notes accumulating at this bank and that—a disturbing condition, when he remembered it, for he was financing the typesetting machine by this time, and it was costing a pretty sum.

Meantime, Webster was no longer active in the management. In two years he had broken down from overwork, and was now desperately ill with an acute neuralgia that kept him away from the business most of the time. Its burdens had fallen upon his assistant, Fred J. Hall, a willing, capable young man, persevering and hopeful, lacking only years and experience. Hall worked like a beaver, and continually looked forward to success. He explained, with each month's report of affairs, just why the business had not prospered more during that particular month, and just why its profits would be greater during the next. Webster finally retired from the business altogether, and Hall was given a small partnership in the firm. He reduced expenses, worked desperately, pumping out the debts, and managed to keep the craft afloat.

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The Library of Humor, the Life of Sheridan, and The Library of American Literature all sold very well; not so well as had been hoped, but the sales yielded a fair profit. It was thought that if Clemens himself would furnish a new book now and then the business might regain something of its original standing.

We may believe that Clemens had not been always patient, not always gentle, during this process of decline. He had differed with Webster, and occasionally had gone down and reconstructed things after his own notions. Once he wrote to Orion that he had suddenly awakened to find that there was no more system in the office than in a nursery without a nurse.

“But,” he added, “I have spent a good deal of time there since, and reduced everything to exact order and system.”

Just what were the new features of order instituted it would be interesting to know. That the financial pressure was beginning to be felt even in the Clemens home is shown by a Christmas letter to Mrs. Moffett.

Hartford, December 18, 1887.

Dear Pamela,—Will you take this \$15 & buy some candy or other trifle for yourself & Sam & his wife to remind you that we remember you?

If we weren't a little crowded this year by the type-setter I'd send a check large enough to buy a family Bible or some other useful thing like that. However, we go on & on, but the type-setter goes on forever—at \$3,000 a month; which is much more satisfactory than was the case the first 17 months, when the bill only averaged \$2,000, & promised to take a thousand years. We'll be through now in 3 or 4 months, I reckon, & then the strain will let up and we can breathe freely once more, whether success ensues or failure.

Even with a type-setter on hand we ought not to be in the least scrimped-but it would take a long letter to explain why & who is to blame.

All the family send love to all of you, & best Christmas wishes for your prosperity.

Affectionately,
Sam.

CLXV

LETTERS, VISITS, AND VISITORS



There were many pleasanter things, to be sure. The farm life never failed with each returning summer; the winters brought gay company and fair occasions. Sir Henry and Lady Stanley, visiting. America, were entertained in the Clemens home, and Clemens went on to Boston to introduce Stanley to his lecture audience. Charles Dickens's son, with his wife and daughter, followed a little later. An incident of their visit seems rather amusing now. There is a custom in England which requires the host to give the guest notice of bedtime by handing him a lighted candle. Mrs. Clemens knew of this custom, but did not have the courage to follow it in her own home, and the guests knew of no other way to relieve the situation; as a result, all sat up much later than usual. Eventually Clemens himself suggested that possibly the guests would like to retire.



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Robert Louis Stevenson came down from Saranac, and Clemens went in to visit him at his New York hotel, the St. Stevens, on East Eleventh Street. Stevenson had orders to sit in the sunshine as much as possible, and during the few days of their association he and Clemens would walk down to Washington Square and sit on one of the benches and talk. They discussed many things—philosophies, people, books; it seems a pity their talk could not have been preserved.

Stevenson was a great admirer of Mark Twain's work. He said that during a recent painting of his portrait he had insisted on reading Huck Finn aloud to the artist, a Frenchman, who had at first protested, and finally had fallen a complete victim to Huck's yarn. In one of Stevenson's letters to Clemens he wrote:

My father, an old man, has been prevailed upon to read *Roughing It* (his usual amusement being found in theology), and after one evening spent with the book he declared: "I am frightened. It cannot be safe for a man at my time of life to laugh so much."

What heaps of letters, by the way, remain from this time, and how curious some of them are! Many of them are requests of one sort or another, chiefly for money—one woman asking for a single day's income, conservatively estimated at five thousand dollars. Clemens seldom answered an unwarranted letter; but at one time he began a series of unmailed answers—that is to say, answers in which he had let himself go merely to relieve his feelings and to restore his spiritual balance. He prepared an introduction for this series. In it he said:

. . . You receive a letter. You read it. It will be tolerably sure to produce one of three results: 1, pleasure; 2, displeasure; 3, indifference. I do not need to say anything about Nos. 1 & 3; everybody knows what to do with those breeds of letters; it is breed No. 2 that I am after. It is the one that is loaded up with trouble. When you get an exasperating letter what happens? If you are young you answer it promptly, instantly—and mail the thing you have written. At forty what do you do? By that time you have found out that a letter written in a passion is a mistake in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred; that it usually wrongs two persons, and always wrongs one—yourself. You have grown weary of wronging yourself and repenting; so you manacle, you fetter, you log-chain the frantic impulse to write a pulverizing answer. You will wait a day or die. But in the mean time what do you do? Why, if it is about dinner-time, you sit at table in a deep abstraction all through the meal; you try to throw it off and help do the talking; you get a start three or four times, but conversation dies on your lips every time—your mind isn't on it; your heart isn't in it. You give up, and subside into a bottomless deep of silence, permanently; people must speak to you two or three times to get your attention, and then



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say it over again to make you understand. This kind of thing goes on all the rest of the evening; nobody can interest you in anything; you are useless, a depressing influence, a burden. You go to bed at last; but at three in the morning you are as wide awake as you were in the beginning. Thus we see what you have been doing for nine hours—on the outside. But what were you doing on the inside? You were writing letters—in your mind. And enjoying it, that is quite true; that is not to be denied. You have been flaying your correspondent alive with your incorporeal pen; you have been braining him, disemboweling him, carving him into little bits, and then—doing it all over again. For nine hours. It was wasted time, for you had no intention of putting any of this insanity on paper and mailing it. Yes, you know that, and confess it—but what were you to do? Where was your remedy? Will anybody contend that a man can say to such masterful anger as that, Go, and be obeyed? No, he cannot; that is certainly true. Well, then, what is he to do? I will explain by the suggestion contained in my opening paragraph. During the nine hours he has written as many as forty- seven furious letters—in his mind. If he had put just one of them on paper it would have brought him relief, saved him eight hours of trouble, and given him an hour's red-hot pleasure besides. He is not to mail this letter; he understands that, and so he can turn on the whole volume of his wrath; there is no harm. He is only writing it to get the bile out. So to speak, he is a volcano: imaging himself erupting does no good; he must open up his crater and pour out in reality his intolerable charge of lava if he would get relief.

Before he has filled his first sheet sometimes the relief is there.
He degenerates into good-nature from that point.

Sometimes the load is so hot and so great that one writes as many as three letters before he gets down to a mailable one; a very angry one, a less angry one, and an argumentative one with hot embers in it here and there. He pigeonholes these and then does one of two things—dismisses the whole matter from his mind or writes the proper sort of letter and mails it. To this day I lose my balance and send an overwarm letter—or more frequently telegram—two or three times a year. But that is better than doing it a hundred times a year, as I used to do years ago. Perhaps I write about as many as ever, but I pigeonhole them. They ought not to be thrown away. Such a letter a year or so old is as good as a sermon to the maw who wrote it. It makes him feel small and shabby, but—well, that wears off. Any sermon does; but the sermon does some little good, anyway. An old cold letter like that makes you wonder how you could ever have got into such a rage about nothing.

The unmailed answers that were to accompany this introduction were plentiful enough and generally of a fervent sort. One specimen will suffice. It was written to the chairman of a hospital committee.



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Dear sir,—If I were Smithfield I would certainly go out and get behind something and blush. According to your report, “the politicians are afraid to tax the people for the support” of so humane and necessary a thing as a hospital. And do your “people” propose to stand that?—at the hands of vermin officials whom the breath of their votes could blow out of official existence in a moment if they had the pluck to band themselves together and blow. Oh, come, these are not “people”—they are cowed school-boys with backbones made of boiled macaroni. If you are not misreporting those “people” you are just in the right business passing the mendicant hat for them. Dear sir, communities where anything like citizenship exists are accustomed to hide their shames, but here we have one proposing to get up a great “exposition” of its dishonor and advertise it all it can.

It has been eleven years since I wrote anything for one of those graveyards called a “Fair paper,” and so I have doubtless lost the knack of it somewhat; still I have done the best I could for you.

This was from a burning heart and well deserved. One may almost regret that he did not send it.

Once he received a letter intended for one Samuel Clements, of Elma, New York, announcing that the said Clements’s pension had been allowed. But this was amusing. When Clemens had forwarded the notice to its proper destination he could not resist sending this comment to the commissioner at Washington:

Dear sir,—I have not applied for a pension. I have often wanted a pension—often—ever so often—I may say, but in as much as the only military service I performed during the war was in the Confederate army, I have always felt a delicacy about asking you for it. However, since you have suggested the thing yourself, I feel strengthened. I haven’t any very pensionable diseases myself, but I can furnish a substitute—a man who is just simply a chaos, a museum of all the different kinds of aches and pains, fractures, dislocations and malformations there are; a man who would regard “rheumatism and sore eyes” as mere recreation and refreshment after the serious occupations of his day. If you grant me the pension, dear sir, please hand it to General Jos. Hawley, United States Senator—I mean hand him the certificate, not the money, and he will forward it to me. You will observe by this postal-card which I inclose that he takes a friendly interest in the matter. He thinks I’ve already got the pension, whereas I’ve only got the rheumatism; but didn’t want that—I had that before. I wish it were catching. I know a man that I would load up with it pretty early. Lord, but we all feel that way sometimes. I’ve seen the day when but never mind that; you may be busy; just hand it to Hawley—the certificate, you understand, is not transferable.

Clemens was in good standing at Washington during the Cleveland administration, and many letters came, asking him to use his influence with the President to obtain this or that favor. He always declined, though once—a few years later, in Europe—when he

learned that Frank Mason, consul-general at Frankfort, was about to be displaced, Clemens, of his own accord, wrote to Baby Ruth Cleveland about it.

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My dear Ruth, I belong to the Mugwumps, and one of the most sacred rules of our order prevents us from asking favors of officials or recommending men to office, but there is no harm in writing a friendly letter to you and telling you that an infernal outrage is about to be committed by your father in turning out of office the best Consul I know (and I know a great many) just because he is a Republican and a Democrat wants his place.

He went on to recall Mason's high and honorable record, suggesting that Miss Ruth take the matter into her own hands. Then he said:

I can't send any message to the President, but the next time you have a talk with him concerning such matters I wish you would tell him about Captain Mason and what I think of a Government that so treats its efficient officials.

Just what form of appeal the small agent made is not recorded, but by and by Mark Twain received a tiny envelope, postmarked Washington, inclosing this note in President Cleveland's handwriting:

Miss Ruth Cleveland begs to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Twain's letter and say that she took the liberty of reading it to the President, who desires her to thank Mr. Twain for her information, and to say to him that Captain Mason will not be disturbed in the Frankfort Consulate. The President also desires Miss Cleveland to say that if Mr. Twain knows of any other cases of this kind he will be greatly obliged if he will write him concerning them at his earliest convenience.

Clemens immensely admired Grover Cleveland, also his young wife, and his visits to Washington were not infrequent. Mrs. Clemens was not always able to accompany him, and he has told us how once (it was his first visit after the President's marriage) she put a little note in the pocket of his evening waistcoat, which he would be sure to find when dressing, warning him about his deportment. Being presented to Mrs. Cleveland, he handed her a card on which he had written "He didn't," and asked her to sign her name below those words. Mrs. Cleveland protested that she couldn't sign it unless she knew what it was he hadn't done; but he insisted, and she promised to sign if he would tell her immediately afterward all about it. She signed, and he handed her Mrs. Clemens's note, which was very brief. It said:

"Don't wear your arctics in the White House."

Mrs. Cleveland summoned a messenger and had the card she had signed mailed at once to Mrs. Clemens at Hartford.

He was not always so well provided against disaster. Once, without consulting his engagements, he agreed to assist Mrs. Cleveland at a dedication, only to find that he must write an apology later. In his letter he said:

I do not know how it is in the White House, but in this house of ours whenever the minor half of the administration tries to run itself without the help of the major half it gets aground.

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He explained his position, and added:

I suppose the President often acts just like that; goes and makes an impossible promise, and you never find it out until it is next to impossible to break it up and set things straight again. Well, that is just our way exactly—one-half the administration always busy getting the family into trouble and the other half busy getting it out.

CLVXI

A “PLAYER” AND A MASTER OF ARTS

One morning early in January Clemens received the following note:

DALY'S *theater, new York*, January 2, 1888.

Mr. Augustin Daly will be very much pleased to have Mr. S. L. Clemens meet Mr. Booth, Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Palmer and a few friends at lunch on Friday next, January 6th (at one o'clock in Delmonico's), to discuss the formation of a new club which it is thought will claim your (sic) interest.

R. S. V. P.

There were already in New York a variety of literary and artistic societies, such as The Kinsmen and Tile clubs, with which Clemens was more or less associated. It was proposed now to form a more comprehensive and pretentious organization—one that would include the various associated arts. The conception of this new club, which was to be called The Players, had grown out of a desire on the part of Edwin Booth to confer some enduring benefit upon the members of his profession. It had been discussed during a summer cruise on Mr. E. C. Benedict's steam-yacht by a little party which, besides the owner, consisted of Booth himself, Aldrich, Lawrence Barrett, William Bispham, and Laurence Hutton. Booth's original idea had been to endow some sort of an actors' home, but after due consideration this did not appear to be the best plan. Some one proposed a club, and Aldrich, with never-failing inspiration, suggested its name, The Players, which immediately impressed Booth and the others. It was then decided that members of all the kindred arts should be admitted, and this was the plan discussed and perfected at the Daly luncheon. The guests became charter members, and The Players became an incorporated fact early in January, 1888. —[Besides Mr. Booth himself, the charter members were: Lawrence Barrett, William Bispham, Samuel L. Clemens, Augustin Daly, Joseph F. Daly, John Drew, Henry Edwards, Laurence Hutton, Joseph Jefferson, John A. Lane, James Lewis, Brander Matthews, Stephen H. Olin, A. M. Palmer, and William T. Sherman.]—Booth purchased the fine old brownstone residence at 16 Gramercy Park, and had expensive alterations made under the directions of Stanford White to adapt it for club purposes. He bore the entire cost,

furnished it from garret to cellar, gave it his books and pictures, his rare collections of every sort. Laurence Hutton, writing of it afterward, said:



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And on the first Founder's Night, the 31st of December, 1888, he transferred it all to the association, a munificent gift; absolutely without parallel in its way. The pleasure it gave to Booth during the few remaining years of his life was very great. He made it his home. Next to his own immediate family it was his chief interest, care, and consolation. He nursed and petted it, as it nursed and petted and honored him. He died in it. And it is certainly his greatest monument.

There is no other club quite like The Players. The personality of Edwin Booth pervades it, and there is a spirit in its atmosphere not found in other large clubs—a spirit of unity, and ancient friendship, and mellowness which usually come only of small membership and long establishment. Mark Twain was always fond of The Players, and more than once made it his home. It is a true home, and its members are a genuine brotherhood.

It was in June, 1888, that Yale College conferred upon Samuel Clemens the degree of Master of Arts. It was his first honor of this kind, and he was proud of it. To Charles Hopkins ("Charley") Clark, who had been appointed to apprise him of the honor, he wrote:

I felt mighty proud of that degree; in fact I could squeeze the truth a little closer and say vain of it. And why shouldn't I be? I am the only literary animal of my particular subspecies who has ever been given a degree by any college in any age of the world as far as I know.

To which Clark answered:

My dear friend, You are "the only literary animal of your particular subspecies" in existence, and you've no cause for humility in the fact. Yale has done herself at least as much credit as she has done you, and "don't you forget it."

C. H. C.

Clemens could not attend the alumni dinner, being at Elmira and unable to get away, but in an address he made at Yale College later in the year he thus freely expressed himself:

I was sincerely proud and grateful to be made a Master of Arts by this great and venerable University, and I would have come last June to testify this feeling, as I do now testify it, but that the sudden and unexpected notice of the honor done me found me at a distance from home and unable to discharge that duty and enjoy that privilege. Along at first, say for the first month or so, I, did not quite know how to proceed because of my not knowing just what authorities and privileges belonged to the title which had been granted me, but after that I consulted some students of Trinity—in Hartford—and they made everything clear to me. It was through them that I found out that my title made

me head of the Governing Body of the University, and lodged in me very broad and severely responsible powers.I was told that it would be necessary



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to report to you at this time, and of course I comply, though I would have preferred to put it off till I could make a better showing; for indeed I have been so pertinaciously hindered and obstructed at every turn by the faculty that it would be difficult to prove that the University is really in any better shape now than it was when I first took charge. By advice, I turned my earliest attention to the Greek department. I told the Greek professor I had concluded to drop the use of Greek-written character because it is so hard to spell with, and so impossible to read after you get it spelt. Let us draw the curtain there. I saw by what followed that nothing but early neglect saved him from being a very profane man. I ordered the professor of mathematics to simplify the whole system, because the way it was I couldn't understand it, and I didn't want things going on in the college in what was practically a clandestine fashion. I told him to drop the conundrum system; it was not suited to the dignity of a college, which should deal in facts, not guesses and suppositions; we didn't want any more cases of if A and B stand at opposite poles of the earth's surface and C at the equator of Jupiter, at what variations of angle will the left limb of the moon appear to these different parties?—I said you just let that thing alone; it's plenty time to get in a sweat about it when it happens; as like as not it ain't going to do any harm, anyway. His reception of these instructions bordered on insubordination, insomuch that I felt obliged to take his number and report him. I found the astronomer of the University gadding around after comets and other such odds and ends—tramps and derelicts of the skies. I told him pretty plainly that we couldn't have that. I told him it was no economy to go on piling up and piling up raw material in the way of new stars and comets and asteroids that we couldn't ever have any use for till we had worked off the old stock. At bottom I don't really mind comets so much, but somehow I have always been down on asteroids. There is nothing mature about them; I wouldn't sit up nights the way that man does if I could get a basketful of them. He said it was the bast line of goods he had; he said he could trade them to Rochester for comets, and trade the comets to Harvard for nebulae, and trade the nebula to the Smithsonian for flint hatchets. I felt obliged to stop this thing on the spot; I said we couldn't have the University turned into an astronomical junk shop. And while I was at it I thought I might as well make the reform complete; the astronomer is extraordinarily mutinous, and so, with your approval, I will transfer him to the law department and put one of the law students in his place. A boy will be more biddable, more tractable, also cheaper. It is true he cannot be intrusted with important work at first, but he can comb the skies for nebulae till he gets his hand in. I have other changes in mind, but as they are in the nature of surprises



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I judge it politic to leave them unspecified at this time.

Very likely it was in this new capacity, as the head of the governing body, that he wrote one morning to Clark advising him as to the misuse of a word in the Courant, though he thought it best to sign the communication with the names of certain learned friends, to give it weight with the public, as he afterward explained.

Sir,—The word “patricide” in your issue of this morning (telegrams) was an error. You meant it to describe the slayer of a father; you should have used “parricide” instead. Patricide merely means the killing of an Irishman—any Irishman, male or female.

Respectfully,
J. Hammond Trumbull.
N. J. Burton.
J. H. Twichell.

CLXVII

NOTES AND LITERARY MATTERS

Clemens' note-books of this time are full of the vexations of his business ventures, figures, suggestions, and a hundred imagined combinations for betterment—these things intermingled with the usual bits of philosophy and reflections, and amusing reminders.

Aldrich's man who painted the fat toads red, and naturalist chasing and trying to catch them.

Man who lost his false teeth over Brooklyn Bridge when he was on his way to propose to a widow.

One believes St. Simon and Benvenuto and partly believes the Margravine of Bayreuth. There are things in the confession of Rousseau which one must believe.

What is biography? Unadorned romance. What is romance? Adorned biography. Adorn it less and it will be better than it is.

If God is what people say there can be none in the universe so unhappy as he; for he sees unceasingly myriads of his creatures suffering unspeakable miseries, and, besides this, foresees all they are going to suffer during the remainder of their lives. One might well say “as unhappy as God.”



In spite of the financial complexities and the drain of the enterprises already in hand he did not fail to conceive others. He was deeply interested in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress at the moment, and from photography and scenic effect he presaged a possibility to-day realized in the moving picture.

Dress up some good actors as Apollyon, Greatheart, *etc.*, & the other Bunyan characters, take them to a wild gorge and photograph them—Valley of the Shadow of Death; to other effective places & photo them along with the scenery; to Paris, in their curious costumes, place them near the Arc de l'Etoile & photo them with the crowd-Vanity Fair; to Cairo, Venice, Jerusalem, & other places (twenty interesting cities) & always make them conspicuous in the curious foreign crowds by their costume. Take them to Zululand. It would take two or three years to do the photographing & cost \$10,000; but this stereopticon panorama of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress could be exhibited in all countries at the same time & would clear a fortune in a year. By & by I will do this.



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If in 1891 I find myself not rich enough to carry out my scheme of buying Christopher Columbus's bones & burying them under the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World I will give the idea to somebody who is rich enough.

Incidentally he did an occasional piece of literary work. Early in the year, with Brander Matthews, he instructed and entertained the public with a copyright controversy in the *Princeton Review*. Matthews would appear to have criticized the English copyright protection, or rather the lack of it, comparing it unfavorably with American conditions. Clemens, who had been amply protected in Great Britain, replied that America was in no position to criticize England; that if American authors suffered in England they had themselves to blame for not taking the proper trouble and precautions required by the English law, that is to say, "previous publication" on English soil. He declared that his own books had been as safe in England as at home since he had undertaken to comply with English requirements, and that Professor Matthews was altogether mistaken, both as to premise and conclusion.

"You are the very wrong-headedest person in America," he said; "and you are injudicious." And of the article: "I read it to the cat—well, I never saw a cat carry on so before The American author can go to Canada, spend three days there and come home with an English and American copyright as strong as if it had been built out of railroad iron."

Matthews replied that not every one could go to Canada, any more than to Corinth. He said:

"It is not easy for a poor author who may chance to live in Florida or Texas, those noted homes of literature, to go to Canada."

Clemens did not reply again; that is to say, he did not publish his reply. It was a capable bomb which he prepared, well furnished with amusing instance, sarcasm, and ridicule, but he did not use it. Perhaps he was afraid it would destroy his opponent, which would not do. In his heart he loved Matthews. He laid the deadly thing away and maintained a dignified reserve.

Clemens often felt called upon to criticize American institutions, but he was first to come to their defense, especially when the critic was an alien. When Matthew Arnold offered some strictures on America. Clemens covered a good many quires of paper with caustic replies. He even defended American newspapers, which he had himself more than once violently assailed for misreporting him and for other journalistic shortcomings, and he bitterly denounced every shaky British institution, touched upon every weak spot in hereditary rule. He did not print—not then—[An article on the American press, probably the best of those prepared at this time, was used, in part, in *The American Claimant*, as the paper read before the Mechanics' Club, by "Parker," assistant editor of the 'Democrat'.]—he was writing mainly for relief—without success, however, for he only

kindled the fires of his indignation. He was at Quarry Farm and he plunged into his neglected story—A Yankee in King Arthur's Court—and made his astonishing hero the mouthpiece of his doctrines. He worked with an inspiration and energy born of his ferocity. To Whitmore, near the end of the summer, he wrote:



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I've got 16 working-days left yet, and in that time I will add another 120,000 words to my book if I have luck.

In his memoranda of this time he says:

There was never a throne which did not represent a crime. There is no throne to-day which does not represent a crime

Show me a lord and I will show you a man whom you couldn't tell from a journeyman shoemaker if he were stripped, and who, in all that is worth being, is the shoemaker's inferior; and in the shoemaker I will show you a dull animal, a poor-spirited insect; for there are enough of him to rise and chuck the lords and royalties into the sea where they belong, and he doesn't do it.

But his violence waned, maybe, for he did not finish the Yankee in the sixteen days as planned. He brought the manuscript back to Hartford, but found it hard work there, owing to many interruptions. He went over to Twichell's and asked for a room where he might work in seclusion. They gave him a big upper chamber, but some repairs were going on below. From a letter written to Theodore Crane we gather that it was not altogether quiet.

Friday, October 5, 1888.

Dear Theo, I am here in Twichell's house at work, with the noise of the children and an army of carpenters to help: Of course they don't help, but neither do they hinder. It's like a boiler factory for racket, and in nailing a wooden ceiling on to the room under me the hammering tickles my feet amazingly sometimes and jars my table a good deal, but I never am conscious of the racket at all, and I move my feet into positions of relief without knowing when I do it. I began here Monday morning, and have done eighty pages since. I was so tired last night that I thought I would lie abed and rest to-day; but I couldn't resist. I mean to try to knock off tomorrow, but it's doubtful if I do. I want to finish the day the machine finishes, and a week ago the closest calculations for that indicated Oct. 22—but experience teaches me that the calculations will miss fire as usual. The other day the children were projecting a purchase, Livy and I to furnish the money—a dollar and a half. Jean discouraged the idea. She said, "We haven't got any money. Children, if you would think, you would remember the machine isn't done."

It's billiards to-night. I wish you were here.

With love to you both, S. L. C.

P. S. I got it all wrong. It wasn't the children, it was Marie. She wanted a box of blacking for the children's shoes. Jean reproved her and said, "Why, Marie, you mustn't ask for things now. The machine isn't done."

Neither the Yankee nor the machine was completed that fall, though returns from both were beginning to be badly needed. The financial pinch was not yet severe, but it was noticeable, and it did not relax.

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A memorandum of this time tells of an anniversary given to Charles and Susan Warner in their own home. The guests assembled at the Clemens home, the Twichells among them, and slipped across to Warner's, entering through a window. Dinner was then announced to the Warners, who were sitting by their library fire. They came across the hall and opened the dining-room door, to be confronted by a table fully spread and lighted and an array of guests already seated.

CLXVIII

INTRODUCING NYE AND RILEY AND OTHERS

It was the winter (1888-89) that the Bill Nye and James Whitcomb Riley entertainment combination set out on its travels. Mark Twain introduced them to their first Boston audience. Major J. B. Pond was exploiting Nye and Riley, and Clemens went on to Boston especially to hear them. Pond happened upon him in the lobby of the Parker House and insisted that nothing would do but he must introduce them. In his book of memories which he published later Pond wrote:

He replied that he believed I was his mortal enemy, and determined that he should never have an evening's enjoyment in my presence. He consented, however, and conducted his brother-humorist and the Hoosier poet to the platform. Mark's presence was a surprise to the audience, and when they recognized him the demonstration was tremendous. The audience rose in a body, and men and women shouted at the very top of their voices. Handkerchiefs waved, the organist even opened every forte key and pedal in the great organ, and the noise went on unabated for minutes. It took some time for the crowd to get down to listening, but when they did subside, as Mark stepped to the front, the silence was as impressive as the noise had been.

He presented the Nye-Riley pair as the Siamese Twins. "I saw them first," he said, "a great many years ago, when Mr. Barnum had them, and they were just fresh from Siam. The ligature was their best hold then, but literature became their best hold later, when one of them committed an indiscretion, and they had to cut the old bond to accommodate the sheriff."

He continued this comic fancy, and the audience was in a proper frame of mind, when he had finished, to welcome the "Twins of Genius" who were to entertain them:

Pond says:

It was a carnival of fun in every sense of the word. Bostonians will not have another such treat in this generation.

Pond proposed to Clemens a regular tour with Nye and Riley. He wrote:

I will go partners with you, and I will buy Nye and Riley's time and give an entertainment something like the one we gave in Boston. Let it be announced that you will introduce the "Twins of Genius." Ostensibly a pleasure trip for you. I will take one-third of the profits and you two-thirds. I can tell you it will be the biggest thing that can be brought before the American public.

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But Clemens, badly as he was beginning to need the money, put this temptation behind him. His chief diversion these days was in gratuitous appearances. He had made up his mind not to read or lecture again for pay, but he seemed to take a peculiar enjoyment in doing these things as a benefaction. That he was beginning to need the money may have added a zest to the joy of his giving. He did not respond to all invitations; he could have been traveling constantly had he done so. He consulted with Mrs. Clemens and gave himself to the cause that seemed most worthy. In January Col. Richard Malcolm Johnston was billed to give a reading with Thomas Nelson Page in Baltimore. Page's wife fell ill and died, and Colonel Johnston, in extremity, wired Charles Dudley Warner to come in Page's place. Warner, unable to go, handed the invitation to Clemens, who promptly wired that he would come. They read to a packed house, and when the audience was gone and the returns had been counted an equal division of the profits was handed to each of the authors. Clemens pushed his share over to Johnston, saying:

"That's yours, Colonel. I'm not reading for money these days."

Colonel Johnston, to whom the sum was important, tried to thank him, but he only said:

"Never mind, Colonel, it only gave me pleasure to do you that little favor. You can pass it on some day."

As a matter of fact, hard put to it as he was for funds, Clemens at this time regarded himself as a potential multi-millionaire. The type-setting machine which for years had been sapping his financial strength was believed to be perfected, and ship-loads of money were waiting in the offing. However, we shall come to this later.

Clemens read for the cadets at West Point and for a variety of institutions and on many special occasions. He usually gave chapters from his *Yankee*, now soon to be finished, chapters generally beginning with the Yankee's impression of the curious country and its people, ending with the battle of the Sun-belt, when the Yankee and his fifty-four adherents were masters of England, with twenty-five thousand dead men lying about them. He gave this at West Point, including the chapter where the Yankee has organized a West Point of his own in King Arthur's reign.

In April, '89, he made an address at a dinner given to a victorious baseball team returning from a tour of the world by way of the Sandwich Islands. He was on familiar ground there. His heart was in his words. He began:

I have been in the Sandwich Islands—twenty-three years ago—that peaceful land, that beautiful land, that far-off home of solitude, and soft idleness, and repose, and dreams, where life is one long slumberous Sabbath, the climate one long summer day, and the good that die experience no change, for they but fall asleep in one heaven and wake up in another. And these boys have played baseball there!—baseball, which is the very



symbol, the outward and visible expression, of the drive and push and rush and struggle of the living, tearing, booming nineteenth, the mightiest of all the centuries!

He told of the curious island habits for his hearers' amusement, but at the close the poetry of his memories once more possessed him:



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Ah, well, it is refreshment to the jaded, it is water to the thirsty, to look upon men who have so lately breathed the soft air of those Isles of the Blest and had before their eyes the inextinguishable vision of their beauty. No alien land in all the earth has any deep, strong charm for me but that one; no other land could so longingly and so beseechingly haunt me, sleeping and waking, through half a lifetime, as that one has done. Other things leave me, but it abides; other things change, but it remains the same. For me its balmy airs are always blowing, its summer seas flashing in the sun; the pulsing of its surf is in my ear; I can see its garlanded crags, its leaping cascades, its plummy palms drowsing by the shore, its remote summits floating like islands above the cloud-rack; I can feel the spirit of its woody solitudes, I hear the plashing of the brooks; in my nostrils still lives the breath of flowers that perished twenty years ago.

CLXIX

THE COMING OF KIPLING

It was the summer of 1889 that Mark Twain first met Rudyard Kipling. Kipling was making his tour around the world, a young man wholly unheard of outside of India. He was writing letters home to an Indian journal, *The Pioneer*, and he came to Elmira especially to see Mark Twain. It was night when he arrived, and next morning some one at the hotel directed him to Quarry Farm. In a hired hack he made his way out through the suburbs, among the buzzing planing-mills and sash factories, and toiled up the long, dusty, roasting east hill, only to find that Mark Twain was at General Langdon's, in the city he had just left behind. Mrs. Crane and Susy Clemens were the only ones left at the farm, and they gave him a seat on the veranda and brought him glasses of water or cool milk while he refreshed them with his talk-talk which Mark Twain once said might be likened to footprints, so strong and definite was the impression which it left behind. He gave them his card, on which the address was Allahabad, and Susy preserved it on that account, because to her India was a fairyland, made up of magic, airy architecture, and dark mysteries. Clemens once dictated a memory of Kipling's visit.

Kipling had written upon the card a compliment to me. This gave it an additional value in Susy's eyes, since, as a distinction, it was the next thing to being recognized by a denizen of the moon.

Kipling came down that afternoon and spent a couple of hours with me, and at the end of that time I had surprised him as much as he had surprised me—and the honors were easy. I believed that he knew more than any person I had met before, and I knew that he knew that I knew less than any person he had met before—though he did not say it, and I was not expecting that he would. When he was gone Mrs. Langdon wanted to know about my visitor. I said:

“He is a stranger to me, but he is a most remarkable man—and I am the other one. Between us we cover all knowledge; he knows all that can be known, and I know the rest.”



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He was a stranger to me and to all the world, and remained so for twelve months, then he became suddenly known, and universally known. From that day to this he has held this unique distinction—that of being the only living person, not head of a nation, whose voice is heard around the world the moment it drops a remark; the only such voice in existence that does not go by slow ship and rail, but always travels first-class—by cable.

About a year after Kipling's visit in Elmira George Warner came into our library one morning in Hartford with a small book in his hand and asked me if I had ever heard of Rudyard Kipling. I said, "No."

He said I would hear of him very soon, and that the noise he was going to make would be loud and continuous. The little book was the *Plain Tales*, and he left it for me to read, saying it was charged with a new and inspiring fragrance, and would blow a refreshing breath around the world that would revive the nations. A day or two later he brought a copy of the *London World* which had a sketch of Kipling in it, and a mention of the fact that he had traveled in the United States. According to this sketch he had passed through Elmira. This remark, with the additional fact that he hailed from India, attracted my attention—also Susy's. She went to her room and brought his card from its place in the frame of her mirror, and the Quarry Farm visitor stood identified.

Kipling also has left an account of that visit. In his letter recording it he says:

You are a contemptible lot over yonder. Some of you are Commissioners and some are Lieutenant-Governors, and some have the V. C., and a few are privileged to walk about the Mall arm in arm with the Viceroy; but I have seen Mark Twain this golden morning, have shaken his hand and smoked a cigar—no, two cigars—with him, and talked with him for more than two hours! Understand clearly that I do not despise you; indeed, I don't. I am only very sorry for you, from the Viceroy downward. A big, darkened drawing-room; a huge chair; a man with eyes, a mane of grizzled hair, a brown mustache covering a mouth as delicate as a woman's, a strong, square hand shaking mine, and the slowest, calmest, levellest voice in all the world saying:

"Well, you think you owe me something, and you've come to tell me so. That's what I call squaring a debt handsomely."

"Piff!" from a cob-pipe (I always said that a Missouri meerschaum was the best smoking in the world), and behold! Mark Twain had curled himself up in the big arm-chair, and I was smoking reverently, as befits one in the presence of his superior. The thing that struck me first was that he was an elderly man; yet, after a minute's thought, I perceived that it was otherwise, and in five minutes, the eyes looking at me, I saw that



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the gray hair was an accident of the most trivial. He was quite young. I was shaking his hand. I was smoking his cigar, and I was hearing him talk—this man I had learned to love and admire fourteen thousand miles away. Reading his books, I had striven to get an idea of his personality, and all my preconceived notions were wrong and beneath the reality. Blessed is the man who finds no disillusion when he is brought face to face with a revered writer.

The meeting of those two men made the summer of '89 memorable in later years. But it was recalled sadly, too. Theodore Crane, who had been taken suddenly and dangerously ill the previous autumn, had a recurring attack and died July 3d. It was the first death in the immediate families for more than seventeen years, Mrs. Clemens, remembering that earlier period of sorrow, was depressed with forebodings.

CLXX

"The prince and the pauper" On the stage

There was an unusual dramatic interest in the Clemens home that autumn. Abby Sage Richardson had dramatized 'The Prince and the Pauper', and Daniel Frohman had secured Elsie Leslie (Lyde) to take the double role of the Prince and Tom Canty. The rehearsals were going on, and the Clemens children were naturally a good deal excited over the outcome. Susy Clemens was inspired to write a play of her own—a pretty Greek fancy, called "The Triumph of Music," and when it was given on Thanksgiving night, by herself, with Clara and Jean and Margaret Warner, it was really a lovely performance, and carried one back to the days when emotions were personified, and nymphs haunted the seclusions of Arcady. Clemens was proud of Susy's achievement, and deeply moved by it. He insisted on having the play repeated, and it was given again later in the year.

Pretty Elsie Leslie became a favorite of the Clemens household. She was very young, and when she visited Hartford Jean and she were companions and romped together in the hay-loft. She was also a favorite of William Gillette. One day when Clemens and Gillette were together they decided to give the little girl a surprise—a unique one. They agreed to embroider a pair of slippers for her—to do the work themselves. Writing to her of it, Mark Twain said:

Either one of us could have thought of a single slipper, but it took both of us to think of two slippers. In fact, one of us did think of one slipper, and then, quick as a flash, the other of the other one. It shows how wonderful the human mind is....Gillette embroidered his slipper with astonishing facility and splendor, but I have been a long time pulling through with mine. You see, it was my very first attempt at art, and I

couldn't rightly get the hang of it along at first. And then I was so busy that I couldn't get a chance to work at it at home, and they wouldn't



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let me embroider on the cars; they said it made the other passengers afraid. They didn't like the light that flared into my eye when I had an inspiration. And even the most fair-minded people doubted me when I explained what it was I was making—especially brakemen. Brakemen always swore at it and carried on, the way ignorant people do about art. They wouldn't take my word that it was a slipper; they said they believed it was a snow-shoe that had some kind of disease.

He went on to explain and elucidate the pattern of the slipper, and how Dr. Root had come in and insisted on taking a hand in it, and how beautiful it was to see him sit there and tell Mrs. Clemens what had been happening while they were away during the summer, holding the slipper up toward the end of his nose, imagining the canvas was a "subject" with a scalp-wound, working with a "lovely surgical stitch," never hesitating a moment in his talk except to say "Ouch!" when he stuck himself with the needle.

Take the slippers and wear them next your heart, Elsie dear; for every stitch in them is a testimony of the affection which two of your loyalest friends bear you. Every single stitch cost us blood. I've got twice as many pores in me now as I used to have; and you would never believe how many places you can stick a needle in yourself until you go into the embroidery line and devote yourself to art.

Do not wear these slippers in public, dear; it would only excite envy; and, as like as not, somebody would try to shoot you.

Merely use them to assist you in remembering that among the many, many people who think all the world of you is your friend,

Mark Twain.

The play of "The Prince and the Pauper," dramatized by Mrs. Richardson and arranged for the stage by David Belasco, was produced at the Park Theater, Philadelphia, on Christmas Eve. It was a success, but not a lavish one. The play was well written and staged, and Elsie Leslie was charming enough in her parts, but in the duality lay the difficulty. The strongest scenes in the story had to be omitted when one performer played both Tom Canty and the little Prince. The play came to New York—to the Broadway Theater—and was well received. On the opening night there Mark Twain made a speech, in which he said that the presentation of "The Prince and the Pauper" realized a dream which fifteen years before had possessed him all through a long downtown tramp, amid the crowds and confusion of Broadway. In Elsie Leslie, he said, he had found the embodiment of his dream, and to her he offered homage as the only prince clothed in a divine right which was not rags and sham—the divine right of an inborn supremacy in art.



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It seems incredible to-day that, realizing the play's possibilities as Mark Twain did, and as Belasco and Daniel Frohman must have done, they did not complete their partial triumph by finding another child actress to take the part of Tom Canty. Clemens urged and pleaded with them, but perhaps the undertaking seemed too difficult—at all events they did not find the little beggar king. Then legal complications developed. Edward House, to whom Clemens had once given a permission to attempt a dramatization of the play, suddenly appeared with a demand for recognition, backed by a lawsuit against all those who had a proprietary interest in the production. House, with his adopted Japanese daughter Koto, during a period of rheumatism and financial depression, had made a prolonged visit in the Clemens home and originally undertook the dramatization as a sort of return for hospitality. He appears not to have completed it and to have made no arrangement for its production or to have taken any definite step until Mrs. Richardson's play was profitably put on; whereupon his suit and injunction.

By the time a settlement of this claim had been reached the play had run its course, and it was not revived in that form. It was brought out in England, where it was fairly prosperous, though it seems not to have been long continued. Various reconstructed, it has occasionally been played since, and always, when the parts of Tom Canty and the Prince were separate, with great success. Why this beautiful drama should ever be absent from the boards is one of the unexplainable things. It is a play for all times and seasons, the difficulty of obtaining suitable "twin" interpreters for the characters of the Prince and the Pauper being its only drawback.

CLXXI

"A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"

From every point of view it seemed necessary to make the 'Yankee in King Arthur's Court' an important and pretentious publication. It was Mark Twain's first book after a silence of five years; it was a book badly needed by his publishing business with which to maintain its prestige and profit; it was a book which was to come out of his maturity and present his deductions, as to humanity at large and kings in particular, to a waiting public. It was determined to spare no expense on the manufacture, also that its illustrations must be of a sort to illuminate and, indeed, to elaborate the text. Clemens had admired some pictures made by Daniel Carter ("Dan") Beard for a Chinese story in the *Cosmopolitan*, and made up his mind that Beard was the man for the Yankee. The manuscript was sent to Beard, who met Clemens a little later in the office of Webster & Co. to discuss the matter. Clemens said:

"Mr. Beard, I do not want to subject you to any undue suffering, but I wish you would read the book before you make the pictures."

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Beard replied that he had already read it twice.

“Very good,” Clemens said; “but I wasn’t led to suppose that that was the usual custom among illustrators, judging from some results I have seen. You know,” he went on, “this Yankee of mine has neither the refinement nor the weakness of a college education; he is a perfect ignoramus; he is boss of a machine shop; he can build a locomotive or a Colt’s revolver, he can put up and run a telegraph line, but he’s an ignoramus, nevertheless. I am not going to tell you what to draw. If a man comes to me and says, ‘Mr. Clemens, I want you to write me a story,’ I’ll write it for him; but if he undertakes to tell me what to write I’ll say, ‘Go hire a typewriter.’”

To Hall a few days later he wrote:

Tell Beard to obey his own inspirations, and when he sees a picture in his mind put that picture on paper, be it humorous or be it serious. I want his genius to be wholly unhampered. I sha’n’t have any fear as to results.

Without going further it is proper to say here that the pictures in the first edition of A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court justified the author’s faith in the artist of his selection. They are far and away Dan Beard’s best work. The socialism of the text strongly appealed to him. Beard himself had socialistic tendencies, and the work inspired him to his highest flights of fancy and to the acme of his technic. Clemens examined the pictures from time to time, and once was moved to write:

My pleasure in them is as strong and as fresh as ever. I do not know of any quality they lack. Grace, dignity, poetry, spirit, imagination, these enrich them and make them charming and beautiful; and wherever humor appears it is high and fine—easy, unforced, kept under, masterly, and delicious.

He went on to describe his appreciation in detail, and when the drawings were complete he wrote again:

Hold me under permanent obligations. What luck it was to find you! There are hundreds of artists who could illustrate any other book of mine, but there was only one who could illustrate this one. Yes, it was a fortunate hour that I went netting for lightning-bugs and caught a meteor. Live forever!

This was not too much praise. Beard realized the last shade of the author’s allegorical intent and portrayed it with a hundred accents which the average reader would otherwise be likely to miss.

Clemens submitted his manuscript to Howells and to Stedman, and he read portions of it, at least, to Mrs. Clemens, whose eyes were troubling her so that she could not read for herself. Stedman suggested certain eliminations, but, on the whole, would seem to

have approved of the book. Howells was enthusiastic. It appealed to him as it had appealed to Beard. Its sociology and its socialism seemed to him the final word that could be said on those subjects. When he had partly finished it he wrote:



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It's a mighty great book and it makes my heart, burn with wrath. It seems that God didn't forget to put a soul in you. He shuts most literary men off with a brain, merely.

A few days later he wrote again:

The book is glorious—simply noble. What masses of virgin truth never touched in print before!

And when he had finished it:

Last night I read your last chapter. As Stedman says of the whole book, it's titanic.

Clemens declared, in one of his replies to Howells:

I'm not writing for those parties who miscall themselves critics, and I don't care to have them paw the book at all. It's my swan song, my retirement from literature permanently, and I wish to pass to the cemetery unclodded . . . Well, my book is written—let it go, but if it were only to write over again there wouldn't be so many things left out. They burn in me; they keep multiplying and multiplying, but now they can't ever be said; and besides they would require a library—and a pen warmed up in hell.

In another letter of this time to Sylvester Baxter, apropos of the tumbling Brazilian throne, he wrote:

When our great brethren, the disenslaved Brazilians, frame their declaration of independence I hope they will insert this missing link: "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all monarchs are usurpers and descendants of usurpers, for the reason that no throne was ever set up in this world by the will, freely exercised, of the only body possessing the legitimate right to set it up—the numerical mass of the nation."

He was full of it, as he had been all along, and 'A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court' is nothing less than a brief for human rights and human privileges. That is what it is, and it is a pity that it should be more than that. It is a pity that he should have been beset by his old demon of the burlesque, and that no one should have had the wisdom or the strength to bring it under control.

There is nothing more charming in any of Mark Twain's work than his introductory chapter, nothing more delightful than the armoring of the Yankee and the outset and the wandering with Alisande. There is nothing more powerful or inspiring than his splendid panoramic picture—of the King learning mercy through his own degradation, his daily intercourse with a band of manacled slaves; nothing more fiercely moving than that fearful incident of the woman burned to warm those freezing chattels, or than the great gallows scene, where the priest speaks for the young mother about to pay the death



penalty for having stolen a halfpenny's worth, that her baby might have bread. Such things as these must save the book from oblivion; but alas! its greater appeal is marred almost to ruin by coarse and extravagant burlesque, which destroys illusion and antagonizes the reader often at the very moment when the tale should fill

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him with a holy fire of a righteous wrath against wrong. As an example of Mark Twain at his literary worst and best the Yankee ranks supreme. It is unnecessary to quote examples; one cannot pick up the volume and read ten pages of it, or five pages, without finding them. In the midst of some exalted passage, some towering sublimity, you are brought suddenly to earth with a phrase which wholly destroys the illusion and the diviner purpose. Howells must have observed these things, or was he so dazzled by the splendor of its intent, its righteous charge upon the ranks of oppression, that he regarded its offenses against art as unimportant. This is hard to explain, for the very thing that would sustain such a great message and make it permanent would be the care, the restraint, the artistic worthiness of its construction. One must believe in a story like that to be convinced of its logic. To lose faith in it—in its narrative—is absolutely fatal to its purpose. The Yankee in King Arthur's Court not only offended the English nation, but much of it offended the better taste of Mark Twain's own countrymen, and in time it must have offended even Mark Twain himself. Reading it, one can visualize the author as a careering charger, with a bit in his teeth, trampling the poetry and the tradition of the romantic days, the very things which he himself in his happier moods cared for most. Howells likened him to Cervantes, laughing Spain's chivalry away. The comparison was hardly justified. It was proper enough to laugh chivalry out of court when it was a reality; but Mark Twain, who loved Sir Thomas Malory to the end of his days, the beauty and poetry of his chronicles; who had written 'The Prince and the Pauper', and would one day write that divine tale of the 'Maid of Orleans'; who was himself no more nor less than a knight always ready to redress wrong, would seem to have been the last person to wish to laugh it out of romance.

And yet, when all is said, one may still agree with Howells in ranking the Yankee among Mark Twain's highest achievements in the way of "a greatly imagined and symmetrically developed tale." It is of that class, beyond doubt. Howells goes further:

Of all the fanciful schemes in fiction it pleases me most, and I give myself with absolute delight to its notion of a keen East Hartford Yankee finding himself, by a retroactionary spell, at the court of King Arthur of Britain, and becoming part of the sixth century with all the customs and ideas of the nineteenth in him and about him. The field for humanizing satire which this scheme opens is illimitable.

Colossal it certainly is, as Howells and Stedman agreed: colossal in its grotesqueness as in its sublimity. Howells, summarizing Mark Twain's gifts (1901), has written:



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He is apt to burlesque the lighter colloquiality, and it is only in the more serious and most tragical junctures that his people utter themselves with veracious simplicity and dignity. That great, burly fancy of his is always tempting him to the exaggeration which is the condition of so much of his personal humor, but which when it invades the drama spoils the illusion. The illusion renews itself in the great moments, but I wish it could be kept intact in the small, and I blame him that he does not rule his fancy better.

All of which applies precisely to the writing of the Yankee in King Arthur's Court. Intended as a fierce heart-cry against human injustice —man's inhumanity to man—as such it will live and find readers; but, more than any other of Mark Twain's pretentious works, it needs editing —trimming by a fond but relentless hand.

CLXXII

THE "YANKEE" IN ENGLAND

The London publishers of the Yankee were keenly anxious to revise the text for their English readers. Clemens wrote that he had already revised the Yankee twice, that Stedman had critically read it, and that Mrs. Clemens had made him strike out many passages and soften others. He added that he had read chapters of it in public several times where Englishmen were present and had profited by their suggestions. Then he said:

Now, mind you, I have taken all this pains because I wanted to say a Yankee mechanic's say against monarchy and its several natural props, and yet make a book which you would be willing to print exactly as it comes to you, without altering a word. We are spoken of (by Englishmen) as a thin-skinned people. It is you who are thin-skinned. An Englishman may write with the most brutal frankness about any man or institution among us and we republish him without dreaming of altering a line or a word. But England cannot stand that kind of a book written about herself. It is England that is thin-skinned. It causeth me to smile when I read the modifications of my language which have been made in my English editions to fit them for the sensitive English palate. Now, as I say, I have taken laborious pains to so trim this book of offense that you'll not lack the nerve to print it just as it stands. I am going to get the proofs to you just as early as I can. I want you to read it carefully. If you can publish it without altering a single word, go ahead. Otherwise, please hand it to J. R. Osgood in time for him to have it published at my expense. This is important, for the reason that the book was not written for America; it was written for England. So many Englishmen have done their sincerest best to teach us something for our betterment that it seems to me high time that some of us should substantially recognize the good intent by trying to pry up the English nation to a little

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higher level of manhood in turn.

So the *Yankee* was published in England just as he had written it,—[The preface was shortened and modified for both the American and English editions. The reader will find it as originally written under Appendix S, at the end of last volume.]—and the criticisms were as plentiful as they were frank. It was referred to as a “lamentable failure” and as an “audacious sacrilege” and in terms still less polite. Not all of the English critics were violent. The *Daily Telegraph* gave it something more than a column of careful review, which did not fail to point out the book’s sins with a good deal of justice and dignity; but the majority of English papers joined in a sort of objugatory chorus which, for a time at least, spared neither the author nor his work. Strictures on the *Yankee* extended to his earlier books. After all, Mark Twain’s work was not for the cultivated class.

These things must have begun to gravel Clemens a good deal at last, for he wrote to Andrew Lang at considerable length, setting forth his case in general terms—that is to say, his position as an author—inviting Lang to stand as his advocate before the English public. In part he said:

The critic assumes every time that if a book doesn’t meet the cultivated-class standard it isn’t valuable . . . The critic has actually imposed upon the world the superstition that a painting by Raphael is more valuable to the civilizations of the earth than is a chromo; and the august opera more than the hurdy-gurdy and the villagers’ singing society; and the Latin classics than Kipling’s far-reaching bugle-note; and Jonathan Edwards than the Salvation Army If a critic should start a religion it would not have any object but to convert angels, and they wouldn’t need it. It is not that little minority who are already saved that are best worth lifting up, I should think, but the mighty mass of the uncultivated who are underneath! That mass will never see the old masters—that sight is for the few; but the chromo-maker can lift them all one step upward toward appreciation of art; they cannot have the opera, but the hurdy-gurdy and the singing-class lift them a little way toward that far height; they will never know Homer, but the passing rhymester of their day leaves them higher than he found them; they may never even hear of the Latin classics, but they will strike step with Kipling’s drum-beat and they will march; for all Jonathan Edwards’s help they would die in their slums, but the Salvation Army will beguile some of them to a purer air and a cleaner life. . . . I have never tried, in even one single little instance, to help cultivate the cultivated classes. I was not equipped for it either by native gifts or training. And I never had any ambition in that direction, but always hunted for bigger game—the masses. I have seldom deliberately tried to instruct them, but I have done my best to entertain them, for

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they can get instruction elsewhere My audience is dumb; it has no voice in print, and so I cannot know whether I have won its approval or only got its censure.

He closed by asking that Lang urge the critics to adopt a rule recognizing the masses, and to formulate a standard whereby work done for them might be judged. "No voice can reach further than yours in a case of this kind," he said, "or carry greater weight of authority." There was no humor in this letter, and the writer of it was clearly in earnest.

Lang's response was an article published in the Illustrated London News on the art of Mark Twain. He began by gently ridiculing hyperculture —the new culture—and ended with a eulogy on Huck Finn. It seems worth while, however, to let Andrew Lang speak for himself.

I have been educated till I nearly dropped; I have lived with the earliest apostles of culture, in the days when Chippendale was first a name to conjure with, and Japanese art came in like a raging lion, and Ronsard was the favorite poet, and Mr. William Morris was a poet, too, and blue and green were the only wear, and the name of Paradise was Camelot. To be sure, I cannot say that I took all this quite seriously, but "we, too, have played" at it, and know all about it. Generally speaking, I have kept up with culture. I can talk (if desired) about Sainte-Beuve, and Merimee, and Felicien Rops; I could rhyme "Ballades" when they were "in," and knew what a "pantoom" was And yet I have not culture. My works are but tinkling brass because I have not culture. For culture has got into new regions where I cannot enter, and, what is perhaps worse, I find myself delighting in a great many things which are under the ban of culture.

He confesses that this is a dreadful position; one that makes a man feel like one of those Liberal politicians who are always "sitting on the fence," and who follow their party, if follow it they do, with the reluctant acquiescence of the prophet's donkey. He further confesses that he has tried Hartmann and prefers Plato, that he is shaky about Blake, though stalwart concerning Rudyard Kipling.

This is not the worst of it. Culture has hardly a new idol but I long to hurl things at it. Culture can scarcely burn anything, but I am impelled to sacrifice to that same. I am coming to suspect that the majority of culture's modern disciples are a mere crowd of very slimly educated people who have no natural taste or impulses; who do not really know the best things in literature; who have a feverish desire to admire the newest thing, to follow the latest artistic fashion; who prate about "style," without the faintest acquaintance with the ancient examples of style in Greek, French, or English; who talk about the classics and—criticize the classical critics and poets, without being able to read a line of them in the original. Nothing of the natural man is left in these people; their intellectual equipment

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is made up of ignorant vanity and eager desire for novelty, and a yearning to be in the fashion. Take, for example—and we have been a long time in coming to him—Mark Twain. [Here follow some observations concerning the Yankee, which Lang confesses that he has not read, and has abstained from reading because——]. Here Mark Twain is not, and cannot be, at the proper point of view. He has not the knowledge which would enable him to be a sound critic of the ideals of the Middle Ages. An Arthurian Knight in New York or in Washington would find as much to blame, and justly, as a Yankee at Camelot.

Of Mark Twain's work in general he speaks with another conclusion:

Mark Twain is a benefactor beyond most modern writers, and the cultured who do not laugh are merely to be pitied. But his art is not only that of the maker of the scarce article—mirth. I have no hesitation in saying that Mark Twain is one among the greatest contemporary makers of fiction I can never forget or be ungrateful for the exquisite pleasure with which I read *Huckleberry Finn* for the first time years ago. I read it again last night, deserting *Kenilworth* for Huck. I never laid it down till I had finished it. I perused several passages more than once, and rose from it with a higher opinion of its merits than ever. What is it that we want in a novel? We want a vivid and original picture of life; we want character naturally displayed in action; and if we get the excitement of adventure into the bargain, and that adventure possible and plausible, I so far differ from the newest school of criticism as to think that we have additional cause for gratitude. If, moreover, there is an unstrained sense of humor in the narrator we have a masterpiece, and *Huckleberry Finn* is, nothing less.

He reviews Huck sympathetically in detail, and closes:

There are defects of taste, or passages that to us seem deficient in taste, but the book remains a nearly flawless gem of romance and of humor. The world appreciates it, no doubt, but “cultured critics” are probably unaware of its singular value. The great American novel has escaped the eyes of those who watch to see this new planet swim into their ken. And will Mark Twain never write such another? One is enough for him to live by, and for our gratitude, but not enough for our desire.

In the brief column and a half which it occupies, this comment of Andrew Lang's constitutes as thoughtful and fair an estimate of Mark Twain's work as was ever written.

W. T. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews*, was about the only prominent English editor to approve of the Yankee and to exploit its merits. Stead brought down obloquy upon himself by so doing, and his separation from his business partner would seem to have been at least remotely connected with this heresy.



The Yankee in King Arthur's Court was dramatized in America by Howard Taylor, one of the Enterprise composers, whom Clemens had known in the old Comstock days. Taylor had become a playwright of considerable success, with a number of well-known actors and actresses starring in his plays. The Yankee, however, did not find a manager, or at least it seems not to have reached the point of production.



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CLXXIII

A SUMMER AT ONTEORA

With the exception of one article—"A Majestic Literary Fossil" —[Harper's Magazine, February, 1890. Included in the "Complete Works."] —Clemens was writing nothing of importance at this time. This article grew out of a curious old medical work containing absurd prescriptions which, with Theodore Crane, he had often laughed over at the farm. A sequel to Huckleberry Finn—Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer Among the Indians — was begun, and a number of its chapters were set in type on the new Paige compositor, which had cost such a gallant sum, and was then thought to be complete. There seems to have been a plan to syndicate the story, but at the end of Chapter IX Huck and Tom had got themselves into a predicament from which it seemed impossible to extricate them, and the plot was suspended for further inspiration, which apparently never came.

Clemens, in fact, was troubled with rheumatism in his arm and shoulder, which made writing difficult. Mrs. Clemens, too, had twinges of the malady. They planned to go abroad for the summer of 1890, to take the waters of some of the German baths, but they were obliged to give up the idea. There were too many business complications; also the health of Clemens's mother had become very feeble. They went to Tannersville in the Catskills, instead—to the Onteora Club, where Mrs. Candace Wheeler had gathered a congenial colony in a number of picturesque cottages, with a comfortable hotel for the more transient visitor. The Clemenses secured a cottage for the season. Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, Laurence Hutton, Carroll Beckwith, the painter; Brander Matthews, Dr. Heber Newton, Mrs. Custer, and Dora Wheeler were among those who welcomed Mark Twain and his family at a generous home-made banquet.

It was the beginning of a happy summer. There was a constant visiting from one cottage to another, with frequent assemblings at the Bear and Fox Inn, their general headquarters. There were pantomimes and charades, in which Mark Twain and his daughters always had star parts. Susy Clemens, who was now eighteen, brilliant and charming, was beginning to rival her father as a leader of entertainment. Her sister Clara gave impersonations of Modjeska and Ada Rehan. When Fourth of July came there were burlesque races, of which Mark Twain was starter, and many of that lighthearted company took part. Sometimes, in the evening, they gathered in one of the cottages and told stories by the firelight, and once he told the story of the Golden Arm, so long remembered, and brought them up with the same old jump at the sudden climax. Brander Matthews remembers that Clemens was obliged frequently to go to New York on business connected with the machine and the publishing, and that during one of these absences a professional entertainer came along, and in the course of his program told a Mark Twain story, at which Mrs. Clemens and the girls laughed without recognizing its authorship. Matthews also remembers Jean, as a little girl of ten,

allowed to ride a pony and to go barefoot, to her great delight, full of health and happiness, a favorite of the colony.

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Clemens would seem to have forgiven Brander Matthews for his copyright articles, for he walked over to the Matthews cottage one morning and asked to be taught piquet, the card game most in vogue there that season. At odd times he sat to Carroll Beckwith for his portrait, and smoked a cob pipe meantime, so Beckwith painted him in that way.

It was a season that closed sadly. Clemens was called to Keokuk in August, to his mother's bedside, for it was believed that her end was near. She rallied, and he returned to Onteora. But on the 27th of October came the close of that long, active life, and the woman who two generations before had followed John Clemens into the wilderness, and along the path of vicissitude, was borne by her children to Hannibal and laid to rest at his side. She was in her eighty-eighth year.

The Clemens family were back in Hartford by this time, and it was only a little later that Mrs. Clemens was summoned to the death-bed of her own mother, in Elmira. Clemens accompanied her, but Jean being taken suddenly ill he returned to Hartford. Watching by the little girl's bedside on the night of the 27th of November, he wrote Mrs. Clemens a birthday letter, telling of Jean's improved condition and sending other good news and as many loving messages as he could devise. But it proved a sad birthday for Mrs. Clemens, for on that day her mother's gentle and beautiful soul went out from among them. The foreboding she had felt at the passing of Theodore Crane had been justified. She had a dread that the harvest of death was not yet ended. Matters in general were going badly with them, and an anxiety began to grow to get away from America, and so perhaps leave sorrow and ill-luck behind. Clemens, near the end of December, writing to his publishing manager, Hall, said:

Merry Christmas to you, and I wish to God I could have one myself before I die.

The house was emptier that winter than before, for Susy was at Bryn Mawr. Clemens planned some literary work, but the beginning, after his long idleness, was hard. A diversion was another portrait of himself, this time undertaken by Charles Noel Flagg. Clemens rather enjoyed portrait-sittings. He could talk and smoke, and he could incidentally acquire information. He liked to discuss any man's profession with him, and in his talks with Flagg he made a sincere effort to get that insight which would enable him to appreciate the old masters. Flagg found him a tractable sitter, and a most interesting one. Once he paid him a compliment, then apologized for having said the obvious thing.

"Never mind the apology," said Clemens. "The compliment that helps us on our way is not the one that is shut up in the mind, but the one that is spoken out."

When Flagg's portrait was about completed, Mrs. Clemens and Mrs. Crane came to the studio to look at it. Mrs. Clemens complained only that the necktie was crooked.



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“But it’s always crooked,” said Flagg, “and I have a great fancy for the line it makes.”

She straightened it on Clemens himself, but it immediately became crooked again. Clemens said:

“If you were to make that necktie straight people would say; ‘Good portrait, but there is something the matter with it. I don’t know where it is.’”

The tie was left unchanged.

CLXXIV

THE MACHINE

The reader may have realized that by the beginning of 1891 Mark Twain’s finances were in a critical condition. The publishing business had managed to weather along. It was still profitable, and could have been made much more so if the capital necessary to its growth had not been continuously and relentlessly absorbed by that gigantic vampire of inventions—that remorseless Frankenstein monster—the machine.

The beginning of this vast tragedy (for it was no less than that) dated as far back as 1880, when Clemens one day had taken a minor and purely speculative interest in patent rights, which was to do away with setting type by hand. In some memoranda which he made more than ten years later, when the catastrophe was still a little longer postponed, he gave some account of the matter.

This episode has now spread itself over more than one-fifth of my life, a considerable stretch of time, as I am now 55 years old.

Ten or eleven years ago Dwight Buell, a jeweler, called at our house and was shown up to the billiard-room—which was my study; and the game got more study than the other sciences. He wanted me to take some stock in a type-setting machine. He said it was at the Colt’s Arms factory, and was about finished. I took \$2,000 of the stock. I was always taking little chances like that, and almost always losing by it, too. Some time afterward I was invited to go down to the factory and see the machine. I went, promising myself nothing, for I knew all about type-setting by practical experience, and held the settled and solidified opinion that a successful type-setting machine was an impossibility, for the reason that a machine cannot be made to think, and the thing that sets movable type must think or retire defeated. So, the performance I witnessed did most thoroughly amaze me. Here was a machine that was really setting type, and doing it with swiftness and accuracy, too. Moreover, it was distributing its case at the same time. The distribution was automatic; the machine fed itself from a galley of dead matter and without human help or suggestion, for it began its work of its own accord when the type channels needed filling, and stopped of its own accord when they were



full enough. The machine was almost a complete compositor; it lacked but one feature—it did not “justify” the lines. This was done by the operator’s assistant. I saw the operator set at the rate of

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3,000 ems an hour, which, counting distribution, was but little short of four casemen's work. William Hamersley was there. He said he was already a considerable owner, and was going to take as much more of the stock as he could afford. Wherefore, I set down my name for an additional \$3,000. It is here that the music begins.

It was the so-called Farnham machine that he saw, invented by James W. Paige, and if they had placed it on the market then, without waiting for the inventor to devise improvements, the story might have been a different one. But Paige was never content short of absolute perfection—a machine that was not only partly human, but entirely so. Clemens' used to say later that the Paige type-setter would do everything that a human being could do except drink and swear and go on a strike. He might properly have omitted the last item, but of that later. Paige was a small, bright-eyed, alert, smartly dressed man, with a crystal-clear mind, but a dreamer and a visionary. Clemens says of him: "He is a poet; a most great and genuine poet, whose sublime creations are written in steel."

It is easy to see now that Mark Twain and Paige did not make a good business combination. When Paige declared that, wonderful as the machine was, he could do vastly greater things with it, make it worth many more and much larger fortunes by adding this attachment and that, Clemens was just the man to enter into his dreams and to furnish the money to realize them. Paige did not require much money at first, and on the capital already invested he tinkered along with his improvements for something like four or five years; Hamersley and Clemens meantime capitalizing the company and getting ready to place the perfected invention on the market. By the time the Grant episode had ended Clemens had no reason to believe but that incalculable wealth lay just ahead, when the newspapers should be apprised of the fact that their types were no longer to be set by hand. Several contracts had been made with Paige, and several new attachments had been added to the machine. It seemed to require only one thing more, the justifier, which would save the labor of the extra man. Paige could be satisfied with nothing short of that, even though the extra man's wage was unimportant. He must have his machine do it all, and meantime five precious years had slipped away. Clemens, in his memoranda, says:

End of 1885. Paige arrives at my house unheralded. I had seen little or nothing of him for a year or two. He said:

"What will you complete the machine for?"

"What will it cost?"

"Twenty thousand dollars; certainly not over \$30,000."

"What will you give?"

“I’ll give you half.”

Clemens was “flush” at this time. His reading tour with Cable, the great sale of Huck Finn, the prospect of the Grant book, were rosy realities. He said:

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“I’ll do it, but the limit must be \$30,000.”

They agreed to allow Hamersley a tenth interest for the money he had already invested and for legal advice.

Hamersley consented readily enough, and when in February, 1886, the new contract was drawn they believed themselves heir to the millions of the Fourth Estate.

By this time F. G. Whitmore had come into Clemens’s business affairs, and he did not altogether approve of the new contract. Among other things, it required that Clemens should not only complete the machine, but promote it, capitalize it commercially. Whitmore said:

“Mr. Clemens, that clause can bankrupt you.”

Clemens answered: “Never mind that, Whitmore; I’ve considered that. I can get a thousand men worth a million apiece to go in with me if I can get a perfect machine.”

He immediately began to calculate the number of millions he would be worth presently when the machine was completed and announced to the waiting world. He covered pages with figures that never ran short of millions, and frequently approached the billion mark. Colonel Sellers in his happiest moments never dreamed more lavishly. He obtained a list of all the newspapers in the United States and in Europe, and he counted up the machines that would be required by each. To his nephew, Sam Moffett, visiting him one day, he declared that it would take ten men to count the profits from the typesetter. He realized clearly enough that a machine which would set and distribute type and do the work of half a dozen men or more would revolutionize type composition. The fact that other inventors besides Paige were working quite as diligently and perhaps toward more simple conclusions did not disturb him. Rumors came of the Rogers machine and the Thorne machine and the Mergenthaler linotype, but Mark Twain only smiled. When the promoters of the Mergenthaler offered to exchange half their interests for a half interest in the Paige patent, to obtain thereby a wider insurance of success, it only confirmed his trust, and he let the golden opportunity go by.

Clemens thinks the thirty thousand dollars lasted about a year. Then Paige confessed that the machine was still incomplete, but he said that four thousand dollars more would finish it, and that with ten thousand dollars he could finish it and give a big exhibition in New York. He had discarded the old machine altogether, it seems, and at Pratt & Whitney’s shops was building a new one from the ground up—a machine of twenty thousand minutely exact parts, each of which must be made by expert hand workmanship after elaborate drawings and patterns even more expensive. It was an undertaking for a millionaire.

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Paige offered to borrow from Clemens the amount needed, offering the machine as security. Clemens supplied the four thousand dollars, and continued to advance money from time to time at the rate of three to four thousand dollars a month, until he had something like eighty thousand dollars invested, with the machine still unfinished. This would be early in 1888, by which time other machines had reached a state of completion and were being placed on the market. The Mergenthaler, in particular, was attracting wide attention. Paige laughed at it, and Clemens, too, regarded it as a joke. The moment their machine was complete all other machines would disappear. Even the fact that the Tribune had ordered twenty-three of the linotypes, and other journals were only waiting to see the paper in its new dress before ordering, did not disturb them. Those linotypes would all go into the scrap-heap presently. It was too bad people would waste their money so. In January, 1888, Paige promised that the machine would be done by the 1st of April. On the 1st of April he promised it for September, but in October he acknowledged there were still eighty-five days' work to be done on it. In November Clemens wrote to Orion:

The machine is apparently almost done—but I take no privileges on that account; it must be done before I spend a cent that can be avoided. I have kept this family on very short commons for two years and they must go on scrimping until the machine is finished, no matter how long that may be.

By the end of '88 the income from the books and the business and Mrs. Clemens's Elmira investments no longer satisfied the demands of the type-setter, in addition to the household expense, reduced though the latter was; and Clemens began by selling and hypothecating his marketable securities. The whole household interest by this time centered in the machine. What the Tennessee land had been to John and Jane Clemens and their children, the machine had now become to Samuel Clemens and his family. "When the machine is finished everything will be all right again" afforded the comfort of that long-ago sentence, "When the Tennessee land is sold."

They would have everything they wanted then. Mrs. Clemens planned benefactions, as was her wont. Once she said to her sister:

"How strange it will seem to have unlimited means, to be able to do whatever you want to do, to give whatever you want to give without counting the cost."

Straight along through another year the three thousand dollars and more a month continued, and then on the 5th of January, 1889, there came what seemed the end—the machine and justifier were complete! In his notebook on that day Mark Twain set down this memorandum:

Eureka!



Saturday, January 5, 1889-12.20 P.M. At this moment I have seen a line of movable type spaced and justified by machinery! This is the first time in the history of the world that this amazing thing has ever been done. Present: J. W. Paige, the inventor; Charles Davis, | Mathematical assistants Earl | & mechanical Graham | experts Bates, foreman, and S. L. Clemens. This record is made immediately after the prodigious event.

Two days later he made another note:



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Monday, January 7—4.45 P.m. The first proper name ever set by this new keyboard was William Shakspeare. I set it at the above hour; & I perceive, now that I see the name written, that I either misspelled it then or I've misspelled it now.

The space-bar did its duty by the electric connections & steam & separated the two words preparatory to the reception of the space.

It seemed to him that his troubles were at an end. He wrote overflowing letters, such as long ago he had written about his first mining claims, to Orion and to other members of the family and to friends in America and Europe. One of these letters, written to George Standring, a London printer and publisher, also an author, will serve as an example.

The machine is finished! An hour and forty minutes ago a line of movable type was spaced and justified by machinery for the first time in the history of the world. And I was there to see.

That was the final function. I had before seen the machine set type, automatically, and distribute type, and automatically distribute its eleven different thicknesses of spaces. So now I have seen the machine, operated by one individual, do the whole thing, and do it a deal better than any man at the case can do it.

This is by far and away the most marvelous invention ever contrived by man. And it is not a thing of rags and patches; it is made of massive steel, and will last a century.

She will do the work of six men, and do it better than any six men that ever stood at a case.

The death-warrant of all other type-setting machines in this world was signed at 12.20 this afternoon, when that first line was shot through this machine and came out perfectly spaced and justified. And automatically, mind you. There was a speck of invisible dirt on one of those nonpareil types. Well, the machine allowed for that by inserting of its own accord a space which was the 5-1,000 of an inch thinner than it would have used if the dirt had been absent. But when I send you the details you will see that that's nothing for this machine to do; you'll see that it knows more and has got more brains than all the printers in the world put together.

His letter to Orion was more technical, also more jubilant. At the end he said:

All the witnesses made written record of the immense historical birth—the first justification of a line of movable type by machinery—& also set down the hour and the minute. Nobody had drank anything, & yet everybody seemed drunk. Well-dizzy, stupefied, stunned. All the other wonderful inventions of the human brain sink pretty nearly into commonplaces contrasted with this awful mechanical miracle. Telephones,

telegraphs, locomotives, cotton-gins, sewing- machines, Babbage calculators, jacquard looms,

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perfecting presses, all mere toys, simplicities! The Paige Compositor marches alone and far in the land of human inventions.

In one paragraph of Orion's letter he refers to the machine as a "cunning devil, knowing more than any man that ever lived." That was a profound truth, though not as he intended it. That creation of James Paige's brain reflected all the ingenuity and elusiveness of its creator, and added something on its own account. It was discovered presently that it had a habit of breaking the types. Paige said it was a trifling thing: he could fix it, but it meant taking down the machine, and that deadly expense of three thousand or four thousand dollars a month for the band of workmen and experts in Pratt & Whitney's machine shops did not cease. In February the machine was again setting and justifying type "to a hair," and Whitmore's son, Fred, was running it at a rate of six thousand ems an hour, a rate of composition hitherto unknown in the history of the world. His speed was increased to eight thousand ems an hour by the end of the year, and the machine was believed to have a capacity of eleven thousand. No type-setter invented to this day could match it for accuracy and precision when it was in perfect order, but its point of perfection was apparently a vanishing point. It would be just reached, when it would suddenly disappear, and Paige would discover other needed corrections. Once, when it was apparently complete as to every detail; and running like a human thing, with such important customers as the New York Herald and other great papers ready to place their orders, Paige suddenly discovered that it required some kind of an air-blast, and it was all taken down again and the air-blast, which required months to invent and perfect, was added.

But what is the use of remembering all these bitter details? The steady expense went on through another year, apparently increasing instead of diminishing, until, by the beginning of 1890, Clemens was finding it almost impossible to raise funds to continue the work. Still he struggled on. It was the old mining fascination—"a foot farther into the ledge and we shall strike the vein of gold."

He sent for Joe Goodman to come and help him organize a capital-stock company, in which Senator Jones and John Mackay, old Comstock friends, were to be represented. He never for a moment lost faith in the final outcome, and he believed that if they could build their own factory the delays and imperfections of construction would be avoided. Pratt & Whitney had been obliged to make all the parts by hand. With their own factory the new company would have vast and perfect machinery dedicated entirely to the production of type-setters.

Nothing short of two million dollars capitalization was considered, and Goodman made at least three trips from California to the East and labored with Jones and Mackay all that winter and at intervals during the following year, through which that "cunning devil," the machine, consumed its monthly four thousand dollars—money that was the final gleanings and sweepings of every nook and corner of the strong-box and bank-account

and savings of the Clemens family resources. With all of Mark Twain's fame and honors his life at this period was far from an enviable one. It was, in fact, a fevered delirium, often a veritable nightmare.



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Reporters who approached him for interviews, little guessing what he was passing through, reported that Mark Twain's success in life had made him crusty and sour.

Goodman remembers that when they were in Washington, conferring with Jones, and had rooms at the Arlington, opening together, often in the night he would awaken to see a light burning in the next room and to hear Mark Twain's voice calling:

"Joe, are you awake?"

"Yes, Mark, what is it?"

"Oh, nothing, only I can't sleep. Won't you talk awhile? I know it's wrong to disturb you, but I am so d—d miserable that I can't help it."

Whereupon he would get up and talk and talk, and pace the floor and curse the delays until he had refreshed himself, and then perhaps wallow in millions until breakfast-time.

Jones and Mackay, deeply interested, were willing to put up a reasonable amount of money, but they were unable to see a profit in investing so large a capital in a plant for constructing the machines.

Clemens prepared estimates showing that the American business alone would earn thirty-five million dollars a year, and the European business twenty million dollars more. These dazzled, but they did not convince the capitalists. Jones was sincerely anxious to see the machine succeed, and made an engagement to come out to see it work, but a day or two before he was to come Paige was seized with an inspiration. The type-setter was all in parts when the day came, and Jones's visit had to be postponed. Goodman wrote that the fatal delay had "sicklied over the bloom" of Jones's original enthusiasm.

Yet Clemens seems never to have been openly violent with Paige. In the memorandum which he completed about this time he wrote:

Paige and I always meet on effusively affectionate terms, and yet he knows perfectly well that if I had him in a steel trap I would shut out all human succor and watch that trap until he died.

He was grabbing at straws now. He offered a twentieth or a hundredth or a thousandth part of the enterprise for varying sums, ranging from one thousand to one hundred thousand dollars. He tried to capitalize his advance (machine) royalties, and did dispose of a few of these; but when the money came in for them he was beset by doubts as to the final outcome, and though at his wit's ends for further funds, he returned the checks to the friends who had sent them. One five-thousand-dollar check from a friend named Arnot, in Elmira, went back by the next mail. He was willing to sacrifice his own last penny, but he could not take money from those who were blindly



backing his judgment only and not their own. He still had faith in Jones, faith which lasted up to the 13th of February, 1891. Then came a final letter, in which Jones said that he had canvassed the situation thoroughly with such men as Mackay, Don Cameron, Whitney, and others, with the result that

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they would have nothing to do with the machine. Whitney and Cameron, he said, were large stockholders in the Mergenthaler. Jones put it more kindly and more politely than that, and closed by saying that there could be no doubt as to the machine's future an ambiguous statement. A letter from young Hall came about the same time, urging a heavy increase of capital in the business. The Library of American Literature, its leading feature, was handled on the instalment plan. The collections from this source were deferred dribbles, while the bills for manufacture and promotion must be paid down in cash. Clemens realized that for the present at least the dream was ended. The family securities were exhausted. The book trade was dull; his book royalties were insufficient even to the demands of the household. He signed further notes to keep business going, left the matter of the machine in abeyance, and turned once more to the trade of authorship. He had spent in the neighborhood of one hundred and ninety thousand dollars on the typesetter—money that would better have been thrown into the Connecticut River, for then the agony had been more quickly over. As it was, it had shadowed many precious years.

CLXXV

"The claimant"—Leaving Hartford

For the first time in twenty years Mark Twain was altogether dependent on literature. He did not feel mentally unequal to the new problem; in fact, with his added store of experience, he may have felt himself more fully equipped for authorship than ever before. It had been his habit to write within his knowledge and observation. To a correspondent of this time he reviewed his stock in trade—

. . . I confine myself to life with which I am familiar when pretending to portray life. But I confined myself to the boy-life out on the Mississippi because that had a peculiar charm for me, and not because I was not familiar with other phases of life. I was a soldier two weeks once in the beginning of the war, and was hunted like a rat the whole time. Familiar? My splendid Kipling himself hasn't a more burnt-in, hard-baked, and unforgettable familiarity with that death-on-the-pale-horse-with-hell-following-after, which is a raw soldier's first fortnight in the field—and which, without any doubt, is the most tremendous fortnight and the vividest he is ever going to see. Yes, and I have shoveled silver tailings in a quartz-mill a couple of weeks, and acquired the last possibilities of culture in that direction. And I've done "pocket-mining" during three months in the one little patch of ground in the whole globe where Nature conceals gold in pockets—or did before we robbed all of those pockets and exhausted, obliterated, annihilated the most curious freak Nature ever indulged in. There are not thirty men left alive who, being told there was a pocket hidden on the broad slope of a mountain,



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would know how to go and find it, or have even the faintest idea of how to set about it; but I am one of the possible 20 or 30 who possess the secret, and I could go and put my hand on that hidden treasure with a most deadly precision. And I've been a prospector, and know pay rock from poor when I find it—just with a touch of the tongue. And I've been a silver miner and know how to dig and shovel and drill and put in a blast. And so I know the mines and the miners interiorly as well as Bret Harte knows them exteriorly. And I was a newspaper reporter four years in cities, and so saw the inside of many things; and was reporter in a legislature two sessions and the same in Congress one session, and thus learned to know personally three sample bodies of the smallest minds and the selfishest souls and the cowardliest hearts that God makes.

And I was some years a Mississippi pilot, and familiarly knew all the different kinds of steamboatmen—a race apart, and not like other folk.

And I was for some years a traveling “jour” printer, and wandered from city to city—and so I know that sect familiarly.

And I was a lecturer on the public platform a number of seasons and was a responder to toasts at all the different kinds of banquets—and so I know a great many secrets about audiences—secrets not to be got out of books, but only acquirable by experience. And I watched over one dear project of mine for years, spent a fortune on it, and failed to make it go—and the history of that would make a large book in which a million men would see themselves as in a mirror; and they would testify and say, Verily, this is not imagination; this fellow has been there—and after would they cast dust upon their heads, cursing and blaspheming.

And I am a publisher, and did pay to one author's widow (General Grant's) the largest copyright checks this world has seen—aggregating more than L80,000 in the first year.

And I have been an author for 20 years and an ass for 55.

Now then: as the most valuable capital or culture or education usable in the building of novels is personal experience I ought to be well equipped for that trade.

I surely have the equipment, a wide culture, and all of it real, none of it artificial, for I don't know anything about books.

This generous bill of literary particulars was fully warranted. Mark Twain's equipment was equal to his occasions. It is true that he was no longer young, and that his health was not perfect, but his resolution and his energy had not waned.



His need was imminent and he lost no time. He dug out from his pigeonholes such materials as he had in stock, selecting a few completed manuscripts for immediate disposal—among them his old article entitled, “Mental Telegraphy,” written in 1878, when he had hesitated to offer it, in the fear that it would not be accepted by the public otherwise than as a joke. He added to it now a supplement and sent it to Mr. Alden, of Harper’s Magazine.



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Psychic interest had progressed in twelve years; also Mark Twain had come to be rather more seriously regarded. The article was accepted promptly! —[The publication of this article created a good deal of a stir and resulted in the first general recognition of what later became known as Telepathy. A good many readers insisted on regarding the whole matter as one of Mark Twain's jokes, but its serious acceptance was much wider.] —The old sketch, "Luck," also found its way to Harper's Magazine, and other manuscripts were looked over and furbished up with a view to their disposal. Even the history game was dragged from the dust of its retirement, and Hall was instructed to investigate its chance of profit.

Then Mark Twain went to work in earnest. Within a week after the collapse of the Jones bubble he was hard at work on a new book—the transmigration of the old "Claimant" play into a novel.

Ever since the appearance of the Yankee there had been what was evidently a concerted movement to induce him to write a novel with the theories of Henry George as the central idea. Letters from every direction had urged him to undertake such a story, and these had suggested a more serious purpose for the Claimant book. A motif in which there is a young lord who renounces his heritage and class to come to America and labor with his hands; who attends socialistic meetings at which men inspired by readings of 'Progress and Poverty' and 'Looking Backward' address their brothers of toil, could have in it something worth while. Clemens inserted portions of some of his discarded essays in these addresses, and had he developed this element further, and abandoned Colonel Sellers's materialization lunacies to the oblivion they had earned, the result might have been more fortunate.

But his faith in the new Sellers had never died, and the temptation to use scenes from the abandoned play proved to be too strong to be resisted. The result was incongruous enough. The author, however, admired it amazingly at the time. He sent Howells stirring reports of his progress. He wrote Hall that the book would be ready soon and that there must be seventy-five thousand orders by the date of issue, "not a single one short of that." Then suddenly, at the end of February, the rheumatism came back into his shoulder and right arm and he could hardly hold the pen. He conceived the idea of dictating into a phonograph, and wrote Howells to test this invention and find out as to terms for three months, with cylinders enough to carry one hundred and seventy-five thousand words.

I don't want to erase any of them. My right arm is nearly disabled by rheumatism, but I am bound to write this book (and sell 100,000 copies of it—no, I mean 1,000,000—next fall). I feel sure I can dictate the book into a phonograph if I don't have to yell. I write 2,000 words a day. I think I can dictate twice as many.

But mind, if this is going to be too much trouble to you—go ahead and do it all the same.



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Howells replied encouragingly. He had talked a letter into a phonograph and the phonograph man had talked his answer into it, after which the cylinder had been taken to a typewriter in the-next room and correctly written out. If a man had the “cheek” to dictate his story into a phonograph, Howells said, all the rest seemed perfectly easy.

Clemens ordered a phonograph and gave it a pretty fair trial. It was only a partial success. He said he couldn't write literature with it because it hadn't any ideas or gift for elaboration, but was just as matter-of-fact, compressive and unresponsive, grave and unsmiling as the devil—a poor audience.

I filled four dozen cylinders in two sittings, then I found I could have said it about as easy with the pen, and said it a deal better. Then I resigned.

He did not immediately give it up. To relieve his aching arm he alternated the phonograph with the pen, and the work progressed rapidly. Early in May he was arranging for its serial disposition, and it was eventually sold for twelve thousand dollars to the McClure Syndicate, who placed it with a number of papers in America and with the Idler Magazine in England. W. M. Laffan, of the Sun, an old and tried friend, combined with McClure in the arrangement. Laffan also proposed to join with McClure in paying Mark Twain a thousand dollars each for a series of six European letters. This was toward the end of May, 1891, when Clemens had already decided upon a long European sojourn.

There were several reasons why this was desirable. Neither Clemens nor his wife was in good health. Both of them were troubled with rheumatism, and a council of physicians had agreed that Mrs. Clemens had some disturbance of the heart. The death of Charles L. Webster in April—the fourth death among relatives in two years—had renewed her forebodings. Susy, who had been at Bryn Mawr, had returned far from well. The European baths and the change of travel it was believed would be beneficial to the family health. Furthermore, the maintenance of the Hartford home was far too costly for their present and prospective income. The house with its associations of seventeen incomparable years must be closed. A great period had ended.

They arranged to sail on the 6th of June by the French line.—[On the Gascogne.]—Mrs. Crane was to accompany them, and came over in April to help in breaking the news to the servants. John and Ellen O'Neill (the gardener and his wife) were to remain in charge; places were found for George and Patrick. Katie Leary was retained to accompany the family. It was a sad dissolution.

The day came for departure and the carriage was at the door. Mrs. Clemens did not come immediately. She was looking into the rooms, bidding a kind of silent good-by to the home she had made and to all its memories. Following the others she entered the carriage, and Patrick McAleer drove them together for the last time. They were going

on a long journey. They did not guess how long, or that the place would never be home to them again.



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CLXXVI A EUROPEAN SUMMER

They landed at Havre and went directly to Paris, where they remained about a week. From Paris Clemens wrote to Hall that a deal by which he had hoped to sell out his interest in the type-setter to the Mallorys, of the Churchman, had fallen through.

“Therefore,” he said, “you will have to modify your instalment system to meet the emergency of a constipated purse; for if you should need to borrow any more money I would not know how or where to raise it.”

The Clemens party went to Geneva, then rested for a time at the baths of Aix; from Aix to Bayreuth to attend the Wagner festival, and from Bayreuth to Marienbad for further additions of health. Clemens began writing his newspaper letters at Aix, the first of which consists of observations at that “paradise of rheumatics.” This letter is really a careful and faithful description of Aix-les-Bains, with no particular drift of humor in it. He tells how in his own case the baths at first developed plenty of pain, but that the subsequent ones removed almost all of it.

“I’ve got back the use of my arm the last few days, and I am going away now,” he says, and concludes by describing the beautiful drives and scenery about Aix—the pleasures to be found paddling on little Lake Bourget and the happy excursions to Annecy.

At the end of an hour you come to Annecy and rattle through its old crooked lanes, built solidly up with curious old houses that are a dream of the Middle Ages, and presently you come to the main object of your trip—Lake Annecy. It is a revelation. It is a miracle. It brings the tears to a body’s eyes. It is so enchanting. That is to say, it affects you just as all other things that you instantly recognize as perfect affect you—perfect music, perfect eloquence, perfect art, perfect joy, perfect grief.

He was getting back into his old descriptive swing, but his dislike for travel was against him, and he found writing the letters hard. From Bayreuth he wrote “At the Shrine of St. Wagner,” one of the best descriptions of that great musical festival that has been put into words. He paid full tribute to the performance, also to the Wagner devotion, confessing its genuineness.

This opera of “Tristan and Isolde” last night broke the hearts of all witnesses who were of the faith, and I know of some, and have heard of many, who could not sleep after it, but cried the night away. I feel strongly out of place here. Sometimes I feel like the one sane person in the community of the mad; sometimes I feel like the one blind man where all others see; the one groping savage in the college of the learned, and always during service I feel like a heretic in heaven.

He tells how he really enjoyed two of the operas, and rejoiced in supposing that his musical regeneration was accomplished and perfected; but alas! he was informed by experts that those particular events were not real music at all. Then he says:



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Well, I ought to have recognized the sign the old, sure sign that has never failed me in matters of art. Whenever I enjoy anything in art it means that it is mighty poor. The private knowledge of this fact has saved me from going to pieces with enthusiasm in front of many and many a chromo. However, my base instinct does bring me profit sometimes; I was the only man out of 3,200 who got his money back on those two operas.

His third letter was from Marienbad, in Bohemia, another “health-factory,” as he calls it, and is of the same general character as those preceding. In his fourth letter he told how he himself took charge of the family fortunes and became courier from Aix to Bayreuth. It is a very delightful letter, most of it, and probably not greatly burlesqued or exaggerated in its details. It is included now in the “Complete Works,” as fresh and delightful as ever. They returned to Germany at the end of August, to Nuremberg, which he notes as the “city of exquisite glimpses,” and to Heidelberg, where they had their old apartment of thirteen years before, Room 40 at the Schloss Hotel, with its wonderful prospect of wood and hill, and the haze-haunted valley of the Rhine. They remained less than a week in that beautiful place, and then were off for Switzerland, Lucerne, Brienz, Interlaken, finally resting at the Hotel Beau Rivage, Ouchy, Lausanne, on beautiful Lake Lemman.

Clemens had agreed to write six of the newspaper letters, and he had by this time finished five of them, the fifth being dated from Interlaken, its subject, “Switzerland, the Cradle of Liberty.” He wrote to Hall that it was his intention to write another book of travel and to take a year or two to collect the material. The Century editors were after him for a series after the style of *Innocents Abroad*. He considered this suggestion, but declined by cable, explaining to Hall that he intended to write for serial publication no more than the six newspaper letters. He said:

To write a book of travel would be less trouble than to write six detached chapters. Each of these letters requires the same variety of treatment and subject that one puts into a book; but in the book each chapter doesn't have to be rounded and complete in itself.

He suggested that the six letters be gathered into a small volume which would contain about thirty-five or forty thousand words, to be sold as low as twenty-five cents, but this idea appears to have been dropped.

At Ouchy Clemens conceived the idea of taking a little trip on his own account, an excursion that would be a rest after the strenuous three months' travel and sightseeing—one that he could turn into literature. He engaged Joseph Very, a courier used during their earlier European travels, and highly recommended in the *Tramp Abroad*. He sent Joseph over to Lake Bourget to engage a boat and a boatman for a ten days' trip down the river Rhone.



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For five dollars Joseph bought a safe, flat-bottom craft; also he engaged the owner as pilot. A few days later—September 19—Clemens followed. They stopped overnight on an island in Lake Bourget, and in his notes Clemens tells how he slept in the old castle of Chatillon, in the room where a pope was born. They started on their drift next morning. To Mrs. Clemens, in some good-by memoranda, he said:

The lake is as smooth as glass; a brilliant sun is shining.

Our boat is so comfortable and shady with its awning.

11.20. We have crossed the lake and are entering the canal. Shall presently be in the Rhone.

Noon. Nearly down to the Rhone, passing the village of Chanaz.

Sunday, 3.15 P.M. We have been in the Rhone three hours. It is unimaginably still & reposeful & cool & soft & breezy. No rowing or work of any kind to do—we merely float with the current we glide noiseless and swift—as fast as a London cab-horse rips along—8 miles an hour—the swiftest current I've ever boated in. We have the entire river to ourselves nowhere a boat of any kind.

Pleasant it must have been in the warm September days to go swinging down that swift, gray stream which comes racing out of Switzerland into France, fed from a thousand glaciers. He sent almost daily memoranda of his progress. Half-way to Arles he wrote:

It's too delicious, floating with the swift current under the awning these superb, sunshiny days in deep peace and quietness.

Some of these curious old historical towns strangely persuade me, but it is so lovely afloat that I don't stop, but view them from the outside and sail on. We get abundance of grapes and peaches for next to nothing. My, but that inn was suffocating with garlic where we stayed last night! I had to hold my nose as we went up-stairs or I believe I should have fainted.

Little bit of a room, rude board floor unswept, 2 chairs, unpainted white pine table—void the furniture! Had a good firm bed, solid as a rock, & you could have brained an ox with the bolster.

These six hours have been entirely delightful. I want to do all the rivers of Europe in an open boat in summer weather.

Still further along he described one of their shore accommodations.



Night caught us yesterday where we had to take quarters in a peasant's house which was occupied by the family and a lot of cows & calves, also several rabbits.—[His word for fleas. Neither fleas nor mosquitoes ever bit him—probably because of his steady use of tobacco.]—The latter had a ball & I was the ballroom; but they were very friendly and didn't bite. The peasants were mighty kind and hearty & flew around & did their best to make us comfortable. This morning I breakfasted on the shore in the open air with two sociable dogs & a cat. Clean

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cloth, napkins & table furniture, white sugar, a vast hunk of excellent butter, good bread, first-class coffee with pure milk, fried fish just caught. Wonderful that so much cleanliness should come out of such a phenomenally dirty house. An hour ago we saw the Falls of the Rhone, a prodigiously rough and dangerous-looking place; shipped a little water, but came to no harm. It was one of the most beautiful pieces of piloting & boat management I ever saw. Our admiral knew his business. We have had to run ashore for shelter every time it has rained heretofore, but Joseph has been putting in his odd time making a waterproof sun-bonnet for the boat, & now we sail along dry, although we have had many heavy showers this morning.

Here follows a pencil-drawing of the boat and its new awning, and he adds: "I'm on the stern, under the shelter, and out of sight."

The trip down the Rhone proved more valuable as an outing than as literary material. Clemens covered one hundred and seventy-four pages with his notes of it, then gave it up. Traveling alone with no one but Joseph and the Admiral (former owner of the craft) was reposeful and satisfactory, but it did not inspire literary flights. He tried to rectify the lack of companionship by introducing fictitious characters, such as Uncle Abner, Fargo, and Stavely, a young artist; also Harris, from the Tramp Abroad; but Harris was not really there this time, and Mark Twain's genius, given rather to elaboration than to construction, found it too severe a task to imagine a string of adventures without at least the customary ten per cent. of fact to build upon.

It was a day above Avignon that he had an experience worth while. They were abreast of an old castle, nearing a village, one of the huddled jumble of houses of that locality, when, glancing over his left shoulder toward the distant mountain range, he received what he referred to later as a soul-stirring shock. Pointing to the outline of the distant range he said to the courier:

"Name it. Who is it?"

The courier said, "Napoleon."

Clemens assented. The Admiral, when questioned, also promptly agreed that the mountain outlined was none other than the reclining figure of the great commander himself. They watched and discussed the phenomenon until they reached the village. Next morning Clemens was up for a first daybreak glimpse of his discovery. Later he reported it to Mrs. Clemens:

I did so long for you and Sue yesterday morning—the most superb sunrise—the most marvelous sunrise—& I saw it all, from the very faintest suspicion of the coming dawn, all the way through to the final explosion of glory. But it had an interest private to itself & not to be found elsewhere in the world; for between me & it, in the far-distant eastward,

was a silhouetted mountain range, in which I had discovered, the previous afternoon, a most noble face upturned to



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the sky, & mighty form outstretched, which I had named Napoleon Dreaming of Universal Empire—and now this prodigious face, soft, rich, blue, spirituelle, asleep, tranquil, reposeful, lay against that giant conflagration of ruddy and golden splendors, all rayed like a wheel with the up-streaming & far-reaching lances of the sun. It made one want to cry for delight, it was so supreme in its unimaginable majesty & beauty.

He made a pencil-sketch of the Napoleon head in his note-book, and stated that the apparition could be seen opposite the castle of Beauchastel; but in later years his treacherous memory betrayed him, and, forgetting these identifying marks, he told of it as lying a few hours above Arles, and named it the “Lost Napoleon,” because those who set out to find it did not succeed. He even wrote an article upon the subject, in which he urged tourists to take steamer from Arles and make a short trip upstream, keeping watch on the right-hand bank, with the purpose of rediscovering the natural wonder. Fortunately this sketch was not published. It would have been set down as a practical joke by disappointed travelers. One of Mark Twain’s friends, Mr. Theodore Stanton, made a persistent effort to find the Napoleon, but with the wrong directions naturally failed.

It required ten days to float to Arles. Then the current gave out and Clemens ended the excursion and returned to Lausanne by rail. He said:

“It was twenty-eight miles to Marseilles, and somebody would have to row. That would not have been pleasure; it would have meant work for the sailor, and I do not like work even when another person does it.”

To Twichell in America he wrote:

You ought to have been along—I could have made room for you easily, & you would have found that a pedestrian tour in Europe doesn’t begin with a raft voyage for hilarity & mild adventure & intimate contact with the unvisited native of the back settlements & extinction from the world and newspapers & a conscience in a state of coma & lazy comfort & solid happiness. In fact, there’s nothing that’s so lovely.

But it’s all over. I gave the raft away yesterday at Arles & am loafing along back by short stages on the rail to Ouchy, Lausanne, where the tribe are staying at the Beau Rivage and are well and prosperous.

CLXXVII

KORNERSTRASSE,7

They had decided to spend the winter in Berlin, and in October Mrs. Clemens and Mrs. Crane, after some previous correspondence with an agent, went up to that city to



engage an apartment. The elevator had not reached the European apartment in those days, and it was necessary, on Mrs. Clemens's account, to have a ground floor. The sisters searched a good while without success, and at last reached Kornerstrasse, a short, secluded street, highly recommended by the agent. The apartment they examined in Kornerstrasse was Number 7, and they were so much pleased with the conveniences and comfort of it and so tired that they did not notice closely its, general social environment. The agent supplied an assortment of furniture for a consideration, and they were soon settled in the attractive, roomy place. Clemens and the children, arriving somewhat later, expressed themselves as satisfied.

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Their contentment was somewhat premature. When they began to go out socially, which was very soon, and friends inquired as to their location, they noticed that the address produced a curious effect. Semi-acquaintances said, "Ah, yes, Kornerstrasse"; acquaintances said, "Dear me, do you like it?" An old friend exclaimed, "Good gracious! How in the world did you ever come to locate there?" Then they began to notice what they had not at first seen. Kornerstrasse was not disreputable, but it certainly was not elegant. There were rag warehouses across the street and women who leaned out the windows to gossip. The street itself was thronged with children. They played on a sand pile and were often noisy and seldom clean. It was eminently not the place for a distinguished man of letters. The family began to be sensitive on the subject of their address.

Clemens, of course, made humor out of it. He wrote a newspaper letter on the subject, a burlesque, naturally, which the family prevailed upon him not to print. But the humiliation is out of it now, and a bit of its humor may be preserved. He takes upon himself the renting of the place, and pictures the tour of inspection with the agent's assistant.

He was greatly moved when they came to the street and said, softly and lovingly:

"Ah, Korner Street, Korner Street, why did I not think of you before! A place fit for the gods, dear sir. Quiet?—notice how still it is; and remember this is noonday—noonday. It is but one block long, you see, just a sweet, dear little nest hid away here in the heart of the great metropolis, its presence and its sacred quiet unsuspected by the restless crowds that swarm along the stately thoroughfares yonder at its two extremities. And _____"

"This building is handsome, but I don't think much of the others. They look pretty commonplace, compared with the rest of Berlin."

"Dear! dear! have you noticed that? It is just an affectation of the nobility. What they want——"

"The nobility? Do they live in——"

"In this street? That is good! very good, indeed! I wish the Duke of Sassafras-Hagenstein could hear you say that. When the Duke first moved in here he——"

"Does he live in this street?"

"Him! Well, I should say so! Do you see the big, plain house over there with the placard in the third floor window? That's his house."



“The placard that says ‘Furnished rooms to let’? Does he keep boarders?”

“What an idea! Him! With a rent-roll of twelve hundred thousand marks a year? Oh, positively this is too good.”

“Well, what does he have that sign up for?”

The assistant took me by the buttonhole & said, with a merry light beaming in his eye:



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“Why, my dear sir, a person would know you are new to Berlin just by your innocent questions. Our aristocracy, our old, real, genuine aristocracy, are full of the quaintest eccentricities, eccentricities inherited for centuries, eccentricities which they are prouder of than they are of their titles, and that sign-board there is one of them. They all hang them out. And it’s regulated by an unwritten law. A baron is entitled to hang out two, a count five, a duke fifteen——”

“Then they are all dukes over on that side, I sup——”

“Every one of them. Now the old Duke of Backofenhofenschwartz not the present Duke, but the last but one, he——”

“Does he live over the sausage-shop in the cellar?”

“No, the one farther along, where the eighteenth yellow cat is chewing the door-mat——”

“But all the yellow cats are chewing the door-mats.”

“Yes, but I mean the eighteenth one. Count. No, never mind; there’s a lot more come. I’ll get you another mark. Let me see——”

They could not remain permanently in Komerstrasse, but they stuck it out till the end of December—about two months. Then they made such settlement with the agent as they could—that is to say, they paid the rest of their year’s rent—and established themselves in a handsome apartment at the Hotel Royal, Unter den Linden. There was no need to be ashamed of this address, for it was one of the best in Berlin.

As for Komerstrasse, it is cleaner now. It is still not aristocratic, but it is eminently respectable. There is a new post-office that takes in Number 7, where one may post mail and send telegrams and use the Fernsprecher—which is to say the telephone—and be politely treated by uniformed officials, who have all heard of Mark Twain, but have no knowledge of his former occupation of their premises.

CLXXVIII

A WINTER IN BERLIN

Clemens, meantime, had been trying to establish himself in his work, but his rheumatism racked him occasionally and was always a menace. Closing a letter to Hall, he said:

“I must stop-my arm is howling.”



He put in a good deal of time devising publishing schemes, principal among them being a plan for various cheap editions of his books, pamphlets, and such like, to sell for a few cents. These projects appear never to have been really undertaken, Hall very likely fearing that a flood of cheap issues would interfere with the more important trade. It seemed dangerous to trifle with an apparently increasing prosperity, and Clemens was willing enough to agree with this view.

Clemens had still another letter to write for Laffan and McClure, and he made a pretty careful study of Berlin with that end in view. But his arm kept him from any regular work. He made notes, however. Once he wrote:

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The first gospel of all monarchies should be Rebellion; the second should be Rebellion; and the third and all gospels, and the only gospel of any monarchy, should be Rebellion—against Church and State.

And again:

I wrote a chapter on this language 13 years ago and tried my level best to improve it and simplify it for these people, and this is the result—a, word of thirty-nine letters. It merely concentrates the alphabet with a shovel. It hurts me to know that that chapter is not in any of their text-books and they don't use it in the university.

Socially, that winter in Berlin was eventful enough. William Walter Phelps, of New Jersey (Clemens had known him in America), was United States minister at the German capital, while at the Emperor's court there was a cousin, Frau von Versen, nee Clemens, one of the St. Louis family. She had married a young German officer who had risen to the rank of a full general. Mark Twain and his family were welcome guests at all the diplomatic events—often brilliant levees, gatherings of distinguished men and women from every circle of achievement. Labouchere of 'Truth' was there, De Blowitz of the 'Times', and authors, ambassadors, and scientists of rank. Clemens became immediately a distinguished figure at these assemblies. His popularity in Germany was openly manifested. At any gathering he was surrounded by a brilliant company, eager to do him honor. He was recognized whenever he appeared on the street, and saluted, though in his notes he says he was sometimes mistaken for the historian Mommsen, whom he resembled in hair and features. His books were displayed for sale everywhere, and a special cheap edition of them was issued at a few cents per copy.

Captain Bingham (later General Bingham, Commissioner of Police in New York City) and John Jackson were attaches of the legation, both of them popular with the public in general, and especially so with the Clemens family. Susy Clemens, writing to her father during a temporary absence, tells of a party at Mrs. Jackson's, and especially refers to Captain Bingham in the most complimentary terms.

"He never left me sitting alone, nor in an awkward situation of any kind, but always came cordially to the rescue. My gratitude toward him was absolutely limitless."

She adds that Mrs. Bingham was very handsome and decidedly the most attractive lady present. Berlin was Susy's first real taste of society, and she was reveling in it. In her letter she refers to Minister Phelps by the rather disrespectful nickname of "Yaas," a term conferred because of his pronunciation of that affirmative. The Clemens children were not entirely happy in the company of the minister. They were fond of him, but he was a great tease. They were quite young enough, but it seemed always to give him delight to make them appear much younger. In the letter above quoted Susy says:



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When I saw Mr. Phelps I put out my hand enthusiastically and said, "Oh, Mr. Phelps, good evening," whereat he drew back and said, so all could hear, "What, you here! why, you're too young. Do you think you know how to behave?" As there were two or three young gentlemen near by to whom I hadn't been introduced I wasn't exactly overjoyed at this greeting.

We may imagine that the nickname "Yaas" had been invented by Susy in secret retaliation, though she was ready enough to forgive him, for he was kindness itself at heart.

In one of his later dictations Clemens related an anecdote concerning a dinner with Phelps, when he (Clemens) had been invited to meet Count S——, a cabinet minister of long and illustrious descent. Clemens, and Phelps too, it seems, felt overshadowed by this ancestry.

Of course I wanted to let out the fact that I had some ancestors, too; but I did not want to pull them out of their graves by the ears, and I never could seem to get the chance to work them in, in a way that would look sufficiently casual. I suppose Phelps was in the same difficulty. In fact he looked distraught now and then just as a person looks who wants to uncover an ancestor purely by accident and cannot think of a way that will seem accidental enough. But at last, after dinner, he made a try. He took us about his drawing-room, showing us the pictures, and finally stopped before a rude and ancient engraving. It was a picture of the court that tried Charles I. There was a pyramid of judges in Puritan slouch hats, and below them three bareheaded secretaries seated at a table. Mr. Phelps put his finger upon one of the three and said, with exulting indifference:

"An ancestor of mine."

I put a finger on a judge and retorted with scathing languidness:

"Ancestor of mine. But it is a small matter. I have others."

Clemens was sincerely fond of Phelps and spent a good deal of time at the legation headquarters. Sometimes he wrote there. An American journalist, Henry W. Fischer, remembers seeing him there several times scribbling on such scraps of paper as came handy, and recalls that on one occasion he delivered an address to a German and English audience on the "Awful German Tongue." This was probably the lecture that brought Clemens to bed with pneumonia. With Mrs. Clemens he had been down to Ilseburg, in the Hartz Mountains, for a week of change. It was pleasant there, and they would have remained longer but for the Berlin lecture engagement. As it was, they found Berlin very cold and the lecture-room crowded and hot. When the lecture was over they stopped at General von Versen's for a ball, arriving at home about two in the morning. Clemens awoke with a heavy cold and lung congestion. He remained in bed,



a very sick man indeed, for the better part of a month. It was unpleasant enough at first, though he rather enjoyed the convalescent period.

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He could sit up in bed and read and receive occasional callers. Fischer brought him *Memoirs of the Margravine of Bayreuth*, always a favorite. —[Clemens was deeply interested in the Margravine, and at one time began a novel with her absorbing history as its theme. He gave it up, probably feeling that the romantic form could add nothing to the Margravine's own story.]—The Emperor sent Frau von Versen with an invitation for him to attend the consecration of some flags in the palace. When she returned, conveying thanks and excuses, his Majesty commanded her to prepare a dinner at her home for Mark Twain and himself and a few special guests, the date to be arranged when Clemens's physician should pronounce him well enough to attend.

Members of the Clemens household were impressed by this royal attention. Little Jean was especially awed. She said:

"I wish I could be in papa's clothes"; then, after reflection, "but that wouldn't be any use. I reckon the Emperor wouldn't recognize me." And a little later, when she had been considering all the notables and nobilities of her father's recent association, she added:

"Why, papa, if it keeps on like this, pretty soon there won't be anybody for you to get acquainted with but God," which Mark Twain decided was not quite as much of a compliment as it had at first seemed.

It was during the period of his convalescence that Clemens prepared his sixth letter for the *New York Sun* and McClure's syndicate, "The German Chicago," a finely descriptive article on Berlin, and German customs and institutions generally. Perhaps the best part of it is where he describes the grand and prolonged celebration which had been given in honor of Professor Virchow's seventieth birthday.—[Rudolph Virchow, an eminent German pathologist and anthropologist and scholar; then one of the most prominent figures of the German Reichstag. He died in 1902.] —He tells how the demonstrations had continued in one form or another day after day, and merged at last into the seventieth birthday of Professor Helmholtz—[Herman von Helmholtz, an eminent German physicist, one of the most distinguished scientists of the nineteenth century. He died in 1894.]—also how these great affairs finally culminated in a mighty 'commerz', or beer-fest, given in their honor by a thousand German students. This letter has been published in Mark Twain's "Complete Works," and is well worth reading to-day. His place had been at the table of the two heroes of the occasion, Virchow and Helmholtz, a place where he could see and hear all that went on; and he was immensely impressed at the honor which Germany paid to her men of science. The climax came when Mommsen unexpectedly entered the room.—[Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), an eminent German historian and archeologist, a powerful factor in all liberal movements. From 1874-1895 permanent secretary of the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences.]



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There seemed to be some signal whereby the students on the platform were made aware that a professor had arrived at the remote door of entrance, for you would see them suddenly rise to their feet, strike an erect military attitude, then draw their swords; the swords of all their brethren standing guard at the innumerable tables would flash from the scabbard and be held aloft—a handsome spectacle. Three clear bugle-notes would ring out, then all these swords would come down with a crash, twice repeated, on the tables and be uplifted and held aloft again; then in the distance you would see the gay uniforms and uplifted swords of a guard of honor clearing the way and conducting the guest down to his place. The songs were stirring, and the immense outpour from young life and young lungs, the crash of swords, and the thunder of the beer-mugs gradually worked a body up to what seemed the last possible summit of excitement. It surely seemed to me that I had reached that summit, that I had reached my limit, and that there was no higher lift devisable for me. When apparently the last eminent guest had long ago taken his place, again those three bugle-blasts rang out, and once more the swords leaped from their scabbards. Who might this late comer be? Nobody was interested to inquire. Still, indolent eyes were turned toward the distant entrance, and we saw the silken gleam and the lifted sword of a guard of honor plowing through the remote crowds. Then we saw that end of the house rising to its feet; saw it rise abreast the advancing guard all along like a wave. This supreme honor had been offered to no one before. There was an excited whisper at our table—“Mommsen!”—and the whole house rose—rose and shouted and stamped and clapped and banged the beer-mugs. Just simply a storm! Then the little man with his long hair and Emersonian face edged his way past us and took his seat. I could have touched him with my hand—Mommsen!—think of it! This was one of those immense surprises that can happen only a few times in one’s life. I was not dreaming of him; he was to me only a giant myth, a world-shadowing specter, not a reality. The surprise of it all can be only comparable to a man’s suddenly coming upon Mont Blanc, with its awful form towering into the sky, when he didn’t suspect he was in its neighborhood. I would have walked a great many miles to get a sight of him, and here he was, without trouble, or tramp, or cost of any kind. Here he was, clothed in a titanic deceptive modesty which made him look like other men. Here he was, carrying the Roman world and all the Caesars in his hospitable skull, and doing it as easily as that other luminous vault, the skull of the universe, carries the Milky Way and the constellations.

During his convalescent days, Clemens had plenty of time to reflect and to look out of the window. His notebook preserves some of his reflections. In one place he says:

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The Emperor passes in a modest open carriage. Next that happy 12-year-old butcher-boy, all in white apron and turban, standing up & so proud!

How fast they drive—nothing like it but in London. And the horses seem to be of very fine breed, though I am not an expert in horses & do not speak with assurance. I can always tell which is the front end of a horse, but beyond that my art is not above the ordinary. The “Court Gazette” of a German paper can be covered with a playing-card. In an English paper the movements of titled people take up about three times that room. In the papers of Republican France from six to sixteen times as much. There, if a Duke’s dog should catch cold in the head they would stop the press to announce it and cry about it. In Germany they respect titles, in England they revere them, in France they adore them. That is, the French newspapers do.

Been taken for Mommsen twice. We have the same hair, but on examination it was found the brains were different.

On February 14th he records that Professor Helmholtz called, but unfortunately leaves no further memorandum of that visit. He was quite recovered by this time, but was still cautioned about going out in the severe weather. In the final entry he says:

Thirty days sick abed—full of interest—read the debates and get excited over them, though don’t ‘versteh’. By reading keep in a state of excited ignorance, like a blind man in a house afire; flounder around, immensely but unintelligently interested; don’t know how I got in and can’t find the way out, but I’m having a booming time all to myself.

Don’t know what a ‘Schelgesetzentwurf’ is, but I keep as excited over it and as worried about it as if it was my own child. I simply live on the Sch.; it is my daily bread. I wouldn’t have the question settled for anything in the world. Especially now that I’ve lost the ‘öffentliche Militargericht circus’. I read all the debates on that question with a never-failing interest, but all at once they sprung a vote on me a couple of days ago & did something by a vote of 100 to 143, but I couldn’t find out what it was.

CLXXIX

A dinner with William II.

The dinner with Emperor William II. at General von Versen’s was set for the 20th of February. A few days before, Mark Twain entered in his note-book:

In that day the Imperial lion and the Democratic lamb shall sit down together, and a little General shall feed them.



Mark Twain was the guest of honor on this occasion, and was seated at the Emperor's right hand. The Emperor's brother, Prince Heinrich, sat opposite; Prince Radolin farther along. Rudolf Lindau, of the Foreign Office, was also present. There were fourteen at the table, all told. In his memorandum made at the time, Clemens gave no account of the dinner beyond the above details, only adding:



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After dinner 6 or 8 officers came in, & all hands adjourned to the big room out of the smoking-room and held a “smoking parliament” after the style of the ancient Potsdam one, till midnight, when the Emperor shook hands and left.

It was not until fourteen years later that Mark Twain related some special matters pertaining to that evening. He may have expanded then somewhat to fill out spaces of his memory, and embroidered them, as was his wont; but that something happened, either in reality or in his imagination, which justified his version of it we may believe. He told it as here given, premising: “This may appear in print after I am dead, but not before.

“From 1891 until day before yesterday I had never mentioned the matter, nor set it down with a pen, nor ever referred to it in any way—not even to my wife, to whom I was accustomed to tell everything that happened to me.” At the dinner his Majesty chatted briskly and entertainingly along in easy and flowing English, and now and then he interrupted himself to address a remark to me or to some other individual of the guests. When the reply had been delivered he resumed his talk. I noticed that the table etiquette tallied with that which was the law of my house at home when we had guests; that is to say, the guests answered when the host favored them with a remark, and then quieted down and behaved themselves until they got another chance. If I had been in the Emperor’s chair and he in mine I should have felt infinitely comfortable and at home, but I was guest now, and consequently felt less at home. From old experience I was familiar with the rules of the game and familiar with their exercise from the high place of host; but I was not familiar with the trammelled and less satisfactory position of guest, therefore I felt a little strange and out of place. But there was no animosity—no, the Emperor was host, therefore, according to my own rule, he had a right to do the talking, and it was my honorable duty to intrude no interruptions or other improvements except upon invitation; and of course it could be my turn some day—some day, on some friendly visit of inspection to America, it might be my pleasure and distinction to have him as guest at my table; then I would give him a rest and a quiet time.” In one way there was a difference between his table and mine—for instance, atmosphere; the guests stood in awe of him, and naturally they conferred that feeling upon me, for, after all, I am only human, although I regret it. When a guest answered a question he did it with a deferential voice and manner; he did not put any emotion into it, and he did not spin it out, but got it out of his system as quickly as he could, and then looked relieved. The Emperor was used to this atmosphere, and it did not chill his blood; maybe it was an inspiration to him, for he was alert, brilliant, and full of animation; also he was most gracefully



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and felicitously complimentary to my books—and I will remark here that the happy phrasing of a compliment is one of the rarest of human gifts and the happy delivery of it another. I once mentioned the high compliment which he paid to the book 'Old Times on the Mississippi'; but there were others, among them some high praise of my description in 'A Tramp Abroad' of certain striking phases of German student life. "Fifteen or twenty minutes before the dinner ended the Emperor made a remark to me in praise of our generous soldier pensions; then, without pausing, he continued the remark, not speaking to me, but across the table to his brother, Prince Heinrich. The Prince replied, endorsing the Emperor's view of the matter. Then I followed with my own view of it. I said that in the beginning our government's generosity to the soldier was clear in its intent and praiseworthy, since the pensions were conferred upon soldiers who had earned them, soldiers who had been disabled in the war and could no longer earn a livelihood for themselves and their families, but that the pensions decreed and added later lacked the virtue of a clean motive, and had, little by little, degenerated into a wider and wider and more and more offensive system of vote-purchasing, and was now become a source of corruption, which was an unpleasant thing to contemplate and was a danger besides. I think that that was about the substance of my remark; but in any case the remark had a quite definite result, and that is the memorable thing about it — manifestly it made everybody uncomfortable. I seemed to perceive this quite plainly. I had committed an indiscretion. Possibly it was in violating etiquette by intruding a remark when I had not been invited to make one; possibly it was in taking issue with an opinion promulgated by his Majesty. I do not know which it was, but I quite clearly remember the effect which my act produced—to wit, the Emperor refrained from addressing any remarks to me afterward, and not merely during the brief remainder of the dinner, but afterward in the kneip-room, where beer and cigars and hilarious anecdoting prevailed until about midnight. I am sure that the Emperor's good night was the only thing he said to me in all that time." "Was this rebuke studied and intentional? I don't know, but I regarded it in that way. I can't be absolutely sure of it because of modifying doubts created afterward by one or two circumstances. For example: the Empress Dowager invited me to her palace, and the reigning Empress invited me to breakfast, and also sent for General von Versen to come to her palace and read to her and her ladies from my books."

It was a personal message from the Emperor that fourteen years later recalled to him this curious circumstance. A gentleman whom Clemens knew went on a diplomatic mission to Germany. Upon being presented to Emperor William, the latter had immediately begun to talk of Mark Twain and his work. He spoke of the description of German student life as the greatest thing of its kind ever written, and of the sketch on the German language as wonderful; then he said:



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“Convey to Mr. Clemens my kindest regards, ask him if he remembers that dinner at Von Versen’s, and ask him why he didn’t do any more talking at that dinner.”

It seemed a mysterious message. Clemens thought it might have been meant to convey some sort of an imperial apology; but again it might have meant that Mark Twain’s breach and the Emperor’s coolness on that occasion were purely imaginary, and that the Emperor had really expected him to talk far more than he did.

Returning to the Royal Hotel after the Von Versen dinner, Mark Twain received his second high compliment that day on the Mississippi book. The portier, a tow-headed young German, must have been comparatively new at the hotel; for apparently he had just that day learned that his favorite author, whose books he had long been collecting, was actually present in the flesh. Clemens, all ready to apologize for asking so late an admission, was greeted by the portier’s round face all sunshine and smiles. The young German then poured out a stream of welcome and compliments and dragged the author to a small bedroom near the front door, where he excitedly pointed out a row of books, German translations of Mark Twain.

“There,” he said; “you wrote them. I’ve found it out. Lieber Gott! I did not know it before, and I ask a million pardons. That one there, Old Times on the Mississippi, is the best you ever wrote.”

The note-book records only one social event following the Emperor’s dinner—a dinner with the secretary of the legation. The note says:

At the Emperor’s dinner black cravats were ordered. Tonight I went in a black cravat and everybody else wore white ones. Just my luck.

The Berlin activities came to an end then. He was still physically far from robust, and his doctors peremptorily ordered him to stay indoors or to go to a warmer climate. This was March 1st. Clemens and his wife took Joseph Very, and, leaving the others for the time in Berlin, set out for Mentone, in the south of France.

CLXXX

MANY WANDERINGS

Mentone was warm and quiet, and Clemens worked when his arm permitted. He was alone there with Mrs. Clemens, and they wandered about a good deal, idling and picture-making, enjoying a sort of belated honeymoon. Clemens wrote to Susy:

Joseph is gone to Nice to educate himself in kodaking—and to get the pictures mounted which mama thinks she took here; but I noticed she didn’t take the plug out, as a rule. When she did she took nine pictures on top of each other—composites.



They remained a month in Mentone, then went over to Pisa, and sent Joseph to bring the rest of the party to Rome. In Rome they spent another month—a period of sight-seeing, enjoyable, but to Clemens pretty profitless.

“I do not expect to be able to write any literature this year,” he said in a letter to Hall near the end of April. “The moment I take up my pen my rheumatism returns.”



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Still he struggled along and managed to pile up a good deal of copy in the course of weeks. From Rome to Florence, at the end of April, and so pleasing was the prospect, and so salubrious the air of that ancient city, that they resolved to engage residence there for the next winter. They inspected accommodations of various kinds, and finally, through Prof. Willard Fiske, were directed to the Villa Viviani, near Settignano, on a hill to the eastward of Florence, with vineyard and olive-grove sloping away to the city lying in a haze—a vision of beauty and peace. They closed the arrangement for Viviani, and about the middle of May went up to Venice for a fortnight of sight-seeing—a break in the travel back to Germany. William Gedney Bunce, the Hartford artist, was in Venice, and Sarah Orne Jewett and other home friends.

From Venice, by way of Lake Como and “a tangled route” (his note-book says) to Lucerne, and so northward to Berlin and on to Bad Nauheim, where they had planned to spend the summer. Clemens for some weeks had contemplated a trip to America, for matters there seemed to demand his personal attention. Summer arrangements for the family being now concluded, he left within the week and set sail on the Havel for New York. To Jean he wrote a cheerful good-by letter, more cheerful, we may believe, than he felt.

Bremen, 7.45 A.M., June 14, 1892.

*Dear Jean Clemens,—*I am up & shaved & got my clean shirt on & feel mighty fine, & am going down to show off before I put on the rest of my clothes.

Perhaps mama & Mrs. Hague can persuade the Hauswirth to do right; but if he don't you go down & kill his dog.

I wish you would invite the Consul-General and his ladies down to take one of those slim dinners with mama, then he would complain to the Government.

Clemens felt that his presence in America, was demanded by two things. Hall's reports continued, as ever, optimistic; but the semi-annual statements were less encouraging. The Library of Literature and some of the other books were selling well enough; but the continuous increase of capital required by a business conducted on the instalment plan had steadily added to the firm's liabilities, while the prospect of a general tightening in the money-market made the outlook not a particularly happy one. Clemens thought he might be able to dispose of the Library or an interest in it, or even of his share of the business itself, to some one with means sufficient to put it on an easier financial footing. The uncertainties of trade and the burden of increased debt had become a nightmare which interfered with his sleep. It seemed hard enough to earn a living with a crippled arm, without this heavy business care.

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The second interest requiring attention was that other old one—the machine. Clemens had left the matter in Paige's hands, and Paige, with persuasive eloquence, had interested Chicago capital to a point where a company had been formed to manufacture the type-setter in that city. Paige reported that he had got several million dollars subscribed for the construction of a factory, and that he had been placed on a salary as a sort of general "consulting omniscient" at five thousand dollars a month. Clemens, who had been negotiating again with the Mallorys for the disposal of his machine royalties, thought it proper to find out just what was going on. He remained in America less than two weeks, during which he made a flying trip to Chicago and found that Paige's company really had a factory started, and proposed to manufacture fifty machines. It was not easy to find out the exact status of this new company, but Clemens at least was hopeful enough of its prospects to call off the negotiations with the Mallorys which had promised considerable cash in hand. He had been able to accomplish nothing material in the publishing situation, but his heart-to-heart talk with Hall for some reason had seemed comforting. The business had been expanding; they would now "concentrate." He returned on the Lahn, and he must have been in better health and spirits, for it is said he kept the ship very merry during the passage. He told many extravagantly amusing yarns; so many that a court was convened to try him on the charge of "inordinate and unscientific lying." Many witnesses testified, and his own testimony was so unconvincing that the jury convicted him without leaving the bench. He was sentenced to read aloud from his own works for a considerable period every day until the steamer should reach port. It is said that he faithfully carried out this part of the program, and that the proceeds from the trial and the various readings amounted to something more than six hundred dollars, which was turned over to the Seamen's Fund.

Clemens's arm was really much better, and he put in a good deal of spare time during the trip writing an article on "All Sorts and Conditions of Ships," from Noah's Ark down to the fine new Havel, then the latest word in ship-construction. It was an article written in a happy vein and is profitable reading to-day. The description of Columbus as he appeared on the deck of his flag-ship is particularly rich and flowing:

If the weather was chilly he came up clad from plumed helmet to spurred heel in magnificent plate-armor inlaid with arabesques of gold, having previously warmed it at the galley fire. If the weather was warm he came up in the ordinary sailor toggery of the time—great slouch hat of blue velvet, with a flowing brush of snowy ostrich-plumes, fastened on with a flashing cluster of diamonds and emeralds; gold-embroidered doublet of green velvet, with slashed sleeves exposing undersleeves of



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crimson satin; deep collar and cuff ruffles of rich, limp lace; trunk hose of pink velvet, with big knee-knots of brocaded yellow ribbon; pearl-tinted silk stockings, clocked and daintily embroidered; lemon-colored buskins of unborn kid, funnel-topped, and drooping low to expose the pretty stockings; deep gauntlets of finest white heretic skin, from the factory of the Holy Inquisition, formerly part of the person of a lady of rank; rapier with sheath crusted with jewels and hanging from a broad baldric upholstered with rubies and sapphires.

CLXXXI

NAUHEIM AND THE PRINCE OF WALES

Clemens was able to write pretty steadily that summer in Nauheim and turned off a quantity of copy. He completed several short articles and stories, and began, or at least continued work on, two books—'Tom Sawyer Abroad' and 'Those Extraordinary Twins'—the latter being the original form of 'Pudd'nhead Wilson'. As early as August 4th he wrote to Hall that he had finished forty thousand words of the "Tom Sawyer" story, and that it was to be offered to some young people's magazine, Harper's Young People or St. Nicholas; but then he suddenly decided that his narrative method was altogether wrong. To Hall on the 10th he wrote:

I have dropped that novel I wrote you about because I saw a more effective way of using the main episode—to wit, by telling it through the lips of Huck Finn. So I have started Huck Finn & Tom Sawyer (still 15 years old) & their friend the freed slave Jim around the world in a stray balloon, with Huck as narrator, & somewhere after the end of that great voyage he will work in that original episode & then nobody will suspect that a whole book has been written & the globe circumnavigated merely to get that episode in in an effective (& at the same time apparently unintentional) way. I have written 12,000 words of this new narrative, & find that the humor flows as easily as the adventures & surprises—so I shall go along and make a book of from 50,000 to 100,000 words.

It is a story for boys, of course, & I think it will interest any boy between 8 years & 80.

When I was in New York the other day Mrs. Dodge, editor of St. Nicholas, wrote and offered me \$5,000 for (serial right) a story for boys 50,000 words long. I wrote back and declined, for I had other matter in my mind then. I conceive that the right way to write a story for boys is to write so that it will not only interest boys, but will also strongly interest any man who has ever been a boy. That immensely enlarges the audience.



Now, this story doesn't need to be restricted to a child's magazine —it is proper enough for any magazine, I should think, or for a syndicate. I don't swear it, but I think so.

Proposed title—New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.



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He was full of his usual enthusiasm in any new undertaking, and writes of the Extraordinary Twins:

By and by I shall have to offer (for grown folks' magazine) a novel entitled, 'Those Extraordinary Twins'. It's the howling farce I told you I had begun awhile back. I laid it aside to ferment while I wrote Tom Sawyer Abroad, but I took it up again on a little different plan lately, and it is swimming along satisfactorily now. I think all sorts of folks will read it. It is clear out of the common order—it is a fresh idea—I don't think it resembles anything in literature.

He was quite right; it did not resemble anything in literature, nor did it greatly resemble literature, though something at least related to literature would eventually grow out of it.

In a letter written many years afterward by Frank Mason, then consul-general at Frankfort, he refers to "that happy summer at Nauheim." Mason was often a visitor there, and we may believe that his memory of the summer was justified. For one thing, Clemens himself was in better health and spirits and able to continue his work. But an even greater happiness lay in the fact that two eminent physicians had pronounced Mrs. Clemens free from any organic ills. To Orion, Clemens wrote:

We are in the clouds because the bath physicians say positively that Livy has no heart disease but has only weakness of the heart muscles and will soon be well again. That was worth going to Europe to find out.

It was enough to change the whole atmosphere of the household, and financial worries were less considered. Another letter to Orion relates history:

The Twichells have been here four days & we have had good times with them. Joe & I ran over to Homburg, the great pleasure-resort, Saturday, to dine with friends, & in the morning I went walking in the promenade & met the British ambassador to the Court of Berlin and he introduced me to the Prince of Wales. I found him a most unusually comfortable and unembarrassing Englishman.

Twichell has reported Mark Twain's meeting with the Prince (later Edward VII) as having come about by special request of the latter, made through the British ambassador. "The meeting," he says, "was a most cordial one on both sides, and presently the Prince took Mark Twain's arm and the two marched up and down, talking earnestly together, the Prince, solid, erect, and soldierlike, Clemens weaving along in his curious, swinging gait in a full tide of talk, and brandishing a sun-umbrella of the most scandalous description."

When they parted Clemens said:

"It has been, indeed, a great pleasure to meet your Royal Highness."

The Prince answered:



“And it is a pleasure, Mr. Clemens, to have met you—again.”

Clemens was puzzled to reply.

“Why,” he said, “have we met before?”

The Prince smiled happily.



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“Oh yes,” he said; “don’t you remember that day on the Strand when you were on the top of a bus and I was heading a procession and you had on your new overcoat with flap-pockets?”—[See chap. clxiii, “A Letter to the Queen of England.”]

It was the highest compliment he could have paid, for it showed that he had read, and had remembered all those years. Clemens expressed to Twichell regret that he had forgotten to mention his visit to the Prince’s sister, Louise, in Ottawa, but he had his opportunity at a dinner next day. Later the Prince had him to supper and they passed an entire evening together.

There was a certain uneasiness in the Nauheim atmosphere that year, for the cholera had broken out at Hamburg, and its victims were dying at a terrific rate. It was almost impossible to get authentic news as to the spread of the epidemic, for the German papers were curiously conservative in their reports. Clemens wrote an article on the subject but concluded not to print it. A paragraph will convey its tenor.

What I am trying to make the reader understand is the strangeness of the situation here—a mighty tragedy being played upon a stage that is close to us, & yet we are as ignorant of its details as we should be if the stage were in China. We sit “in front,” & the audience is in fact the world; but the curtain is down, & from behind it we hear only an inarticulate murmur. The Hamburg disaster must go into history as the disaster without a history.

He closes with an item from a physician’s letter—an item which he says “gives you a sudden and terrific sense of the situation there.”

For in a line it flashes before you—this ghastly picture—a thing seen by the physician: a wagon going along the street with five sick people in it, and with them four dead ones.

CLXXXII

THE VILLA VIVIANI

‘The American Claimant’, published in May I (1892), did not bring a very satisfactory return. For one thing, the book-trade was light, and then the Claimant was not up to his usual standard. It had been written under hard circumstances and by a pen long out of practice; it had not paid, and its author must work all the harder on the new undertakings. The conditions at Nauheim seemed favorable, and they lingered there until well into September. To Mrs. Crane, who had returned to America, Clemens wrote on the 18th, from Lucerne, in the midst of their travel to Italy:

We remained in Nauheim a little too long. If we had left four or five days earlier we should have made Florence in three days. Hard trip because it was one of those trains

that gets tired every 7 minutes and stops to rest three-quarters of an hour. It took us 3 1/2 hours to get there instead of the regulation 2 hours. We shall pull through to Milan to-morrow if possible. Next day we shall start at 10 *am* and try to make



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Bologna, 5 hours. Next day, Florence, D. V. Next year we will walk. Phelps came to Frankfort and we had some great times—dinner at his hotel; & the Masons, supper at our inn—Livy not in it. She was merely allowed a glimpse, no more. Of course Phelps said she was merely pretending to be ill; was never looking so well & fine. A Paris journal has created a happy interest by inoculating one of its correspondents with cholera. A man said yesterday he wished to God they would inoculate all of them. Yes, the interest is quite general and strong & much hope is felt.

Livy says I have said enough bad things, and better send all our loves & shut up. Which I do—and shut up.

They lingered at Lucerne until Mrs. Clemens was rested and better able to continue the journey, arriving at last in Florence, September 26th. They drove out to the Villa Viviani in the afternoon and found everything in readiness for their reception, even to the dinner, which was prepared and on the table. Clemens, in his notes, speaks of this and adds:

It takes but a sentence to state that, but it makes an indolent person tired to think of the planning & work and trouble that lie concealed in it.

Some further memoranda made at this time have that intimate interest which gives reality and charm. The 'contadino' brought up their trunks from the station, and Clemens wrote:

The 'contadino' is middle-aged & like the rest of the peasants—that is to say, brown, handsome, good-natured, courteous, & entirely independent without making any offensive show of it. He charged too much for the trunks, I was told. My informer explained that this was customary. September 27. The rest of the trunks brought up this morning. He charged too much again, but I was told that this was also customary. It's all right, then. I do not wish to violate the customs. Hired landau, horses, & coachman. Terms, 480 francs a month & a pourboire to the coachman, I to furnish lodging for the man & the horses, but nothing else. The landau has seen better days & weighs 30 tons. The horses are feeble & object to the landau; they stop & turn around every now & then & examine it with surprise & suspicion. This causes delay. But it entertains the people along the road. They came out & stood around with their hands in their pockets & discussed the matter with each other. I was told that they said that a 30-ton landau was not the thing for horses like those—what they needed was a wheelbarrow.

His description of the house pictures it as exactly today as it did then, for it has not changed in these twenty years, nor greatly, perhaps, in the centuries since it was built.

It is a plain, square building, like a box, & is painted light

yellow & has green window-shutters. It stands in a commanding position on the artificial terrace of liberal dimensions, which is

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walled around with masonry. From the walls the vineyards & olive orchards of the estate slant away toward the valley. There are several tall trees, stately stone-pines, also fig-trees & trees of breeds not familiar to me. Roses overflow the retaining-walls, & the battered & mossy stone urn on the gate-posts, in pink & yellow cataracts exactly as they do on the drop-curtains in the theaters. The house is a very fortress for strength. The main walls—all brick covered with plaster—are about 3 feet thick. I have several times tried to count the rooms of the house, but the irregularities baffle me. There seem to be 28. There are plenty of windows & worlds of sunlight. The floors are sleek & shiny & full of reflections, for each is a mirror in its way, softly imaging all objects after the subdued fashion of forest lakes. The curious feature of the house is the salon. This is a spacious & lofty vacuum which occupies the center of the house. All the rest of the house is built around it; it extends up through both stories & its roof projects some feet above the rest of the building. The sense of its vastness strikes you the moment you step into it & cast your eyes around it & aloft. There are divans distributed along its walls. They make little or no show, though their aggregate length is 57 feet. A piano in it is a lost object. We have tried to reduce the sense of desert space & emptiness with tables & things, but they have a defeated look, & do not do any good. Whatever stands or moves under that soaring painted vault is belittled.

He describes the interior of this vast room (they grew to love it), dwelling upon the plaster-relief portraits above its six doors, Florentine senators and judges, ancient dwellers there and former owners of the estate.

The date of one of them is 1305—middle-aged, then, & a judge—he could have known, as a youth, the very greatest Italian artists, & he could have walked & talked with Dante, & probably did. The date of another is 1343—he could have known Boccaccio & spent his afternoons wandering in Fiesole, gazing down on plague-reeking Florence & listening to that man's improper tales, & he probably did. The date of another is 1463—he could have met Columbus & he knew the magnificent Lorenzo, of course. These are all Cerretanis—or Cerretani-Twains, as I may say, for I have adopted myself into their family on account of its antiquity—my origin having been heretofore too recent to suit me.

We are considering the details of Viviani at some length, for it was in this setting that he began and largely completed what was to be his most important work of this later time—in some respects his most important of any time—the ‘Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc’. If the reader loves this book, and he must love it if he has read it, he will not begrudge the space here given to the scene of its inspiration. The outdoor picture of Viviani is of even more importance, for he wrote oftener out-of-doors than elsewhere. Clemens added it to his notes several months later, but it belongs here.



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The situation of this villa is perfect. It is three miles from Florence, on the side of a hill. Beyond some hill-spurs is Fiesole perched upon its steep terraces; in the immediate foreground is the imposing mass of the Ross castle, its walls and turrets rich with the mellow weather-stains of forgotten centuries; in the distant plain lies Florence, pink & gray & brown, with the ruddy, huge dome of the cathedral dominating its center like a captive balloon, & flanked on the right by the smaller bulb of the Medici chapel & on the left by the airy tower of the Palazzo Vecchio; all around the horizon is a billowy rim of lofty blue hills, snowed white with innumerable villas. After nine months of familiarity with this panorama I still think, as I thought in the beginning, that this is the fairest picture on our planet, the most enchanting to look upon, the most satisfying to the eye & the spirit. To see the sun sink down, drowned in his pink & purple & golden floods, & overwhelm Florence with tides of color that make all the sharp lines dim & faint & turn the solid city into a city of dreams, is a sight to stir the coldest nature & make a sympathetic one drunk with ecstasy.

The Clemens household at Florence consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Clemens, Susy, and Jean. Clara had soon returned to Berlin to attend Mrs. Willard's school and for piano instruction. Mrs. Clemens improved in the balmy autumn air of Florence and in the peaceful life of their well-ordered villa. In a memorandum of October 27th Clemens wrote:

The first month is finished. We are wonted now. This carefree life at a Florentine villa is an ideal existence. The weather is divine, the outside aspects lovely, the days and nights tranquil and reposeful, the seclusion from the world and its worries as satisfactory as a dream. Late in the afternoons friends come out from the city & drink tea in the open air & tell what is happening in the world; & when the great sun sinks down upon Florence & the daily miracle begins they hold their breath & look. It is not a time for talk.

No wonder he could work in that environment. He finished 'Tom Sawyer Abroad', also a short story, 'The L 1,000,000 Bank-Note' (planned many years before), discovered the literary mistake of the 'Extraordinary Twins' and began converting it into the worthier tale, 'Pudd'nhead Wilson', soon completed and on its way to America.

With this work out of his hands, Clemens was ready for his great new undertaking. A seed sown by the wind more than forty years before was ready to bloom. He would write the story of Joan of Arc.

CLXXXIII

THE SIEUR DE CONTE AND JOAN

In a note which he made many years later Mark Twain declared that he was fourteen years at work on Joan of Arc; that he had been twelve years preparing for it, and that he was two years in writing it.

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There is nothing in any of his earlier notes or letters to indicate that he contemplated the story of Joan as early as the eighties; but there is a bibliographical list of various works on the subject, probably compiled for him not much later than 1880, for the latest published work of the list bears that date. He was then too busy with his inventions and publishing schemes to really undertake a work requiring such vast preparation; but without doubt he procured a number of books and renewed that old interest begun so long ago when a stray wind had blown a leaf from that tragic life into his own. Joan of Arc, by Janet Tuckey, was apparently the first book he read with the definite idea of study, for this little volume had been recently issued, and his copy, which still exists, is filled with his marginal notes. He did not speak of this volume in discussing the matter in after-years. He may have forgotten it. He dwelt mainly on the old records of the trial which had been dug out and put into modern French by Quicherat; the 'Jeanne d'Arc' of J. Michelet, and the splendid 'Life of the Maid' of Lord Ronald Gower, these being remembered as his chief sources of information.—[The book of Janet Tuckey, however, and ten others, including those mentioned, are credited as "authorities examined in verification" on a front page of his published book. In a letter written at the conclusion of "Joan" in 1895, the author states that in the first two-thirds of the story he used one French and one English authority, while in the last third he had constantly drawn from five French and five English sources.]

"I could not get the Quicherat and some of the other books in English," he said, "and I had to dig them out of the French. I began the story five times."

None of these discarded beginnings exists to-day, but we may believe they were wisely put aside, for no story of the Maid could begin more charmingly, more rarely, than the one supposedly told in his old age by Sieur Louis de Conte, secretary of Joan of Arc, and translated by Jean Francois Alden for the world to read. The impulse which had once prompted Mark Twain to offer *The Prince and the Pauper* anonymously now prevailed. He felt that the Prince had missed a certain appreciation by being connected with his signature, and he resolved that its companion piece (he so regarded Joan) should be accepted on its merits and without prejudice. Walking the floor one day at Viviani, smoking vigorously, he said to Mrs. Clemens and Susy:

"I shall never be accepted seriously over my own signature. People always want to laugh over what I write and are disappointed if they don't find a joke in it. This is to be a serious book. It means more to me than anything I have ever undertaken. I shall write it anonymously."

So it was that that gentle, quaint Sieur de Conte took up the pen, and the tale of Joan was begun in that beautiful spot which of all others seems now the proper environment for its lovely telling.



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He wrote rapidly once he got his plan perfected and his material arranged. The reading of his youth and manhood, with the vivid impressions of that earlier time, became now something remembered, not merely as reading, but as fact.

Others of the family went down into the city almost daily, but he remained in that still garden with Joan as his companion—the old *Sieur de Conte*, saturated with memories, pouring out that marvelous and tragic tale. At the end of each day he would read to the others what he had written, to their enjoyment and wonder.

How rapidly he worked may be judged from a letter which he wrote to Hall in February, in which he said:

I am writing a companion piece to 'The Prince and the Pauper', which is half done & will make 200,000 words.

That is to say, he had written one hundred thousand words in a period of perhaps six weeks, marvelous work when one remembers that after all he was writing history, some of which he must dig laboriously from a foreign source. He had always, more or less, kept up his study of the French, begun so long ago on the river and it stood him in good stead now. Still, it was never easy for him, and the multitude of notes along the margin of his French authorities bears evidence of his faithfulness and the magnitude of his toil. No previous work had ever required so much of him, such thorough knowledge; none had ever so completely commanded his interest. He would have been willing to remain shut away from visitors, to have been released altogether from social obligations; and he did avoid most of them. Not all, for he could not always escape, and perhaps did not always really wish to. Florence and its suburbs were full of delightful people—some of them his old friends. There were luncheons, dinners, teas, dances, concerts, operas always in progress somewhere, and not all of these were to be resisted even by an absorbed author who was no longer himself, but sad old *Sieur de Conte*, following again the banner of the Maid of Orleans, marshaling her twilight armies across his illumined page.

CLXXXIV

NEW HOPE IN THE MACHINE

If all human events had not been ordered in the first act of the primal atom, and so become inevitable, it would seem a pity now that he must abandon his work half-way, and make another hard, distracting trip to America.

But it was necessary for him to go. Even Hall was no longer optimistic. His letters provided only the barest shreds of hope. Times were hard and there was every reason to believe they would be worse. The World's Fair year promised to be what it speedily



became—one of the hardest financial periods this country has ever seen. Chicago could hardly have selected a more profitless time for her great exposition. Clemens wrote urging Hall to sell out all, or a portion, of the business—to do anything, indeed, that would avoid the necessity of further liability and increased dread. Every payment that could be spared from the sales of his manuscript was left in Hall's hands, and such moneys as still came to Mrs. Clemens from her Elmira interests were flung into the general fund. The latter were no longer large, for Langdon & Co. were suffering heavily in the general depression, barely hoping to weather the financial storm.

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It is interesting to note that age and misfortune and illness had a tempering influence on Mark Twain's nature. Instead of becoming harsh and severe and bitter, he had become more gentle, more kindly. He wrote often to Hall, always considerately, even tenderly. Once, when something in Hall's letter suggested that he had perhaps been severe, he wrote:

Mrs. Clemens is deeply distressed, for she thinks I have been blaming you or finding fault with you about something. But most assuredly that cannot be. I tell her that although I am prone to write hasty and regrettable things to other people I am not a bit likely to write such things to you. I can't believe I have done anything so ungrateful. If I have, pile coals of fire upon my head for I deserve it. You have done magnificently with the business, & we must raise the money somehow to enable you to reap a reward for all that labor.

He was fond of Hall. He realized how honest and resolute and industrious he had been. In another letter he wrote him that it was wonderful he had been able to "keep the ship afloat in the storm that has seen fleets and fleets go down"; and he added: "Mrs. Clemens says I must tell you not to send us any money for a month or two, so that you may be afforded what little relief is in our power."

The type-setter situation seemed to promise something. In fact, the machine once more had become the principal hope of financial salvation. The new company seemed really to be getting ahead in spite of the money stringency, and was said to have fifty machines well under way: About the middle of March Clemens packed up two of his shorter manuscripts which he had written at odd times and forwarded them to Hall, in the hope that they would be disposed of and the money waiting him on his arrival; and a week later, March 22, 1893, he sailed from Genoa on the Kaiser Wilhelm II, a fine, new boat. One of the manuscripts was 'The Californian's Tale' and the other was 'Adam's Diary'. —[It seems curious that neither of these tales should have found welcome with the magazines. "The Californian's Tale" was published in the *Liber Scriptorum*, an Authors' Club book, edited by Arthur Stedman. The 'Diary' was disposed of to the *Niagara Book*, a souvenir of Niagara Falls, which contained sketches by Howells, Clemens, and others. Harper's Magazine republished both these stories in later years—the Diary especially with great success.]

Some joke was likely to be played on Mark Twain during these ocean journeys, and for this particular voyage an original one was planned. They knew how he would fume and swear if he should be discovered with dutiable goods and held up in the Custom House, and they planned for this effect. A few days before arriving in New York one passenger after another came to him, each with a box of expensive cigars, and some pleasant speech expressing friendship and appreciation and a hope that they would be remembered in absence,

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etc., until he had perhaps ten or a dozen very choice boxes of smoking material. He took them all with gratitude and innocence. He had never declared any dutiable baggage, entering New York alone, and it never occurred to him that he would need to do so now. His trunk and bags were full; he had the cigars made into a nice package, to be carried handily, and on his arrival at the North German Lloyd docks stood waiting among his things for the formality of Customs examination, his friends assembled for the explosion.

They had not calculated well; the Custom-House official came along presently with the usual "Open your baggage, please," then suddenly recognizing the owner of it he said:

"Oh, Mr. Clemens, excuse me. We have orders to extend to you the courtesies of the port. No examination of your effects is necessary."

It was the evening of Monday, April 3d, when he landed in New York and went to the Hotel Glenham. In his notes he tells of having a two-hour talk with Howells on the following night. They had not seen each other for two years, and their correspondence had been broken off. It was a happy, even if somewhat sad, reunion, for they were no longer young, and when they called the roll of friends there were many vacancies. They had reached an age where some one they loved died every year. Writing to Mrs. Crane, Clemens speaks of the ghosts of memory; then he says:

I dreamed I was born & grew up & was a pilot on the Mississippi & a miner & a journalist in Nevada & a pilgrim in the Quaker City & had a wife & children & went to live in a villa at Florence—& this dream goes on & on & sometimes seems so real that I almost believe it is real. I wonder if it is? But there is no way to tell, for if one applies tests they would be part of the dream, too, & so would simply aid the deceit. I wish I knew whether it is a dream or real.

He was made handsomely welcome in New York. His note-book says:

Wednesday. Dined with Mary Mapes Dodge, Howells, Rudyard Kipling & wife, Clarke,—[William Fayal Clarke, now editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine*.]—Jamie Dodge & wife.

Thursday, 6th. Dined with Andrew Carnegie, Prof. Goldwin Smith, John Cameron, Mr. Glenn. Creation of league for absorbing Canada into our Union. Carnegie also wants to add Great Britain & Ireland.

It was on this occasion that Carnegie made his celebrated maxim about the basket and the eggs. Clemens was suggesting that Carnegie take an interest in the typesetter, and quoted the old adage that one should not put all of his eggs into one basket. Carnegie regarded him through half-closed lids, as was his custom, and answered:

“That’s a mistake; put all your eggs into one basket—and watch that basket.”



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He had not come to America merely for entertainment. He was at the New York office of the type-setter company, acquiring there what seemed to be good news, for he was assured that his interests were being taken care of, and that within a year at most his royalty returns would place him far beyond the fear of want. He forwarded this good news to Italy, where it was sorely needed, for Mrs. Clemens found her courage not easy to sustain in his absence. That he had made his letter glowing enough, we may gather from her answer.

It does not seem credible that we are really again to have money to spend. I think I will jump around and spend money just for fun, and give a little away, if we really get some. What should we do and how should we feel if we had no bright prospects before us, and yet how many people are situated in that way?

He decided to make another trip to Chicago to verify, with his own eyes, the manufacturing reports, and to see Paige, who would appear to have become more elusive than ever as to contracts, written and implied. He took Hall with him, and wrote Orion to meet him at the Great Northern Hotel. This would give him a chance to see Orion and would give Orion a chance to see the great Fair. He was in Chicago eleven days, and in bed with a heavy cold almost the whole of that time. Paige came to see him at his rooms, and, as always, was rich in prospects and promises; full of protestations that, whatever came, when the tide of millions rolled in, they would share and share alike. The note-book says:

Paige shed even more tears than usual. What a talker he is! He could persuade a fish to come out and take a walk with him. When he is present I always believe him; I can't help it.

Clemens returned to New York as soon as he was able to travel. Going down in the elevator a man stepped in from one of the floors swearing violently. Clemens, leaning over to Hall, with his hand to his mouth, and in a whisper audible to every one, said:

“Bishop of Chicago.”

The man, with a quick glance, recognized his fellow-passenger and subsided.

On May 13th Clemens took the Kaiser Wilhelm II. for Genoa. He had accomplished little, but he was in better spirits as to the machine. If only the strain of his publishing business had slackened even for a moment! Night and day it was always with him. Hall presently wrote that the condition of the money-market was “something beyond description. You cannot get money on anything short of government bonds.” The Mount Morris Bank would no longer handle their paper. The Clemens household resorted to economies hitherto undreamed of. Mrs. Clemens wrote to her sister that she really did not see sometimes where their next money would come from. She reported that her husband got up in the night and walked the floor in his distress.

He wrote again to Hall, urging him to sell and get rid of the debts and responsibilities at whatever sacrifice:



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I am terribly tired of business. I am by nature and disposition unfit for it, & I want to get out of it. I am standing on the Mount Morris volcano with help from the machine a long, long way off—& doubtless a long way further off than the Connecticut company imagine.

Get me out of business!

He knew something of the delays of completing a typesetting machine, and he had little faith in any near relief from that source. He wrote again go Hall, urging him to sell some of his type-setter royalties. They should be worth something now since the manufacturing company was actually in operation; but with the terrible state of the money-market there was no sale for anything. Clemens attempted to work, but put in most of his time footing up on the margin of his manuscript the amount of his indebtedness, the expenses of his household, and the possibilities of his income. It was weary, hard, nerve-racking employment. About the middle of June they closed Viviani. Susy Clemens went to Paris to cultivate her voice, a rare soprano, with a view to preparing for the operatic stage. Clemens took Mrs. Clemens, with little Jean, to Germany for the baths. Clara, who had graduated from Mrs. Willard's school in Berlin, joined them in Munich, and somewhat later Susy also joined them, for Madame Marchesi, the great master of voice-culture, had told her that she must acquire physique to carry that voice of hers before she would undertake to teach her.

In spite of his disturbed state of mind Clemens must have completed some literary work during this period, for we find first mention, in a letter to Hall, of his immortal defense of Harriet Shelley, a piece of writing all the more marvelous when we consider the conditions of its performance. Characteristically, in the same letter, he suddenly develops a plan for a new enterprise—this time for a magazine which Arthur Stedman or his father will edit, and the Webster company will publish as soon as their present burdens are unloaded. But we hear no more of this project.

But by August he was half beside himself with anxiety. On the 6th he wrote Hall:

Here we never see a newspaper, but even if we did I could not come anywhere near appreciating or correctly estimating the tempest you have been buffeting your way through—only the man who is in it can do that—but I have tried not to burden you thoughtlessly or wantonly. I have been overwrought & unsettled in mind by apprehensions, & that is a thing that is not helpable when one is in a strange land & sees his resources melt down to a two months' supply & can't see any sure daylight beyond. The bloody machine offers but a doubtful outlook—& will still offer nothing much better for a long time to come; for when the "three weeks" are up, there will be three months' tinkering to follow, I guess. That is unquestionably the boss machine of the world, but is the toughest one on prophets when it is in an incomplete state that has ever seen the light.

And three days later:

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Great Scott, but it's a long year—for you & me! I never knew the almanac to drag so. At least not since I was finishing that other machine.

I watch for your letters hungrily—just as I used to watch for the telegram saying the machine's finished—but when “next week certainly” suddenly swelled into “three weeks sure” I recognized the old familiar tune I used to hear so much. W——don't know what sick-heartedness is—but he is in a way to find out.

And finally, on the 4th:

I am very glad indeed if you and Mr. Langdon are able to see any daylight ahead. To me none is visible. I strongly advise that every penny that comes in shall be applied to paying off debts. I may be in error about this, but it seems to me that we have no other course open. We can pay a part of the debts owing to outsiders —none to Clemenses. In very prosperous times we might regard our stock & copyrights as assets sufficient, with the money owing to us, to square up & quit even, but I suppose we may not hope for such luck in the present condition of things.

What I am mainly hoping for is to save my book royalties. If they come into danger I hope you will cable me so that I can come over & try to save them, for if they go I am a beggar.

I would sail to-day if I had anybody to take charge of my family & help them through the difficult journeys commanded by the doctors.

A few days later he could stand it no longer, and on August 29 (1893) sailed, the second time that year, for New York.

CLXXXV

AN INTRODUCTION TO H. H. ROGERS

Clemens took a room at The Players—“a cheap room,” he wrote, “at \$1.50 per day.” It was now the end of September, the beginning of a long half-year, during which Mark Twain's fortunes were at a lower ebb than ever before; lower, even, than during those mining days among the bleak Esmeralda hills. Then he had no one but him self and was young. Now, at fifty-eight, he had precious lives dependent upon him, and he was weighed down with a vast burden of debt. The liabilities of Charles L. Webster & Co. were fully two hundred thousand dollars. Something like sixty thousand dollars of this was money supplied by Mrs. Clemens, but the vast remaining sum was due to banks, to printers, to binders, and to dealers in various publishing materials. Somehow it must be paid. As for their assets, they looked ample enough on paper, but in reality, at a time like this, they were problematical. In fact, their value was very doubtful indeed. What

he was to do Clemens did not know. He could not even send cheerful reports to Europe. There was no longer anything to promise concerning the type-setter. The fifty machines which the company had started to build had dwindled to ten machines; there was a prospect that the ten would dwindle to one, and that one a reconstruction of the original Hartford product, which had cost so much money and so many weary years. Clemens spent a good part of his days at The Players, reading or trying to write or seeking to divert his mind in the company of the congenial souls there, waiting for-he knew not what.

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Yet at this very moment a factor was coming into his life, a human element, a man to whom in his old age Mark Twain owed more than to any other of his myriad of friends. One night, when he was with Dr. Clarence C. Rice at the Murray Hill Hotel, Rice said:

“Clemens, I want you to know my friend, Mr. H. H. Rogers. He is an admirer of your books.”

Clemens turned and was looking into the handsome, clean-cut features of the great financier, whose name was hardly so familiar then as it became at a later period, but whose power was already widely known and felt among his kind.

“Mr. Clemens,” said Mr. Rogers, “I was one of your early admirers. I heard you lecture a long time ago on the Sandwich Islands. I was interested in the subject in those days, and I heard that Mark Twain was a man who had been there. I didn’t suppose I’d have any difficulty getting a seat, but I did; the house was jammed. When I came away I realized that Mark Twain was a great man, and I have read everything of yours since that I could get hold of.”

They sat down at a table, and Clemens told some of his amusing stories. Rogers was in a perpetual gale of laughter. When at last he rose to go the author and the financier were as old friends. Mr. Rogers urged him to visit him at his home. He must introduce him to Mrs. Rogers, he said, who was also his warm admirer. It was only a little while after this that Dr. Rice said to the millionaire:

“Mr. Rogers, I wish you would look into Clemens’s finances a little: I am afraid they are a good deal confused.”

This would be near the end of September, 1893. On October 18 Clemens wrote home concerning a possible combination of Webster & Co. with John Brisben Walker, of the ‘Cosmopolitan’, and added:

I have got the best and wisest man of the whole Standard Oil group—a multi-millionaire—a good deal interested in looking into the type- setter. He has been searching into that thing for three weeks and yesterday he said to me: “I find the machine to be all you represent it. I have here exhaustive reports from my own experts, and I know every detail of its capacity, its immense construction, its cost, its history, and all about its inventor’s character. I know that the New York company and the Chicago company are both stupid, and that they are unbusinesslike people, destitute of money and in a hopeless boggle.”

Then he told me the scheme he had planned and said:

“If I can arrange with these people on this basis—it will take several weeks to find out—I will see to it that they get the money they need. In the mean time you 'stop walking the floor'.”



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Of course, with this encouragement, Clemens was in the clouds again. Furthermore, Rogers had suggested to his son-in-law, William Evarts Benjamin, also a subscription publisher, that he buy from the Webster company The Library of American Literature for fifty thousand dollars, a sum which provided for the more insistent creditors. There was hope that the worst was over. Clemens did in reality give up walking the floor, and for the time, at least, found happier diversions. He must not return to Europe as yet, for the type-setter matter was still far from conclusion. On the 11th of November he was gorgeously entertained by the Lotos Club in its new building. Introducing him, President Frank Lawrence said:

“What name is there in literature that can be likened to his? Perhaps some of the distinguished gentlemen about this table can tell us, but I know of none. Himself his only parallel, it seems to me. He is all our own—a ripe and perfect product of the American soil.”

CLXXXVI

“The Belle of new York”

Those were feverish weeks of waiting, with days of alternate depression and exaltation as the pendulum swung to and fro between hope and despair. By daylight Clemens tried to keep himself strenuously busy; evenings and nights he plunged into social activities—dinners, amusements, suppers, balls, and the like. He was besieged with invitations, sought for by the gayest and the greatest; “Jamie” Dodge conferred upon him the appropriate title: of “The Belle of New York.” In his letters home he describes in detail many of the festivities and the wildness with which he has flung himself into them, dilating on his splendid renewal of health, his absolute immunity from fatigue. He attributes this to his indifference to diet and regularities of meals and sleep; but we may guess that it was due to a reaction from having shifted his burden to stronger financial shoulders. Henry Rogers had taken his load upon him.

“It rests me,” Rogers said, “to experiment with the affairs of a friend when I am tired of my own. You enjoy yourself. Let me work at the puzzle a little.”

And Clemens, though his conscience pricked him, obeyed, as was his habit at such times. To Mrs. Clemens (in Paris now, at the Hotel Brighton) he wrote:

He is not common clay, but fine-fine & delicate. I did hate to burden his good heart & overworked head, but he took hold with avidity & said it was no burden to work for his friends, but a pleasure. When I arrived in September, Lord! how black the prospect was & how desperate, how incurably desperate! Webster & Co. had to have a small sum of money or go under at once. I flew to Hartford—to my friends—but they were not

moved, not strongly interested, & I was ashamed that I went. It was from Mr. Rogers, a stranger, that I got the money and was by it saved. And then—while still a stranger—he



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set himself the task of saving my financial life without putting upon me (in his native delicacy) any sense that I was the recipient of a charity, a benevolence. He gave time to me —time, which could not be bought by any man at \$100,000 a month—no, nor for three times the money.

He adds that a friend has just offered to Webster & Co. a book that arraigns the Standard Oil magnates individual by individual.

I wanted to say the only man I care for in the world, the only man I would give a d—n for, the only man who is lavishing his sweat & blood to save me & mine from starvation is a Standard Oil magnate. If you know me, you know whether I want the book or not.

But I didn't say that. I said I didn't want any book; I wanted to get out of this publishing business & out of all business & was here for that purpose & would accomplish it if I could.

He tells how he played billiards with Rogers, tirelessly as always, until the millionaire had looked at him helplessly and asked:

“Don't you ever get tired?”

And he answered:

“I don't know what it is to get tired. I wish I did.”

He wrote of going with Mr. Rogers to the Madison Square Garden to see an exhibition of boxing given by the then splendid star of pugilism, James J. Corbett. Dr. Rice accompanied him, and painters Robert Reid and Edward Simmons, from *The Players*. They had five seats in a box, and Stanford White came along presently and took Clemens into the champion's dressing-room.

Corbett has a fine face and is modest and diffident, besides being the most perfectly & beautifully constructed human animal in the world. I said:

“You have whipped Mitchell & maybe you will whip Jackson in June—but you are not done then. You will have to tackle me.”

He answered, so gravely that one might easily have thought him in earnest:

“No, I am not going to meet you in the ring. It is not fair or right to require it. You might chance to knock me out, by no merit of your own, but by a purely accidental blow, &



then my reputation would be gone & you would have a double one. You have got fame enough & you ought not to want to take mine away from me.”

Corbett was for a long time a clerk in the Nevada Bank, in San Francisco.

There were lots of little boxing-matches to entertain the crowd; then at last Corbett appeared in the ring & the 8,000 people present went mad with enthusiasm. My two artists went mad about his form. They said they had never seen anything that came reasonably near equalling its perfection except Greek statues, & they didn't surpass it. Corbett boxed 3 rounds with the middle-weight Australian champion —oh, beautiful to see!—then the show was over and we struggled out through a perfect mash of humanity. When

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we reached the street I found I had left my arctics in the box. I had to have them, so Simmons said he would go back & get them, & I didn't dissuade him. I wouldn't see how he was going to make his way a single yard into that solid incoming wave of people—yet he must plow through it full 50 yards. He was back with the shoes in 3 minutes!

How do you reckon he accomplished that miracle? By saying:

“Way, gentlemen, please—coming to fetch Mr. Corbett’s overshoes.”

The word flew from mouth to mouth, the Red Sea divided, & Simmons walked comfortably through & back, dry-shod. This is Fire-escape Simmons, the inveterate talker, you know: Exit—in case of Simmons.

I had an engagement at a beautiful dwelling close to The Players for 10.30; I was there by 10.45. Thirty cultivated & very musical ladies & gentlemen present—all of them acquaintances & many of them personal friends of mine. That wonderful Hungarian band was there (they charge \$500 for an evening). Conversation and band until midnight; then a bite of supper; then the company was compactly grouped before me & I told them about Dr. B. E. Martin & the etchings, & followed it with the Scotch-Irish christening. My, but the Martin is a darling story! Next, the head tenor from the Opera sang half a dozen great songs that set the company wild, yes, mad with delight, that nobly handsome young Damrosch accompanying on the piano. Just a little pause, then the band burst out into an explosion of weird and tremendous dance-music, a Hungarian celebrity & his wife took the floor; I followed—I couldn't help it; the others drifted in, one by one, & it was Onteora over again. By half past 4. I had danced all those people down—& yet was not tired; merely breathless. I was in bed at 5 & asleep in ten minutes. Up at 9 & presently at work on this letter to you. I think I wrote until 2 or half past. Then I walked leisurely out to Mr. Rogers's (it is called 3 miles, but is short of it), arriving at 3.30, but he was out—to return at 5.30—so I didn't stay, but dropped over and chatted with Howells until five.

—[Two Mark Twain anecdotes are remembered of that winter at The Players:

Just before Christmas a member named Scott said one day:

“Mr. Clemens, you have an extra overcoat hanging in the coatroom. I've got to attend my uncle's funeral and it's raining very hard. I'd like to wear it.”

The coat was an old one, in the pockets of which Clemens kept a melancholy assortment of pipes, soiled handkerchiefs, neckties, letters, and what not.

“Scott,” he said, “if you won't lose anything out of the pockets of that coat you may wear it.”

An hour or two later Clemens found a notice in his mail-box that a package for him was in the office. He called for it and found a neat bundle, which somehow had a Christmas look. He carried it up to the reading-room with a showy air.



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“Now, boys,” he said, “you may make all the fun of Christmas you like, but it’s pretty nice, after all, to be remembered.”

They gathered around and he undid the package. It was filled with the pipes, soiled handkerchiefs, and other articles from the old overcoat. Scott had taken special precautions against losing them.

Mark Twain regarded them a moment in silence, then he drawled:

“Well—, d—n Scott. I hope his uncle’s funeral will be a failure!”

The second anecdote concerns The Player egg-cups. They easily hold two eggs, but not three. One morning a new waiter came to take the breakfast order. Clemens said:

“Boy, put three soft eggs in that cup for me.”

By and by the waiter returned, bringing the breakfast. Clemens looked at the egg portion and asked:

“Boy, what was my order?”

“Three soft eggs broken in the cup, Mr. Clemens.”

“And you’ve filled that order, have you?”

“Yes, Mr. Clemens.”

“Boy, you are trifling with the truth; I’ve been trying all winter to get three eggs into that cup.”]

In one letter he tells of a dinner with his old Comstock friend, John Mackay—a dinner without any frills, just soup and raw oysters and corned beef and cabbage, such as they had reveled in sometimes, in prosperous moments, thirty years before.

“The guests were old gray Pacific coasters,” he said, “whom I knew when they were young and not gray. The talk was of the days when we went gipsying-along time ago—thirty years.”

Indeed, it was a talk of the dead. Mainly that. And of how they looked & the harum-scarum things they did & said. For there were no cares in that life, no aches & pains, & not time enough in the day (& three-fourths of the night) to work off one’s surplus vigor & energy. Of the midnight highway-robbery joke played upon me with revolvers at my head on the windswept & desolate Gold Hill Divide no witness was left but me, the victim. Those old fools last night laughed till they cried over the particulars of that old forgotten crime.



In still another letter he told of a very wonderful entertainment at Robert Reid's studio. There were present, he says:

Coquelin; Richard Harding Davis; Harrison, the great outdoor painter; Wm. H. Chase, the artist; Bettini, inventor of the new phonograph; Nikola Tesla, the world-wide illustrious electrician; see article about him in Jan. or Feb. Century. John Drew, actor; James Barnes, a marvelous mimic; my, you should see him! Smedley, the artist; Zorn, " " Zogbaum, " " Reinhart, " " Metcalf, " " Ancona, head tenor at the Opera;

Oh, & a great lot of others. Everybody there had done something & was in his way famous.



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Somebody welcomed Coquelin in a nice little French speech, John Drew did the like for me in English, & then the fun began. Coquelin did some excellent French monologues—one of them an ungrammatical Englishman telling a colorless historiette in French. It nearly killed the fifteen or twenty people who understood it. I told a yarn, Ancona sang half a dozen songs, Barnes did his darling imitations, Handing Davis sang the hanging of Danny Deever, which was of course good, but he followed it with that mast fascinating (for what reason I don't know) of all Kipling's poems, "On the Road to Mandalay," sang it tenderly, & it searched me deeper & charmed me more than the Deever. Young Gerrit Smith played some ravishing dance-music, & we all danced about an hour. There couldn't be a pleasanter night than that one was. Some of those people complained of fatigue, but I don't seem to know what the sense of fatigue is.

In his reprieve he was like some wild thing that had regained liberty.

He refers to Susy's recent illness and to Mrs. Clemens's own poor state of health.

Dear, dear Susy! My strength reproaches me when I think of her and you.

It is an unspeakable pity that you should be without any one to go about with the girls, & it troubles me, & grieves me, & makes me curse & swear; but you see, dear heart, I've got to stick right where I am till I find out whether we are rich or whether the poorest person we are acquainted with in anybody's kitchen is better off than we are. . I stand on the land-end of a springboard, with the family clustered on the other end; if I take my foot—

He realized his hopes to her as a vessel trying to make port; once he wrote:

The ship is in sight now

When the anchor is down then I shall say:

"Farewell—a long farewell—to business! I will never touch it again!"

I will live in literature, I will wallow in it, revel in it; I will swim in ink! 'Joan of Arc'—but all this is premature; the anchor is not down yet.

Sometimes he sent her impulsive cables calculating to sustain hope. Mrs. Clemens, writing to her sister in January, said:

Mr. Clemens now for ten days has been hourly expecting to send me word that Paige had signed the (new) contract, but as yet no despatch comes On the 5th of this



month I received a cable, "Expect good news in ten days." On the 15th I receive a cable, "Look out for good news." On the 19th a cable, "Nearing success."

It appealed to her sense of humor even in these dark days. She added:

They make me laugh, for they are so like my beloved "Colonel."

Mr. Rogers had agreed that he would bring Paige to rational terms, and with Clemens made a trip to Chicago. All agreed now that the machine promised a certain fortune as soon as a contract acceptable to everybody could be concluded—Paige and his lawyer being the last to dally and dicker as to terms. Finally a telegram came from Chicago saying that Paige had agreed to terms. On that day Clemens wrote in his note-book:



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This is a great date in my history. Yesterday we were paupers with but 3 months' rations of cash left and \$160,000 in debt, my wife & I, but this telegram makes us wealthy.

But it was not until a fortnight later that Paige did actually sign. This was on the 1st of February, '94, and Clemens that night cabled to Paris, so that Mrs. Clemens would have it on her breakfast-plate the morning of their anniversary:

"Wedding news. Our ship is safe in port. I sail the moment Rogers can spare me."

So this painted bubble, this thing of emptiness, had become as substance again—the grand hope. He was as concerned with it as if it had been an actual gold-mine with ore and bullion piled in heaps—that shadow, that farce, that nightmare. One longs to go back through the years and face him to the light and arouse him to the vast sham of it all.

CLXXXVII

SOME LITERARY MATTERS

Clemens might have lectured that winter with profit, and Major Pond did his best to persuade him; but Rogers agreed that his presence in New York was likely to be too important to warrant any schedule of absence. He went once to Boston to lecture for charity, though his pleasure in the experience was a sufficient reward. On the evening before the lecture Mrs. James T. Fields had him to her house to dine with Dr. Holmes, then not far from the end of his long, beautiful life.—[He died that same year, October, 1894.]

Clemens wrote to Paris of their evening together:

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes never goes out (he is in his 84th year), but he came out this time—said he wanted to "have a time" once more with me.

Mrs. Fields said Aldrich begged to come, & went away crying because she wouldn't let him. She allowed only her family (Sarah Orne Jewett & sister) to be present, because much company would overtax Dr. Holmes.

Well, he was just delightful! He did as brilliant and beautiful talking (& listening) as he ever did in his life, I guess. Fields and Jewett said he hadn't been in such splendid form for years. He had ordered his carriage for 9. The coachman sent in for him at 9, but he said, "Oh, nonsense!—leave glories & grandeurs like these? Tell him to go away & come in an hour!"



At 10 he was called for again, & Mrs. Fields, getting uneasy, rose, but he wouldn't go— & so we rattled ahead the same as ever. Twice more Mrs. Fields rose, but he wouldn't go—& he didn't go till half past 10—an unwarrantable dissipation for him in these days. He was prodigiously complimentary about some of my books, & is having Pudd'nhead read to him. I told him you & I used the Autocrat as a courting book & marked it all through, & that you keep it in the sacred green box with the loveletters, & it pleased him.

One other address Clemens delivered that winter, at Fair Haven, on the opening of the Millicent Library, a present to the town from Mrs. Rogers. Mrs. Rogers had suggested to her husband that perhaps Mr. Clemens would be willing to say a few words there. Mr. Rogers had replied, "Oh, Clemens is in trouble. I don't like to ask him," but a day or two later told him of Mrs. Rogers's wish, adding:



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“Don’t feel at all that you need to do it. I know just how you are feeling, how worried you are.”

Clemens answered, “Mr. Rogers, do you think there is anything I could do for you that I wouldn’t do?”

It was on this occasion that he told for the first time the “stolen watermelon” story, so often reprinted since; how once he had stolen a watermelon, and when he found it to be a green one, had returned it to the farmer, with a lecture on honesty, and received a ripe one in its place.

In spite of his cares and diversions Clemens’s literary activities of this time were considerable. He wrote an article for the Youth’s Companion—“How to Tell a Story”—and another for the North American Review on Fenimore Cooper’s “Literary Offenses.” Mark Twain had not much respect for Cooper as a literary artist. Cooper’s stilted artificialities and slipshod English exasperated him and made it hard for him to see that in spite of these things the author of the Deerslayer was a mighty story-teller. Clemens had also promised some stories to Walker, of the Cosmopolitan, and gave him one for his Christmas number, “Traveling with a Reformer,” which had grown out of some incidents of that long-ago journey with Osgood to Chicago, supplemented by others that had happened on the more recent visit to that city with Hall. This story had already appeared when Clemens and Rogers had made their Chicago trip. Rogers had written for passes over the Pennsylvania road, and the president, replying, said:

“No, I won’t give Mark Twain a pass over our road. I’ve been reading his ‘Traveling with a Reformer,’ in which he abuses our road. I wouldn’t let him ride over it again if I could help it. The only way I’ll agree to let him go over it at all is in my private car. I have stocked it with everything he can possibly want, and have given orders that if there is anything else he wants the train is to be stopped until they can get it.”

“Pudd’nhead Wilson” was appearing in the Century during this period, and “Tom Sawyer Abroad” in the St. Nicholas. The Century had issued a tiny calendar of the Pudd’nhead maxims, and these quaint bits of philosophy, the very gems of Mark Twain mental riches, were in everybody’s mouth. With all this going on, and with his appearance at various social events, he was rather a more spectacular figure that winter than ever before.

From the note-book:

The Haunted Looking-glass. The guest (at midnight a dim light burning) wakes up & sees appear & disappear the faces that have looked into the glass during 3 centuries.



Love seems the swiftest but is the slowest of all growths. No man and woman really know what perfect love is until they have been married a quarter of a century.

It is more trouble to make a maxim than it is to do right.

Of all God's creatures, there is only one that cannot be made the slave of the lash—that one is the cat.



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Truth is stranger than fiction—to some people, but I am measurably familiar with it.

CLXXXVIII

FAILURE

It was the first week in March before it was thought to be safe for Clemens to return to France, even for a brief visit to his family. He hurried across and remained with them what seemed an infinitesimal time, a bare three weeks, and was back again in New York by the middle of April. The Webster company difficulties had now reached an acute stage. Mr. Rogers had kept a close watch on its financial affairs, hoping to be able to pull it through or to close it without failure, paying all the creditors in full; but on the afternoon of the 16th of April, 1894, Hall arrived at Clemens's room at The Players in a panic. The Mount Morris Bank had elected a new president and board of directors, and had straightway served notice on him that he must pay his notes—two notes of five thousand dollars each in a few days when due. Mr. Rogers was immediately notified, of course, and said he would sleep on it and advise them next day. He did not believe that the bank would really push them to the wall. The next day was spent in seeing what could be done, and by evening it was clear that unless a considerable sum of money was raised a voluntary assignment was the proper course. The end of the long struggle had come. Clemens hesitated less on his own than on his wife's account. He knew that to her the word failure would be associated with disgrace. She had pinched herself with a hundred economies to keep the business afloat, and was willing to go on economizing to avert this final disaster. Mr. Rogers said:

“Mr. Clemens, assure her from me that there is not even a tinge of disgrace in making this assignment. By doing it you will relieve yourself of a fearful load of dread, and in time will be able to pay everything and stand clear before the world. If you don't do it you will probably never be free from debt, and it will kill you and Mrs. Clemens both. If there is any disgrace it would be in not taking the course that will give you and her your freedom and your creditors a better chance for their claims. Most of them will be glad enough to help you.”

It was on the afternoon of the next day, April 18, 1894, that the firm of Charles L. Webster & Co. executed assignment papers and closed its doors. A meeting of the creditors was called, at which H. H. Rogers was present, representing Clemens. For the most part the creditors were liberal and willing to agree to any equitable arrangement. But there were a few who were grumpy and fussy. They declared that Mark Twain should turn over his copyrights, his Hartford home, and whatever other odds and ends could be discovered. Mr. Rogers, discussing the matter in 1908, said:

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“They were bent on devouring every pound of flesh in sight and picking the bones afterward, as Clemens and his wife were perfectly willing they should do. I was getting a little warm all the time at the highhanded way in which these few men were conducting the thing, and presently I got on my feet and said, ‘Gentlemen, you are not going to have this thing all your way. I have something to say about Mr. Clemens’s affairs. Mrs. Clemens is the chief creditor of this firm. Out of her own personal fortune she has lent it more than sixty thousand dollars. She will be a preferred creditor, and those copyrights will be assigned to her until her claim is paid in full. As for the home in Hartford, it is hers already.’

“There was a good deal of complaint, but I refused to budge. I insisted that Mrs. Clemens had the first claims on the copyrights, though, to tell the truth, these did not promise much then, for in that hard year the sale of books was small enough. Besides Mrs. Clemens’s claim the debts amounted to one hundred thousand dollars, and of course there must be a definite basis of settlement, so it was agreed that Clemens should pay fifty cents on the dollar, when the assets were finally realized upon, and receive a quittance. Clemens himself declared that sooner or later he would pay the other fifty cents, dollar for dollar, though I believe there was no one besides himself and his wife and me who believed he would ever be able to do it. Clemens himself got discouraged sometimes, and was about ready to give it up, for he was getting on in years—nearly sixty—and he was in poor health. Once when we found the debt, after the Webster salvage, was going to be at least seventy thousand dollars, he said, ‘I need not dream of paying it. I never could manage it.’ But he stuck to it. He was at my house a good deal at first. We gave him a room there and he came and went as he chose. The worry told upon him. He became frail during those weeks, almost ethereal, yet it was strange how brilliant he was, how cheerful.”

The business that had begun so promisingly and prosperously a decade before had dwindled to its end. The last book it had in hand was ‘Tom Sawyer Abroad’, just ready for issue. It curiously happened that on the day of the failure copies of it were filed in Washington for copyright. Frank Bliss came over from Hartford, and Clemens arranged with him for the publication of ‘Pudd’nhead Wilson’, thereby renewing the old relationship with the American Publishing Company after a break of a dozen years.

Naturally, the failure of Mark Twain’s publishing firm made a public stir, and it showed how many and sincere were his friends, how ready they were with sympathy and help of a more material kind. Those who understood best, congratulated him on being out of the entanglement.

Poultney Bigelow, Douglas Taylor, Andrew Carnegie, Charles Dudley Warner, and others extended financial help, Bigelow and Taylor each inclosing him a check of one thousand dollars for immediate necessities. He was touched by these things, but the checks were returned. Many of his creditors sent him personal letters assuring him that

he was to forget his obligation to them completely until such time as the remembering would cost him no uneasiness.



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Clemens, in fact, felt relieved, now that the worst had come, and wrote bright letters home. In one he said:

Mr. Rogers is perfectly satisfied that our course was right, absolutely right and wise—cheer up, the best is yet to come.

And again:

Now & then a good and dear Joe Twichell or Susy Warner condoles with me & says, “Cheer up—don’t be downhearted,” and some other friend says, “I’m glad and surprised to see how cheerful you are & how bravely you stand it,” & none of them suspect what a burden has been lifted from me & how blithe I am inside. Except when I think of you, dear heart—then I am not blithe; for I seem to see you grieving and ashamed, & dreading to look people in the face. For in the thick of the fight there is cheer, but you are far away & cannot hear the drum nor see the wheeling squadrons. You only seem to see rout, retreat, & dishonored colors dragging in the dirt—whereas none of these things exist. There is temporary defeat, but no dishonor—& we will march again. Charley Warner said to-day, “Sho, Livy isn’t worrying. So long as she’s got you and the children she doesn’t care what happens. She knows it isn’t her affair.” Which didn’t convince me.

Olivia Clemens wrote bravely and encouragingly to him, and more cheerfully than she felt, for in a letter to her sister she said:

The hideous news of Webster & Co.’s failure reached me by cable on Thursday, and Friday morning Galignani’s Messenger had a squib about it. Of course I knew it was likely to come, but I had great hope that it would be in some way averted. Mr. Rogers was so sure there was no way out but failure that I suppose it was true. But I have a perfect horror and heart-sickness over it. I cannot get away from the feeling that business failure means disgrace. I suppose it always will mean that to me. We have put a great deal of money into the concern, and perhaps there would have been nothing but to keep putting it in and losing it. We certainly now have not much to lose. We might have mortgaged the house; that was the only thing I could think of to do. Mr. Clemens felt that there would never be any end, and perhaps he was right. At any rate, I know that he was convinced that it was the only thing, because when he went back he promised me that if it was possible to save the thing he would do so if only on account of my sentiment in the matter.

Sue, if you were to see me you would see that I have grown old very fast during this last year. I have wrinkled.

Most of the time I want to lie down and cry. Everything seems to me so impossible. I do not make things go very well, and I feel that my life is an absolute and irretrievable failure. Perhaps I am thankless, but I so often feel that I should like to give it up and

die. However, I presume that if I could have the opportunity I should at once desire to live.



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Clemens now hurried back to Paris, arriving about the middle of May, his second trip in two months. Scarcely had he got the family settled at La Bourboule-les-Bains, a quiet watering-place in the southern part of France, when a cable from Mr. Rogers, stating that the typesetter was perfected, made him decide to hurry back to America to assist in securing the new fortune. He did not go, however. Rogers wrote that the machine had been installed in the Times-Herald office, Chicago, for a long and thorough trial. There would be plenty of time, and Clemens concluded to rest with his family at La Bourboule-les-Bains. Later in the summer they went to Etretat, where he settled down to work.

CLXXXIX

AN EVENTFUL YEAR ENDS

That summer (July, '94.) the 'North American Review' published "In Defense of Harriet Shelley," a rare piece of literary criticism and probably the most human and convincing plea ever made for that injured, ill-fated woman. An admirer of Shelley's works, Clemens could not resist taking up the defense of Shelley's abandoned wife. It had become the fashion to refer to her slightly, and to suggest that she had not been without blame for Shelley's behavior. A Shelley biography by Professor Dowden, Clemens had found particularly irritating. In the midst of his tangle of the previous year he had paused to give it attention. There were times when Mark Twain wrote without much sequence, digressing this way and that, as his fancy led him, charmingly and entertainingly enough, with no large, logical idea. He pursued no such method in this instance. The paper on Harriet Shelley is a brief as direct and compact and cumulative as could have been prepared by a trained legal mind of the highest order, and it has the added advantage of being the utterance of a human soul voicing an indignation inspired by human suffering and human wrong. By no means does it lack humor, searching and biting sarcasm. The characterization of Professor Dowden's Life of Shelley as a "literary cake-walk" is a touch which only Mark Twain could have laid on. Indeed, the "Defense of Harriet Shelly," with those early chapters of Joan at Florence, maybe counted as the beginning for Mark Twain of a genuine literary renaissance. It was to prove a remarkable period less voluminous than the first, but even more choice, containing, as it would, besides Joan and the Shelley article, the rest of that remarkable series collected now as Literary Essays; the Hadleyburg story; "Was it Heaven or Hell?"; those masterly articles on our national policies; closing at last with those exquisite memories, in his final days.



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The summer of 1894 found Mark Twain in the proper frame of mind for literary work. He was no longer in a state of dread. At Etretat, a watering-place on the French coast, he returned eagerly to the long-neglected tale of Joan—"a book which writes itself," he wrote Mr. Rogers—a tale which tells itself; I merely have to hold the pen." Etretat, originally a fishing-village, was less pretentious than to-day, and the family had taken a small furnished cottage a little way back from the coast—a charming place, and a cheap one—as became their means. Clemens worked steadily at Etretat for more than a month, finishing the second part of his story, then went over to Rouen to visit the hallowed precincts where Joan dragged out those weary months that brought her to the stake. Susy Clemens was taken ill at Rouen, and they lingered in that ancient city, wandering about its venerable streets, which have been changed but slowly by the centuries, and are still full of memories.

They returned to Paris at length—to the Brighton; their quarters of the previous winter—but presently engaged for the winter the studio home of the artist Pomroy at 169 rue de l'Universite, beyond the Seine. Mark Twain wrote of it once:

It was a lovely house; large, rambling, quaint, charmingly furnished and decorated, built upon no particular plan, delightfully uncertain and full of surprises. You were always getting lost in it, and finding nooks and corners which you did not know were there and whose presence you had not suspected before. It was built by a rich French artist, and he had also furnished it and decorated it himself. The studio was coziness itself. With us it served as a drawing-room, sitting-room, living-room, dancing-room—we used it for everything. We couldn't get enough of it. It is odd that it should have been so cozy, for it was 40 feet long, 40 feet high, and 30 feet wide, with a vast fireplace on, each side, in the middle, and a musicians' gallery at one end.

Mrs. Clemens had hoped to return to America, to their Hartford home. That was her heart's desire—to go back once more to their old life and fireside, to forget all this period of exile and wandering. Her letters were full of her home-longing; her three years of absence seemed like an eternity.

In its way, the Pomroy house was the best substitute for home they had found. Its belongings were of the kind she loved. Susy had better health, and her husband was happy in his work. They had much delightful and distinguished company. Her letters tell of these attractive things, and of their economies to make their income reach.

It was near the end of the year that the other great interest—the machine—came finally to a conclusion. Reports from the test had been hopeful during the summer. Early in October Clemens, receiving a copy of the Times-Herald, partly set by the machine, wrote: "The Herald has just arrived, and that column is healing for sore eyes. It affects me like Columbus sighting land." And again on the 28th:



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It seems to me that things couldn't well be going better at Chicago than they are. There's no other machine that can set type eight hours with only seventeen minutes' stoppage through cussedness. The others do rather more stopping than working. By and by our machines will be perfect; then they won't stop at all.

But that was about the end of the good news. The stoppages became worse and worse. The type began to break—the machine had its old trouble: it was too delicately adjusted—too complicated.

“Great guns, what is the matter with it?” wrote Clemens in November when he received a detailed account of its misconduct.

Mr. Rogers and his son-in-law, Mr. Broughton, went out to Chicago to investigate. They went to the Times-Herald office to watch the type-setter in action. Mr. Rogers once told of this visit to the writer of these chapters. He said:

“Certainly it was a marvelous invention. It was the nearest approach to a human being in the wonderful things it could do of any machine I have ever known. But that was just the trouble; it was too much of a human being and not enough of a machine. It had all the complications of the human mechanism, all the liability of getting out of repair, and it could not be replaced with the ease and immediateness of the human being. It was too costly; too difficult of construction; too hard to set up. I took out my watch and timed its work and counted its mistakes. We watched it a long time, for it was most interesting, most fascinating, but it was not practical—that to me was clear.”

It had failed to stand the test. The Times-Herald would have no more of it. Mr. Rogers himself could see the uselessness of the endeavor. He instructed Mr. Broughton to close up the matter as best he could and himself undertook the harder task of breaking the news to Mark Twain. His letters seem not to have been preserved, but the replies to them tell the story.

169 rue de l'Universite,

Paris, December 22, 1894.

Dear Mr. Rogers,—I seemed to be entirely expecting your letter, and also prepared and resigned; but Lord, it shows how little we know ourselves and how easily we can deceive ourselves. It hit me like a thunder-clap. It knocked every rag of sense out of my head, and I went flying here and there and yonder, not knowing what I was doing, and only one clearly defined thought standing up visible and substantial out of the crazy storm-drift—that my dream of ten years was in desperate peril and out of the 60,000 or 70,000 projects for its rescue that came flocking through my skull not one would hold still long enough for me to examine it and size it up. Have you ever been like that? Not

so much, I reckon. There was another clearly defined idea—I must be there and see it die. That is, if it must die; and maybe if I were there we might hatch



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up some next-to-impossible way to make it take up its bed and take a walk. So, at the end of four hours I started, still whirling, and walked over to the rue Scribe—4 p.m.—and asked a question or two and was told I should be running a big risk if I took the 9 p.m. train for London and Southampton; “better come right along at 6.52 per Havre special and step aboard the New York all easy and comfortable.” Very! and I about two miles from home and no packing done. Then it occurred to me that none of these salvation notions that were whirlwinding through my head could be examined or made available unless at least a month’s time could be secured. So I cabled you, and said to myself that I would take the French steamer to-morrow (which will be Sunday). By bedtime Mrs. Clemens had reasoned me into a fairly rational and contented state of mind; but of course it didn’t last long. So I went on thinking—mixing it with a smoke in the dressing-room once an hour—until dawn this morning. Result—a sane resolution; no matter what your answer to my cable might be I would hold still and not sail until I should get an answer to this present letter which I am now writing or a cable answer from you saying “Come” or “Remain.”

I have slept 6 hours, my pond has clarified, and I find the sediment of my 70,000 projects to be of this character:

He follows with a detailed plan for reconstructing the machine, using brass type, *etc.*, and concludes:

Don’t say I’m wild. For really I’m sane again this morning.

I am going right along with Joan now, and wait untroubled till I hear from you. If you think I can be of the least use cable me “Come.” I can write Joan on board ship and lose no time. Also I could discuss my plan with the publisher for a de luxe Joan, time being an object, for some of the pictures could be made over here, cheaply and quickly, that would cost much more time and money in America.

The second letter followed five days later:

169 rue de l’Universite,
Paris, December 27, 1894.

Dear Mr. Rogers,—Notwithstanding your heart is “old and hard” you make a body choke up. I know you “mean every word you say” and I do take it “in the same spirit in which you tender it.” I shall keep your regard while we two live—that I know; for I shall always remember what you have done for me, and that will insure me against ever doing anything that could forfeit it or impair it. It is six days or seven days ago that I lived through that despairing day, and then through a night without sleep; then settled down next day into my right mind (or thereabouts) and wrote you. I put in the rest of that day



till 7 P.m. plenty comfortably enough writing a long chapter of my book; then went to a masked ball blacked



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up as Uncle Remus, taking Clara along, and we had a good time. I have lost no day since, and suffered no discomfort to speak of, but drove my troubles out of my mind and had good success in keeping them out—through watchfulness. I have done a good week's work and put the book a good way ahead in the Great Trial [of Joan], which is the difficult part: the part which requires the most thought and carefulness. I cannot see the end of the Trial yet, but I am on the road. I am creeping surely toward it.

“Why not leave them all to me?” My business brothers? I take you by the hand! I jump at the chance!

I ought to be ashamed and I am trying my best to be ashamed—and yet I do jump at the chance in spite of it. I don't want to write Irving and I don't want to write Stoker. It doesn't seem as if I could. But I can suggest something for you to write them; and then if you see that I am unwise you can write them something quite different. Now this is my idea:

1. To return Stoker's \$100 to him and keep his stock.
2. And tell Irving that when luck turns with me I will make good to him what the salvage from the dead Co. fails to pay him of his \$500.

[P. S. Madam says No, I must face the music. So I inclose my effort—to be used if you approve, but not otherwise.]

We shall try to find a tenant for our Hartford house; not an easy matter, for it costs heavily to live in. We can never live in it again; though it would break the family's hearts if they could believe it.

Nothing daunts Mrs. Clemens or makes the world look black to her—which is the reason I haven't drowned myself.

I got the Xmas journals which you sent and I thank you for that Xmas remembrance.

We all send our deepest and warmest greetings to you and all of yours and a Happy New Year!

S. L. Clemens.

—[Brain Stoker and Sir Henry Irving had each taken a small interest in the machine. The inclosure for Stoker ran as follows:]



My dear Stoker,—I am not dating this, because it is not to be mailed at present.

When it reaches you it will mean that there is a hitch in my machine enterprise—a, hitch so serious as to make it take to itself the aspect of a dissolved dream. This letter, then, will contain cheque for the \$100 which you have paid. And will you tell Irving for me —I can't get up courage enough to talk about this misfortune myself, except to you, whom by good luck I haven't damaged yet—that when the wreckage presently floats ashore he will get a good deal of his \$500 back; and a dab at a time I will make up to him the rest. I'm not feeling as fine as I was when I saw you there in your home. Please remember me kindly to Mrs. Stoker. I gave up that London lecture-project entirely. Had to—there's never been a chance since to find the time.

Sincerely yours,
S. L. *Clemens*.

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A week later he added what was about his final word on the subject:

Yours of December 21 has arrived, containing the circular to stockholders, and I guess the Co. will really quit—there doesn't seem to be any other wise course.

There's one thing which makes it difficult for me to soberly realize that my ten-year dream is actually dissolved; and that is that it reverses my horoscope. The proverb says, "Born lucky, always lucky."

It was usual for one or two of our lads (per annum) to get drowned in the Mississippi or in Bear Creek, but I was pulled out in a drowned condition 9 times before I learned to swim, and was considered to be a cat in disguise. When the Pennsylvania blew up and the telegraph reported my brother as fatally injured (with 60 others) but made no mention of me, my uncle said to my mother "it means that Sam was somewhere else, after being on that boat a year and a half—he was born lucky." Yes, I was somewhere else. I am so superstitious that I have always been afraid to have business dealings with certain relatives and friends of mine because they were unlucky people. All my life I have stumbled upon lucky chances of large size, and whenever they were wasted it was because of my own stupidity and carelessness. And so I have felt entirely certain that the machine would turn up trumps eventually. It disappointed me lots of times, but I couldn't shake off the confidence of a lifetime in my luck.

Well, whatever I get out of the wreckage will be due to good luck—the good luck of getting you into the scheme—for, but for that there wouldn't be any wreckage; it would be total loss.

I wish you had been in at the beginning. Then we should have had the good luck to step promptly ashore.

So it was that the other great interest died and was put away forever. Clemens scarcely ever mentioned it again, even to members of his family. It was a dead issue; it was only a pity that it had ever seemed a live one. A combination known as the Regius Company took over Paige's interest, but accomplished nothing. Eventually—irony of fate—the Mergenthaler Company, so long scorned and derided, for twenty thousand dollars bought out the rights and assets and presented that marvelous work of genius, the mechanical wonder of the age, to the Sibley College of Engineering, where it is shown as the costliest piece of machinery, for its size, ever constructed. Mark Twain once received a letter from an author who had written a book calculated to assist inventors and patentees, asking for his indorsement. He replied:



Dear sir,—I have, as you say, been interested in patents and patentees. If your books tell how to exterminate inventors send me nine editions. Send them by express.

Very truly yours,
S. L. *Clemens*.



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The collapse of the “great hope” meant to the Clemens household that their struggle with debt was to continue, that their economies were to become more rigid. In a letter on her wedding anniversary, February a (1895), Mrs. Clemens wrote to her sister:

As I was starting down the stairs for my breakfast this morning Mr. Clemens called me back and took out a five-franc piece and gave it to me, saying: “It is our silver-wedding day, and so I give you a present.”

It was a symbol of their reduced circumstances—of the change that twenty-five years had brought.

Literary matters, however, prospered. The new book progressed amazingly. The worst had happened; other and distracting interests were dead. He was deep in the third part—the story of Joan’s trial and condemnation, and he forgot most other things in his determination to make that one a reality.

As at Viviani, Clemens read his chapters to the family circle. The story was drawing near the end now; tragedy was closing in on the frail martyr; the farce of her trial was wringing their hearts. Susy would say, “Wait, wait till I get a handkerchief,” and one night when the last pages had been written and read, and Joan had made the supreme expiation for devotion to a paltry king, Susy wrote in her diary, “To-night Joan of Arc was burned at the stake,” meaning that the book was finished.

Susy herself had literary taste and might have written had it not been that she desired to sing. There are fragments of her writing that show the true literary touch. Her father, in an unpublished article which he once wrote of her, quoted a paragraph, doubtless intended some day to take its place at the end of a story:

And now at last when they lie at rest they must go hence. It is always so. Completion; perfection, satisfaction attained—a human life has fulfilled its earthly destiny. Poor human life! It may not pause and rest, for it must hasten on to other realms and greater consummations.

She was a deep reader, and she had that wonderful gift of brilliant, flowing, scintillating speech. From her father she had inherited a rare faculty of oral expression, born of a superior depth of mind, swiftness and clearness of comprehension, combined with rapid, brilliant, and forceful phrasing. Her father wrote of her gift:

Sometimes in those days of swift development her speech was rocket- like for vividness and for the sense it carried of visibility. I seem to see it stream into the sky and burst full in a shower of colored fire.

We are dwelling here a moment on Susy, for she was at her best that winter.



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She was more at home than the others. Her health did not permit her to go out so freely and her father had more of her companionship. They discussed many things—the problems of life and of those beyond life, philosophies of many kinds, and the subtleties of literary art. He recalled long after how once they lost themselves in trying to solve the mystery of the emotional effect of certain word-combinations—certain phrases and lines of verse—as, for instance, the wild, free breath of the open that one feels in “the days when we went gipsying a long time ago” and the tender, sunlit, grassy slope and mossy headstones suggested by the simple words, “departed this life.” Both Susy and her father cared more for Joan than any of the former books. To Mr. Rogers, Clemens wrote:

“Possibly the book may not sell, but that is nothing—it was written for love.” A memorandum which he made at the time, apparently for no one but himself, brings us very close to the personality behind it.

Do you know that shock? I mean when you come at your regular hour into the sick-room where you have watched for months and find the medicine-bottles all gone, the night-table removed, the bed stripped, the furniture set stiffly to rights, the windows up, the room cold, stark, vacant—& you catch your breath & realize what has happened.

Do you know that shock?

The man who has written a long book has that experience the morning after he has revised it for the last time & sent it away to the printer. He steps into his study at the hour established by the habit of months—& he gets that little shock. All the litter & confusion are gone. The piles of dusty reference-books are gone from the chairs, the maps from the floor; the chaos of letters, manuscripts, note-books, paper-knives, pipes, matches, photographs, tobacco-jars, & cigar-boxes is gone from the writing-table, the furniture is back where it used to be in the long-ago. The housemaid, forbidden the place for five months, has been there & tidied it up & scoured it clean & made it repellent & awful. I stand here this morning contemplating this desolation, & I realize that if I would bring back the spirit that made this hospital home-like & pleasant to me I must restore the aids to lingering dissolution to their wonted places & nurse another patient through & send it forth for the last rites, With many or few to assist there, as may happen; & that I will do.

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STARTING ON THE LONG TRAIL



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The tragedy of 'Pudd'nhead Wilson', with its splendid illustrations by Louis Loeb, having finished its course in the Century Magazine, had been issued by the American Publishing Company. It proved not one of Mark Twain's great books, but only one of his good books. From first to last it is interesting, and there are strong situations and chapters finely written. The character of Roxy is thoroughly alive, and her weird relationship with her half-breed son is startling enough. There are not many situations in fiction stronger than that where half-breed Tom sells his mother down the river into slavery. The negro character is well drawn, of course—Mark Twain could not write it less than well, but its realism is hardly to be compared with similar matter in his other books—in Tom Sawyer, for instance, or Huck Finn. With the exceptions of Tom, Roxy, and Pudd'nhead the characters are slight. The Twins are mere bodiless names that might have been eliminated altogether. The character of Pudd'nhead Wilson is lovable and fine, and his final triumph at the murder trial is thrilling in the extreme. Identification by thumb-marks was a new feature in fiction then—in law, too, for that matter. But it is chiefly Pudd'nhead Wilson's maxims, run at the head of each chapter, that will stick in the memory of men. Perhaps the book would live without these, but with them it is certainly immortal.

Such aphorisms as: "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits"; "Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example"; "When angry count four, and when very angry swear," cannot perish; these, with the forty or so others in this volume and the added collection of rare philosophies that head the chapters of *Following the Equator*, have insured to Philosopher Pudd'nhead a respectful hearing for all time.—[The story of Pudd'nhead Wilson was dramatized by Frank Mayo, who played it successfully as long as he lived. It is by no means dead, and still pays a royalty to the Mayo and Clemens estates.]

Clemens had meant to begin another book, but he decided first to make a trip to America, to give some personal attention to publishing matters there. They were a good deal confused. The Harpers had arranged for the serial and book publication of *Joan*, and were negotiating for the Webster contracts. Mr. Rogers was devoting priceless time in an effort to establish amicable relations between the Harpers and the American Company at Hartford so that they could work on some general basis that would be satisfactory and profitable to all concerned. It was time that Clemens was on the scene of action. He sailed on the *New York* on the end of February, and a little more than a month later returned by the *Paris*—that is, at the end of March. By this time he had altogether a new thought. It was necessary to earn a large sum of money as promptly as possible, and he adopted the plan which twice before in his life in 1872 and in 1884:—had supplied him with needed funds. Loathing the platform as he did, he was going back to it. Major Pond had proposed a lecture tour soon after his failure.



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“The loss of a fortune is tough,” wrote Pond, “but there are other resources for another fortune. You and I will make the tour together.”

Now he had resolved to make a tour—one that even Pond himself had not contemplated. He would go platforming around the world! He would take Pond with him as far as the Pacific coast, arranging with some one equally familiar with the lecture circuit on the other side of the Pacific. He had heard of R. S. Smythe, who had personally conducted Henry M. Stanley and other great lecturers through Australia and the East, and he wrote immediately, asking information and advice concerning such a tour. Clemens himself has told us in one of his chapters how his mental message found its way to Smythe long before his written one, and how Smythe’s letter, proposing just such a trip, crossed his own.

He sailed for America, with the family on the 11th of May, and a little more than a week later, after four years of exile, they found themselves once more at beautiful Quarry Farm. We may imagine how happy they were to reach that peaceful haven. Mrs. Clemens had written:

“It is, in a way, hard to go home and feel that we are not able to open our house. But it is an immense delight to me to think of seeing our friends.”

Little at the farm was changed. There were more vines on the home—the study was overgrown—that was all. Even Ellerslie remained as the children had left it, with all the small comforts and utensils in place. Most of the old friends were there; only Mrs. Langdon and Theodore Crane were missing. The Beechers drove up to see them, as formerly, and the old discussions on life and immortality were taken up in the old places.

Mrs. Beecher once came with some curious thin layers of leaves of stone which she had found, knowing Mark Twain’s interest in geology. Later, when they had been discussing the usual problems, he said he would write an agreement on those imperishable leaves, to be laid away until the ages should solve their problems. He wrote it in verse:

If you prove right and I prove wrong,
A million years from now,
In language plain and frank and strong
My error I’ll avow
To your dear waking face. If I prove right, by God His grace,
Full sorry I shall be,
For in that solitude no trace
There’ll be of you and me. A million years, O patient stone,
You’ve waited for this message.
Deliver it a million hence;
(Survivor pays expressage.)

Mark Twain

Contract with Mrs. T. K. Beecher, July 2, 1895.



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Pond came to Elmira and the route westward was arranged. Clemens decided to give selections from his books, as he had done with Cable, and to start without much delay. He dreaded the prospect of setting out on that long journey alone, nor could Mrs. Clemens find it in her heart to consent to such a plan. It was bitterly hard to know what to do, but it was decided at last that she and one of the elder daughters should accompany him, the others remaining with their aunt at Quarry Farm. Susy, who had the choice, dreaded ocean travel, and felt that she would be happier and healthier to rest in the quiet of that peaceful hilltop. She elected to remain with her aunt and Jean; and it fell to Clara to go. Major Pond and his wife would accompany them as far as Vancouver. They left Elmira on the night of the 14th of July. When the train pulled away their last glimpse was of Susy, standing with the others under the electric light of the railway platform, waving them good-by.

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Clemens had been ill in Elmira with a distressing carbuncle, and was still in no condition to undertake steady travel and entertainment in that fierce summer heat. He was fearful of failure. "I sha'n't be able to stand on a platform," he wrote Mr. Rogers; but they pushed along steadily with few delays. They began in Cleveland, thence by the Great Lakes, traveling by steamer from one point to another, going constantly, with readings at every important point—Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Winnipeg, Butte, and through the great Northwest, arriving at Vancouver at last on August 16th, but one day behind schedule time.

It had been a hot, blistering journey, but of immense interest, for none of them had traveled through the Northwest, and the wonder and grandeur of it all, its scenery, its bigness, its mighty agriculture, impressed them. Clemens in his notes refers more than once to the "seas" and "ocean" of wheat.

There is the peace of the ocean about it and a deep contentment, a heaven-wide sense of ampleness, spaciousness, where pettiness and all small thoughts and tempers must be out of place, not suited to it, and so not intruding. The scattering, far-off homesteads, with trees about them, were so homelike and remote from the warring world, so reposeful and enticing. The most distant and faintest under the horizon suggested fading ships at sea.

The Lake travel impressed him; the beauties and cleanliness of the Lake steamers, which he compares with those of Europe, to the disadvantage of the latter. Entering Port Huron he wrote:



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The long approach through narrow ways with flat grass and wooded land on both sides, and on the left a continuous row of summer cottages, with small-boat accommodations for visiting across the little canals from family to family, the groups of summer-dressed young people all along waving flags and handkerchiefs and firing cannon, our boat replying with toots of the hoarse whistle and now and then a cannon, and meeting steamers in the narrow way, and once the stately sister-ship of the line crowded with summer-dressed people waving—the rich browns and greens of the rush-grown, far-reaching flat-lands, with little glimpses of water away on their farther edges, the sinking sun throwing a crinkled broad carpet of gold on the water-well, it is the perfection of voyaging.

It had seemed a doubtful experiment to start with Mrs. Clemens on that journey in the summer heat; but, strange to say, her health improved, and she reached Vancouver by no means unfit for the long voyage ahead. No doubt the change and continuous interest and their splendid welcome everywhere and their prosperity were accountable. Everywhere they were entertained; flowers filled their rooms; carriages and committees were always waiting. It was known that Mark Twain had set out for the purpose of paying his debts, and no cause would make a deeper appeal to his countrymen than that, or, for that matter, to the world at large.

From Winnipeg he wrote to Mr. Rogers:

At the end of an hour and a half I offered to let the audience go, but they said “go on,” and I did.

He had five thousand dollars to forward to Rogers to place against his debt account by the time he reached the Coast, a fine return for a month’s travel in that deadly season. At no more than two places were the houses less than crowded. One of these was Anaconda, then a small place, which they visited only because the manager of the entertainment hall there had known Clemens somewhere back in the sixties and was eager to have him. He failed to secure the amount of the guarantee required by Pond, and when Pond reported to Clemens that he had taken “all he had” Clemens said:

“And you took the last cent that poor fellow had. Send him one hundred dollars, and if you can’t afford to stand your share charge it all to me. I’m not going around robbing my friends who are disappointed in my commercial value. I don’t want to get money that way.”

“I sent the money,” said Pond afterward, “and was glad of the privilege of standing my share.”

Clemens himself had not been in the best of health during the trip. He had contracted a heavy cold and did not seem to gain strength. But in a presentation copy of ‘*Roughing It*’, given to Pond as a souvenir, he wrote:



“Here ends one of the smoothest and pleasantest trips across the continent that any group of five has ever made.”

There were heavy forest fires in the Northwest that year, and smoke everywhere. The steamer Waryimoo, which was to have sailed on the 16th, went aground in the smoke, and was delayed a week. While they were waiting, Clemens lectured in Victoria, with the Governor-General and Lady Aberdeen and their little son in the audience. His notebook says:



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They came in at 8.45, 15 minutes late; wish they would always be present, for it isn't permissible to begin until they come; by that time the late-comers are all in.

Clemens wrote a number of final letters from Vancouver. In one of them to Mr. J. Henry Harper, of Harper & Brothers, he expressed the wish that his name might now be printed as the author of "Joan," which had begun serially in the April Magazine. He thought it might, help his lecturing tour and keep his name alive. But a few days later, with Mrs. Clemens's help, he had reconsidered, and wrote:

My wife is a little troubled by my wanting my nom de plume put to the "Joan of Arc" so soon. She thinks it might go counter to your plans, and that you ought to be left free and unhampered in the matter.

All right-so be it. I wasn't strenuous about it, and wasn't meaning to insist; I only thought my reasons were good, and I really think so yet, though I do confess the weight and fairness of hers.

As a matter of fact the authorship of "Joan" had been pretty generally guessed by the second or third issue. Certain of its phrasing and humor could hardly have come from another pen than Mark Twain's. The authorship was not openly acknowledged, however, until the publication of the book, the following May.

Among the letters from Vancouver was this one to Rudyard Kipling

Dear Kipling,—It is reported that you are about to visit India. This has moved me to journey to that far country in order that I may unload from my conscience a debt long due to you. Years ago you came from India to Elmira to visit me, as you said at the time. It has always been my purpose to return that visit & that great compliment some day. I shall arrive next January & you must be ready. I shall come riding my ayah with his tusks adorned with silver bells & ribbons & escorted by a troop of native howdahs richly clad & mounted upon a herd of wild bungalows; & you must be on hand with a few bottles of ghee, for I shall be thirsty.

To the press he gave this parting statement:

It has been reported that I sacrificed for the benefit of the creditors the property of the publishing firm whose financial backer I was and that I am now lecturing for my own benefit. This is an error. I intend the lectures as well as the property for the creditors. The law recognizes no mortgage on a man's brain, and a merchant who has given up all he has may take advantage of the laws of insolvency and start free again for himself. But I am not a business man, and honor is a harder master than the law. It cannot compromise for less than 100 cents on the dollar and its debts never outlaw. From my reception thus far on my lecturing tour I am confident that if I live I can pay off

the last debt within four years, after which, at the age of sixty-four, I can make a fresh and unincumbered start in life.



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I am going to Australia, India, and South Africa, and next year I hope to make a tour of the great cities of the United States. I meant, when I began, to give my creditors all the benefit of this, but I am beginning to feel that I am gaining something from it, too, and that my dividends, if not available for banking purposes, may be even more satisfactory than theirs.

There was one creditor, whose name need not be “handed down to infamy,” who had refused to consent to any settlement except immediate payment in full, and had pursued with threatened attachment of earnings and belongings, until Clemens, exasperated, had been disposed to turn over to his creditors all remaining properties and let that suffice, once and for all. But this was momentary. He had presently instructed Mr. Rogers to “pay Shylock in full,” and to assure any others that he would pay them, too, in the end. But none of the others annoyed him.

It was on the afternoon of August 23, 1895, that they were off at last. Major Pond and his wife lunched with them on board and waved them good-by as long as they could see the vessel. The far voyage which was to carry them for the better part of the year to the under side of the world had begun.

CXCII

“Following the equator”

Mark Twain himself has written with great fulness the story of that traveling—setting down what happened, and mainly as it happened, with all the wonderful description, charm, and color of which he was so great a master. We need do little more than summarize then—adding a touch here and there, perhaps, from another point of view.

They had expected to stop at the Sandwich Islands, but when they arrived in the roadstead of Honolulu, word came that cholera had broken out and many were dying daily. They could not land. It was a double disappointment; not only were the lectures lost, but Clemens had long looked forward to revisiting the islands he had so loved in the days of his youth. There was nothing for them to do but to sit on the decks in the shade of the awnings and look at the distant shore. In his book he says:

We lay in luminous blue water; shoreward the water was green-green and brilliant; at the shore itself it broke in a long, white ruffle, and with no crash, no sound that we could hear. The town was buried under a mat of foliage that looked like a cushion of moss. The silky mountains were clothed in soft, rich splendors of melting color, and some of the cliffs were veiled in slanting mists. I recognized it all. It was just as I had seen it long before, with nothing of its beauty lost, nothing of its charm wanting.

In his note-book he wrote: "If I might, I would go ashore and never leave."



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This was the 31st of August. Two days later they were off again, sailing over the serene Pacific, bearing to the southwest for Australia. They crossed the equator, which he says was wisely put where it is, because if it had been run through Europe all the kings would have tried to grab it. They crossed it September 6th, and he notes that Clara kodaked it. A day or two later the north star disappeared behind them and the constellation of the Cross came into view above the southern horizon. Then presently they were among the islands of the southern Pacific, and landed for a little time on one of the Fiji group. They had twenty-four days of halcyon voyaging between Vancouver and Sydney with only one rough day. A ship's passengers get closely acquainted on a trip of that length and character. They mingle in all sorts of diversions to while away the time; and at the end have become like friends of many years.

On the night of September 15th—a night so dark that from the ship's deck one could not see the water—schools of porpoises surrounded the ship, setting the water alive with phosphorescent splendors: "Like glorified serpents thirty to fifty feet long. Every curve of the tapering long body perfect. The whole snake dazzlingly illumined. It was a weird sight to see this sparkling ghost come suddenly flashing along out of the solid gloom and stream past like a meteor."

They were in Sydney next morning, September 16, 1895, and landed in a pouring rain, the breaking up of a fierce drought. Clemens announced that he had brought Australia good-fortune, and should expect something in return.

Mr. Smythe was ready for them and there was no time lost in getting to work. All Australia was ready for them, in fact, and nowhere in their own country were they more lavishly and royally received than in that faraway Pacific continent. Crowded houses, ovations, and gorgeous entertainment—public and private—were the fashion, and a little more than two weeks after arrival Clemens was able to send back another two thousand dollars to apply on his debts. But he had hard luck, too, for another carbuncle developed at Melbourne and kept him laid up for nearly a week. When he was able to go before an audience again he said:

"The doctor says I am on the verge of being a sick man. Well, that may be true enough while I am lying abed all day trying to persuade his cantankerous, rebellious medicines to agree with each other; but when I come out at night and get a welcome like this I feel as young and healthy as anybody, and as to being on the verge of being a sick man I don't take any stock in that. I have been on the verge of being an angel all my life, but it's never happened yet."

In his book Clemens has told us his joy in Australia, his interest in the perishing native tribes, in the wonderfully governed cities, in the gold-mines, and in the advanced industries. The climate he thought superb; "a darling climate," he says in a note-book entry.



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Perhaps one ought to give a little idea of the character of his entertainment. His readings were mainly from his earlier books, 'Roughing It' and 'Innocents Abroad'. The story of the dead man which, as a boy, he had discovered in his father's office was one that he often told, and the "Mexican Plug" and his "Meeting with Artemus Ward" and the story of Jim Blaine's old ram; now and again he gave chapters from 'Huck Finn' and 'Tom Sawyer'. He was likely to finish with that old fireside tale of his early childhood, the "Golden Arm." But he sometimes told the watermelon story, written for Mrs. Rogers, or gave extracts from Adam's Diary, varying his program a good deal as he went along, and changing it entirely where he appeared twice in one city.

Mrs. Clemens and Clara, as often as they had heard him, generally went when the hour of entertainment came: They enjoyed seeing his triumph with the different audiences, watching the effect of his subtle art.

One story, the "Golden Arm," had in it a pause, an effective, delicate pause which must be timed to the fraction of a second in order to realize its full value. Somewhere before we have stated that no one better than Mark Twain knew the value of a pause. Mrs. Clemens and Clara were willing to go night after night and hear that tale time and again, for its effect on each new, audience.

From Australia to New Zealand—where Clemens had his third persistent carbuncle,—[In *Following the Equator* the author says: "The dictionary says a carbuncle is a kind of jewel. Humor is out of place in a dictionary."]¹—and again lost time in consequence. It was while he was in bed with this distressing ailment that he wrote Twichell:

I think it was a good stroke of luck that knocked me on my back here at Napier instead of in some hotel in the center of a noisy city. Here we have the smooth & placidly complaining sea at our door, with nothing between us & it but 20 yards of shingle—& hardly a suggestion of life in that space to mar it or to make a noise. Away down here fifty-five degrees south of the equator this sea seems to murmur in an unfamiliar tongue—a foreign tongue—a tongue bred among the ice-fields of the antarctic—a murmur with a note of melancholy in it proper to the vast unvisited solitudes it has come from. It was very delicious and solacing to wake in the night & find it still pulsing there. I wish you were here—land, but it would be fine!

Mrs. Clemens and himself both had birthdays in New Zealand; Clemens turned sixty, and his wife passed the half-century mark.

"I do not like it one single bit," she wrote to her sister. "Fifty years old—think of it; that seems very far on."

And Clemens wrote:

Day before yesterday was Livy's birthday (underworld time) & tomorrow will be mine. I shall be 60—no thanks for it!



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From New Zealand back to Australia, and then with the new year away to Ceylon. Here they were in the Orient at last, the land of color, enchantment, and gentle races. Clemens was ill with a heavy cold when they arrived; and in fact, at no time during this long journeying was his health as good as that of his companions. The papers usually spoke of him as looking frail, and he was continually warned that he must not remain in India until the time of the great heat. He was so determined to work, however, and working was so profitable, that he seldom spared himself.

He traveled up and down and back and forth the length and breadth of India—from Bombay to Allahabad, to Benares, to Calcutta and Darjeeling, to Lahore, to Lucknow, to Delhi—old cities of romance—and to Jeypore —through the heat and dust on poor, comfortless railways, fighting his battle and enjoying it too, for he reveled in that amazing land—its gorgeous, swarming life, the patience and gentleness of its servitude, its splendid pageantry, the magic of its architecture, the maze and mystery of its religions, the wonder of its ageless story.

One railway trip he enjoyed—a thirty-five-mile flight down the steep mountain of Darjeeling in a little canopied hand-car. In his book he says:

That was the most enjoyable time I have spent in the earth. For rousing, tingling, rapturous pleasure there is no holiday trip that approaches the bird-flight down the Himalayas in a handcar. It has no fault, no blemish, no lack, except that there are only thirty- five miles of it, instead of five hundred.

Mark Twain found India all that Rudyard Kipling had painted it and more. "*India the marvelous*" he printed in his note-book in large capitals, as an effort to picture his thought, and in his book he wrote:

So far as I am able to judge nothing has been left undone, either by man or Nature, to make India the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on his rounds. "Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile."

Marvelous India is, certainly; and he saw it all to the best advantage, for government official and native grandee spared no effort to do honor to his party—to make their visit something to be remembered for a lifetime. It was all very gratifying, and most of it of extraordinary interest. There are not many visitors who get to see the inner household of a native prince of India, and the letter which Mark Twain wrote to Kumar Shri Samatsinhji, a prince of the Palitana state, at Bombay, gives us a notion of how his unostentatious, even if lavish, hospitality was appreciated.



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Dear Kumar sahib,—It would be hard for me to put into words how much my family & I enjoyed our visit to your hospitable house. It was our first glimpse of the home of an Eastern Prince, & the charm of it, the grace & beauty & dignity of it realized to us the pictures which we had long ago gathered from books of travel & Oriental tales. We shall not forget that happy experience, nor your kind courtesies to us, nor those of her Highness to my wife & daughter. We shall keep always the portrait & the beautiful things you gave us; & as long as we live a glance at them will bring your house and its life & its sumptuous belongings & rich harmonies of color instantly across the years & the oceans, & we shall see them again, & how welcome they will be!

We make our salutation to your Highness & to all members of your family—including, with affectionate regard, that littlest little sprite of a Princess—& I beg to sign myself

Sincerely yours,
S. L. Clemens.

Benares, February 5, 1896.

They had been entertained in truly royal fashion by Prince Kumar, who, after refreshments, had ordered in “bales of rich stuffs” in the true Arabian Nights fashion, and commanded his servants to open them and allow his guests to select for themselves.

With the possible exception of General Grant’s long trip in ’78 and ’79 there has hardly been a more royal progress than Mark Twain’s trip around the world. Everywhere they were overwhelmed with honors and invitations, and their gifts became so many that Mrs. Clemens wrote she did not see how they were going to carry them all. In a sense, it was like the Grant trip, for it was a tribute which the nations paid not only to a beloved personality, but to the American character and people.

The story of that East Indian sojourn alone would fill a large book, and Mark Twain, in his own way, has written that book, in the second volume of *Following the Equator*, an informing, absorbing, and enchanting story of Indian travel.

Clemens lectured everywhere to jammed houses, which were rather less profitable than in Australia, because in India the houses were not built for such audiences as he could command. He had to lecture three times in Calcutta, and then many people were turned away. At one place, however, his hall was large enough. This was in the great Hall of the Palace, where durbars are held, at Bombay.

Altogether they were two months in India, and then about the middle of March an English physician at Jeypore warned them to fly for Calcutta and get out of the country immediately before the real heat set in.



They sailed toward the end of March, touched at Madras and again at Ceylon, remaining a day or two at Colombo, and then away to sea again, across the Indian Ocean on one of those long, peaceful, eventless, tropic voyages, where at night one steeps on deck and in daytime wears the whitest and lightest garments and cares to do little more than sit drowsily in a steamer-chair and read and doze and dream.



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From the note-book:

Here in the wastes of the Indian Ocean just under the equator the sea is blue, the motion gentle, the sunshine brilliant, the broad decks with their grouped companies of talking, reading, or game- playing folk suggestive of a big summer hotel—but outside of the ship is no life visible but the occasional flash of a flying-fish. I would like the voyage, under these conditions, to continue forever. The Indian Ocean sits and smiles

So sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue,
There aren't a wave for miles an' miles
Excep' the jiggle of the screw.

—*Kip.*

How curiously unanecdotal the colonials and the ship-going English are—I believe I haven't told an anecdote or heard one since I left America, but Americans when grouped drop into anecdotes as soon as they get a little acquainted.

Preserve your illusions. When they are gone you may still exist, but not live.

Swore off from profanity early this morning—I was on deck in the peaceful dawn, the calm of holy dawn. Went down, dressed, bathed, put on white linen, shaved—a long, hot, troublesome job and no profanity. Then started to breakfast. Remembered my tonic—first time in 3 months without being told—poured it into measuring-glass, held bottle in one hand, it in the other, the cork in my teeth —reached up & got a tumbler—measuring-glass slipped out of my fingers—caught it, poured out another dose, first setting the tumbler on wash-stand—just got it poured, ship lurched, heard a crash behind me—it was the tumbler, broken into millions of fragments, but the bottom hunk whole. Picked it up to throw out of the open port, threw out the measuring-glass instead—then I released my voice. Mrs. Clemens behind me in the door.

“Don't reform any more. It is not an improvement.”

This is a good time to read up on scientific matters and improve the mind, for about us is the peace of the great deep. It invites to dreams, to study, to reflection. Seventeen days ago this ship sailed out of Calcutta, and ever since, barring a day or two in Ceylon, there has been nothing in sight but the tranquil blue sea & a cloudless blue sky. All down the Bay of Bengal it was so. It is still so in the vast solitudes of the Indian Ocean—17 days of heaven. In 11 more it will end. There will be one passenger who will be sorry. One reads all day long in this delicious air. Today I have been storing up knowledge from Sir John Lubbock about the ant. The thing which has struck me most and most astonished me is the ant's extraordinary powers of identification—memory of his friend's person. I will quote something which he says about *Formica fusca*. *Formica fusca* is not something to eat; it's the name of a breed of ants.

He does quote at great length and he transferred most of it later to his book. In another note he says:



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In the past year have read *Vicar of Wakefield* and some of Jane Austen—thoroughly artificial. Have begun *Children of the Abbey*. It begins with this “Impromptu” from the sentimental heroine:

“Hail, sweet asylum of my infancy! Content and innocence reside beneath your humble roof and charity unboastful of the good it renders . . . Here unmolested may I wait till the rude storm of sorrow is overblown and my father’s arms are again extended to receive me.”

Has the ear-marks of preparation.

They were at the island of Mauritius by the middle of April, that curious bit of land mainly known to the world in the romance of Paul and Virginia, a story supposed by some in Mauritius to be “a part of the Bible.” They rested there for a fortnight and then set sail for South Africa on the ship *Arundel Castle*, which he tells us is the finest boat he has seen in those waters.

It was the end of the first week in May when they reached Durban and felt that they were nearing home.

One more voyage and they would be in England, where they had planned for Susy and Jean to join them.

Mrs. Clemens, eager for letters, writes of her disappointment in not finding one from Susy. The reports from Quarry Farm had been cheerful, and there had been small snap-shot photographs which were comforting, but her mother heart could not be entirely satisfied that Susy did not send letters. She had a vague fear that some trouble, some illness, had come to Susy which made her loath to write. Susy was, in fact, far from well, though no one, not even Susy herself, suspected how serious was her condition.

Mrs. Clemens writes of her own hopefulness, but adds that her husband is often depressed.

Mr. Clemens has not as much courage as I wish he had, but, poor old darling, he has been pursued with colds and inabilities of various sorts. Then he is so impressed with the fact that he is sixty years old. Naturally I combat that thought all I can, trying to make him rejoice that he is not seventy . . . He does not believe that any good thing will come, but that we must all our lives live in poverty. He says he never wants to go back to America. I cannot think that things are as black as he paints them, and I trust that if I get him settled down for work in some quiet English village he will get back much of his cheerfulness; in fact, I believe he will because that is what he wants to do, and that is the work that he loves: The platform he likes for the two hours that he is on it, but all the rest of the time it grinds him, and he says he is ashamed of what he is doing. Still, in



spite of this sad undercurrent, we are having a delightful trip. People are so nice, and with people Mr. Clemens seems cheerful. Then the ocean trips are a great rest to him.

Mrs. Clemens and Clara remained at the hotel in Durban



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while Clemens made his platform trip to the South African cities. It was just at the time when the Transvaal invasion had been put down—when the Jameson raid had come to grief and John Hares Hammond, chief of the reformers, and fifty or more supporters were lying in the jail at Pretoria under various sentences, ranging from one to fifteen years, Hammond himself having received the latter award. Mrs. Hammond was a fellow-Missourian; Clemens had known her in America. He went with her now to see the prisoners, who seemed to be having a pretty good time, expecting to be pardoned presently; pretending to regard their confinement mainly as a joke. Clemens, writing of it to Twichell, said:

A Boer guard was at my elbow all the time, but was courteous & polite, only he barred the way in the compound (quadrangle or big open court) & wouldn't let me cross a white mark that was on the ground—the "deathline," one of the prisoners called it. Not in earnest, though, I think. I found that I had met Hammond once when he was a Yale senior & a guest of General Franklin's. I also found that I had known Captain Mein intimately 32 years ago. One of the English prisoners had heard me lecture in London 23 years ago.... These prisoners are strong men, prominent men, & I believe they are all educated men. They are well off; some of them are wealthy. They have a lot of books to read, they play games & smoke, & for a while they will be able to bear up in their captivity; but not for long, not for very long, I take it. I am told they have times of deadly brooding and depression. I made them a speech—sitting down. It just happened so. I don't prefer that attitude. Still, it has one advantage—it is only a talk, it doesn't take the form of a speech I advised them at considerable length to stay where they were—they would get used to it & like it presently; if they got out they would only get in again somewhere else, by the look of their countenances; & I promised to go and see the President & do what I could to get him to double their jail terms.... We had a very good sociable time till the permitted time was up & a little over & we outsiders had to go. I went again to-day, but the Rev. Mr. Gray had just arrived, & the warden, a genial, elderly Boer named Du Plessis, explained that his orders wouldn't allow him to admit saint & sinner at the same time, particularly on a Sunday. Du Plessis descended from the Huguenot fugitives, you see, of 200 years ago—but he hasn't any French left in him now—all Dutch.

Clemens did visit President Kruger a few days later, but not for the purpose explained. John Hayes Hammond, in a speech not long ago (1911), told how Mark Twain was interviewed by a reporter after he left the jail, and when the reporter asked if the prisoners were badly treated Clemens had replied that he didn't think so, adding:

"As a matter of fact, a great many of these gentlemen have fared far worse in the hotels and mining-camps of the West."



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Said Hammond in his speech: "The result of this was that the interview was reported literally and a leader appeared in the next morning's issue protesting against such lenience. The privations, already severe enough, were considerably augmented by that remark, and it required some three or four days' search on the part of some of our friends who were already outside of jail to get hold of Mark Twain and have him go and explain to Kruger that it was all a joke."

Clemens made as good a plea to "Oom Paul" as he could, and in some degree may have been responsible for the improved treatment and the shortened terms of the unlucky reformers.

They did not hurry away from South Africa. Clemens gave many readings and paid a visit to the Kimberley mines. His note-book recalls how poor Riley twenty-five years before had made his fatal journey.

It was the 14th of July, 1896, a year to a day since they left Elmira, that they sailed by the steamer Norman for England, arriving at Southampton the 31st. It was from Southampton that they had sailed for America fourteen months before. They had completed the circuit of the globe.

CXCII

THE PASSING OF SUSY

It had been arranged that Katie Leary should bring Jean and Susy to England. It was expected that they would arrive soon, not later than the 12th, by which time the others would be established. The travelers proceeded immediately to London and engaged for the summer a house in Guildford, modest quarters, for they were still economizing, though Mark Twain had reason to hope that with the money already earned and the profits of the book he would write of his travels he could pay himself free. Altogether, the trip had been prosperous. Now that it was behind him, his health and spirits had improved. The outlook was brighter.

August 12th came, but it did not bring Katie and the children. A letter came instead. Clemens long afterward wrote:

It explained that Susy was slightly ill—nothing of consequence. But we were disquieted and began to cable for later news. This was Friday. All day no answer—and the ship to leave Southampton next day at noon. Clara and her mother began packing, to be ready in case the news should be bad. Finally came a cablegram saying, "Wait for cablegram in the morning." This was not satisfactory—not reassuring. I cabled again, asking that the answer be sent to Southampton, for the day was now closing. I waited in the post-office that night till the doors were closed, toward midnight, in the hope that good news



might still come, but there was no message. We sat silent at home till one in the morning waiting—waiting for we knew not what. Then we took the earlier morning train, and when we reached Southampton the message was there. It said the recovery would be long but certain. This was a great relief to me, but not to my wife. She was frightened.



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She and Clara went aboard the steamer at once and sailed for America, to nurse Susy. I remained behind to search for another and larger house in Guildford. That was the 15th of August, 1896. Three days later, when my wife and Clara were about half-way across the ocean, I was standing in our dining-room, thinking of nothing in particular, when a cablegram was put into my hand. It said, "Susy was peacefully released to-day."

Some of those who in later years wondered at Mark Twain's occasional attitude of pessimism and bitterness toward all creation, when his natural instinct lay all the other way, may find here some reasons in his logic of gloom. For years he and his had been fighting various impending disasters. In the end he had torn his family apart and set out on a weary pilgrimage to pay, for long financial unwisdom, a heavy price—a penance in which all, without complaint, had joined. Now, just when it seemed about ended, when they were ready to unite and be happy once more, when he could hold up his head among his fellows—in this moment of supreme triumph had come the message that Susy's lovely and blameless life was ended. There are not many greater dramas in fiction or in history than this. The wonder is not that Mark Twain so often preached the doctrine of despair during his later life, but that he did not exemplify it—that he did not become a misanthrope in fact.

Mark Twain's life had contained other tragedies, but no other that equaled this one. This time none of the elements were lacking—not the smallest detail. The dead girl had been his heart's pride; it was a year since he had seen her face, and now by this word he knew that he would never see it again. The blow had found him alone absolutely alone among strangers—those others—half-way across the ocean, drawing nearer and nearer to it, and he with no way to warn them, to prepare them, to comfort them.

Clemens sought no comfort for himself. Just as nearly forty years before he had writhed in self-accusation for the death of his younger brother, and as later he held himself to blame for the death of his infant son, so now he crucified himself as the slayer of Susy. To Mrs. Clemens he poured himself out in a letter in which he charged himself categorically as being wholly and solely responsible for the tragedy, detailing step by step with fearful reality his mistakes and weaknesses which had led to their downfall, the separation from Susy, and this final incredible disaster. Only a human being, he said, could have done these things.

Susy Clemens had died in the old Hartford home. She had been well for a time at Quarry Farm, well and happy, but during the summer of '96 she had become restless, nervous, and unlike herself in many ways. Her health seemed to be gradually failing, and she renewed the old interest in mental science, always with the approval of her parents. Clemens had great faith in mind over matter, and Mrs. Clemens also believed that Susy's high-strung nature was especially calculated to receive benefit from a serene and confident mental attitude. From Bombay, in January, she wrote Mrs. Crane:



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I am very glad indeed that Susy has taken up Mental Science, and I do hope it may do her as much good as she hopes. Last winter we were so very anxious to have her get hold of it, and even felt at one time that we must go to America on purpose to have her have the treatment, so it all seems very fortunate that it should have come about as it has this winter.

Just how much or how little Susy was helped by this treatment cannot be known. Like Stevenson, she had “a soul of flame in a body of gauze,” a body to be guarded through the spirit. She worked continuously at her singing and undoubtedly overdid herself. Early in the year she went over to Hartford to pay some good-by visit, remaining most of the time in the home of Charles Dudley Warner, working hard at her singing. Her health did not improve, and when Katie Leary went to Hartford to arrange for their departure she was startled at the change in her.

“Miss Susy; you are sick,” she said. “You must have the doctor come.”

Susy refused at first, but she grew worse and the doctor was sent for. He thought her case not very serious—the result, he said, of overwork. He prescribed some soothing remedies, and advised that she be kept very quiet, away from company, and that she be taken to her own home, which was but a step away. It was then that the letter was written and the first cable sent to England. Mrs. Crane was summoned from Elmira, also Charles Langdon. Mr. Twichell was notified and came down from his summer place in the Adirondacks.

Susy did not improve. She became rapidly worse, and a few days later the doctor pronounced her ailment meningitis. This was on the 15th of August—that hot, terrible August of 1896. Susy’s fever increased and she wandered through the burning rooms in delirium and pain; then her sight left her, an effect of the disease. She lay down at last, and once, when Katie Leary was near her, she put her hands on Katie’s face and said, “mama.” She did not speak after that, but sank into unconsciousness, and on the evening of Tuesday, August 18th, the flame went out forever.

To Twichell Clemens wrote of it:

Ah, well, Susy died at home. She had that privilege. Her dying eyes rested upon no thing that was strange to them, but only upon things which they had known & loved always & which had made her young years glad; & she had you & Sue & Katie & John & Ellen. This was happy fortune—I am thankful that it was vouchsafed to her. If she had died in another house—well, I think I could not have borne that. To us our house was not un sentient matter—it had a heart & a soul & eyes to see us with, & approvals & solitudes & deep sympathies; it was of us, & we were in its confidence, & lived in its grace & in the peace of its benediction. We never came home from an absence that its face did not light up & speak out its eloquent welcome—and we could not enter it unmoved. And could we now?



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oh, now, in spirit we should enter it unshod.

A tugboat with Dr. Rice, Mr. Twichell, and other friends of the family went down the bay to meet the arriving vessel with Mrs. Clemens and Clara on board. It was night when the ship arrived, and they did not show themselves until morning; then at first to Clara. There had been little need to formulate a message—their presence there was enough—and when a moment later Clara returned to the stateroom her mother looked into her face and she also knew. Susy already had been taken to Elmira, and at half past ten that night Mrs. Clemens and Clara arrived there by the through train—the same train and in the same coach which they had taken one year and one month before on their journey westward around the world.

And again Susy was there, not waving her welcome in the glare of the lights as she had waved her farewell to us thirteen months before, but lying white and fair in her coffin in the house where she was born.

They buried her with the Langdon relatives and the little brother, and ordered a headstone with some lines which they had found in Australia:

Warm summer sun shine kindly here;
Warm southern wind blow softly here;
Green sod above lie light, lie light
Good night, dear heart, good night, good night.

—[These lines at first were generally attributed to Clemens himself. When this was reported to him he ordered the name of the Australian poet, Robert Richardson, cut beneath them. The word “southern” in the original read “northern,” as in Australia. the warm wind is from the north. Richardson died in England in 1901.]

CXCIV

WINTER IN TEDWORTH SQUARE

Mrs. Clemens, Clara, and Jean, with Katie Leary, sailed for England without delay. Arriving there, they gave up the house in Guildford, and in a secluded corner of Chelsea, on the tiny and then almost unknown Tedworth Square (No. 23), they hid themselves away for the winter. They did not wish to be visited; they did not wish their whereabouts known except to a few of their closest friends. They wanted to be alone with their sorrow, and not a target for curious attention. Perhaps not a dozen people in London knew their address and the outside world was ignorant of it altogether. It was through this that a wild report started that Mark Twain’s family had deserted him—that ill

and in poverty he was laboring alone to pay his debts. This report—exploited in five-column head-lines by a hyper-hysterical paper of that period received wide attention.



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James Ross Clemens, of the St. Louis branch, a nephew of Frau von Versen, was in London just then, and wrote at once, through Chatto & Windus, begging Mark Twain to command his relative's purse. The reply to this kind offer was an invitation to tea, and "Young Doctor Jim," as he was called, found his famous relative by no means abandoned or in want, but in pleasant quarters, with his family still loyal. The general impression survived, however, that Mark Twain was sorely pressed, and the New York Herald headed a public benefit fund for the payment of his debts. The Herald subscribed one thousand dollars on its own account, and Andrew Carnegie followed with another thousand, but the enterprise was barely under way when Clemens wrote a characteristic letter, in which he declared that while he would have welcomed the help offered, being weary of debt, his family did not wish him to accept and so long as he was able to take care of them through his own efforts.

Meantime he was back into literary harness; a notebook entry for October 24, 1896, says:

"Wrote the fist chapter of the book to-day-'Around the World'."

He worked at it uninterruptedly, for in work; there was respite, though his note-books show something of his mental torture, also his spiritual heresies. His series of mistakes and misfortunes, ending with the death of Susy, had tended to solidify his attitude of criticism toward things in general and the human race in particular.

"Man is the only animal that blushes, or that needs to," was one of his maxims of this period, and in another place he sets down the myriad diseases which human flesh is heir to and his contempt for a creature subject to such afflictions and for a Providence that could invent them. Even Mrs. Clemens felt the general sorrow of the race. "Poor, poor human nature," she wrote once during that long, gloomy winter.

Many of Mark Twain's notes refer to Susy. In one he says:

"I did not hear her glorious voice at its supremest—that was in Hartford a month or two before the end."

Notes of heavy regret most of them are, and self-reproach and the hopelessness of it all. In one place he records her accomplishment of speech, adding:

"And I felt like saying 'you marvelous child,' but never said it; to my sorrow I remember it now. But I come of an undemonstrative race."

He wrote to Twichell:

But I have this consolation: that dull as I was I always knew enough to be proud when she commended me or my work—as proud as if Livy had done it herself—& I took it as



the accolade from the hand of genius. I see now—as Livy always saw—that she had greatness in her, & that she herself was dimly conscious of it.

And now she is dead—& I can never tell her.

And closing a letter to Howells:

Good-by. Will healing ever come, or life have value again?



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And shall we see Susy? Without doubt! without a shadow of doubt if it can furnish opportunity to break our hearts again.

On November 26th, Thanksgiving, occurs this note:

“We did not celebrate it. Seven years ago Susy gave her play for the first time.”

And on Christmas:

London, 11.30 Xmas morning. The Square & adjacent streets are not merely quiet, they are dead. There is not a sound. At intervals a Sunday-looking person passes along. The family have been to breakfast. We three sat & talked as usual, but the name of the day was not mentioned. It was in our minds, but we said nothing.

And a little later:

Since bad luck struck us it is risky for people to have to do with us. Our cook's sweetheart was healthy. He is rushing for the grave now. Emily, one of the maids, has lost the sight of one eye and the other is in danger. Wallace carried up coal & blacked the boots two months—has suddenly gone to the hospital—pleurisy and a bad case. We began to allow ourselves to see a good deal of our friends, the Bigelows—straightway their baby sickened & died. Next Wilson got his skull fractured. January 23, 1897. I wish the Lord would disguise Himself in citizen's clothing & make a personal examination of the sufferings of the poor in London. He would be moved & would do something for them Himself.

CXCV

“Personal recollections of Joan of arc”

Meantime certain publishing events had occurred. During his long voyage a number of Mark Twain's articles had appeared in the magazines, among them “Mental Telegraphy Again,” in Harpers, and in the North American Review that scorching reply to Paul Bourget's reflections upon America. Clemens could criticize his own nation freely enough, but he would hardly be patient under the strictures of a Frenchman, especially upon American women.

There had been book publication also during this period. The Harpers had issued an edition of ‘Tom Sawyer Abroad’, which included another Tom and Huck story ‘Tom Sawyer, Detective’, written in Paris, and the contents of the old White Elephant book.

But there had been a much more important book event. The chapters of his story of Joan having run their course in Harper's Magazine had been issued as a volume.



As already mentioned, Joan had been early recognized as Mark Twain's work, and it was now formally acknowledged as such on the title-page. It is not certain now that the anonymous beginning had been a good thing. Those who began reading it for its lofty charm, with the first hint of Mark Twain as the author became fearful of some joke or burlesque. Some who now promptly hastened to read it as Mark Twain's, were inclined to be disappointed at the very lack of these features. When the book itself appeared the general public, still doubtful as to its merits, gave it a somewhat dubious reception. The early sales were disappointing.



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Nor were the reviewers enthusiastic, as a rule. Perhaps they did not read it over-carefully, or perhaps they were swayed a good deal by a sort of general verdict that, in attempting 'Joan of Arc', Mark Twain had gone out of his proper field. Furthermore, there were a number of Joan books published just then, mainly sober, somber books, in which Joan was pictured properly enough as a saint, and never as anything else—never being permitted to smile or enjoy the lighter side of life, to be a human being, in fact, at all.

But this is just the very wonder of Mark Twain's Joan. She is a saint; she is rare, she is exquisite, she is all that is lovely, and she is a human being besides. Considered from every point of view, Joan of Arc is Mark Twain's supreme literary expression, the loftiest, the most delicate, the most luminous example of his work. It is so from the first word of its beginning, that wonderful "Translator's Preface," to the last word of the last chapter, where he declares that the figure of Joan with the martyr's crown upon her head shall stand for patriotism through all time.

The idyllic picture of Joan's childhood with her playmates around the fairy tree is so rare in its delicacy and reality that any attempt to recall it here would disturb its bloom. The little poem, "L'Arbre fee de Bourlemont," Mark Twain's own composition, is a perfect note, and that curiously enough, for in versification he was not likely to be strong. Joan's girlhood, the picture of her father's humble cottage, the singing there by the wandering soldier of the great song of Roland which stirred her deepest soul with the love of France, Joan's heroism among her playmates, her wisdom, her spiritual ideals—are not these all reverently and nobly told, and with that touch of tenderness which only Mark Twain could give? And the story of her voices, and her march, and of her first appearance before the wavering king. And then the great coronation scene at Rheims, and the dramatic moment when Joan commands the march on Paris—the dragging of the hopeless trial, and that last, fearful day of execution, what can surpass these? Nor must we forget those charming, brighter moments where Joan is shown just as a human being, laughing until the tears run at the absurdities of the paladin or the simple home prattle of her aged father and uncle. Only here and there does one find a touch—and it is never more than that—of the forbidden thing, the burlesque note which was so likely to be Mark Twain's undoing.

It seems incredible to-day that any reader, whatever his preconceived notions of the writer might have been, could have followed these chapters without realizing their majesty, and that this tale of Joan was a book such as had not before been written. Let any one who read it then and doubted, go back and consider it now. A surprise will await him, and it will be worth while. He will know the true personality of Joan of Arc more truly than ever before, and he will love her as the author loved her, for "the most innocent, the most lovely, the most adorable child the ages have produced."



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The tale is matchless in its workmanship. The quaint phrasing of the old *Sieur de Conte* is perfectly adapted to the subject-matter, and the lovely character of the old narrator himself is so perfectly maintained that we find ourselves all the time as in an atmosphere of consecration, and feel that somehow we are helping him to weave a garland to lay on Joan's tomb. Whatever the tale he tells, he is never more than a step away. We are within sound of his voice, we can touch his presence; we ride with him into battle; we laugh with him in the by-play and humors of warfare; we sit hushed at his side through the long, fearful days of the deadly trial, and when it is all ended it is to him that we turn to weep for Joan—with him only would we mingle our tears. It is all bathed in the atmosphere of romance, but it is the ultimate of realism, too; not hard, sordid, ugly realism, but noble, spiritual, divine realism, belonging to no particular class or school—a creation apart. Not all of Mark Twain's tales have been convincing, but there is no chapter of his *Joan* that we doubt. We believe it all happened—we know that it must have happened, for our faith in the *Sieur de Conte* never for an instant wavers.

Aside from the personality of the book—though, in truth, one never is aside from it—the tale is a marvel in its pageantry, its splendid panorama and succession of stirring and stately scenes. The fight before Orleans, the taking of the *Tourelles* and of *Jargeau*, all the movement of that splendid march to *Rheims*, there are few better battle-pictures than these. Howells, always interested mainly in the realism of to-day, in his review hints at staginess in the action and setting and even in *Joan* herself. But Howells himself did not accept his earlier judgment as final. Five years later he wrote:

“She is indeed realized to the modern sense as few figures of the past have been realized in fiction.”

As for the action, suppose we consider a brief bit of *Joan's* warfare. It is from the attack on the *Tourelles*:

Joan mounted her horse now with her staff about her, and when our people saw us coming they raised a great shout, and were at once eager for another assault on the boulevard. *Joan* rode straight to the foss where she had received her wound, and, standing there in the rain of bolts and arrows, she ordered the paladin to let her long standard blow free, and to note when its fringes should touch the fortress. Presently he said:

“It touches.”

“Now, then,” said *Joan* to the waiting battalions, “the place is yours—enter in! Bugles, sound the assault! Now, then—all together—go!”



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And go it was. You never saw anything like it. We swarmed up the ladders and over the battlements like a wave—and the place was our property. Why, one might live a thousand years and never see so gorgeous a thing as that again....We were busy and never heard the five cannon-shots fired, but they were fired a moment after Joan had ordered the assault; and so, while we were hammering and being hammered in the smaller fortress, the reserve on the Orleans side poured across the bridge and attacked the Tourelles from that side. A fireboat was brought down and moored under the drawbridge which connected the Tourelles with our boulevard; wherefore, when at last we drove our English ahead of us, and they tried to cross that drawbridge and join their friends in the Tourelles, the burning timbers gave way under them and emptied them in a mass into the river in their heavy armor—and a pitiful sight it was to see brave men die such a death as that. “God pity them!” said Joan, and wept to see that sorrowful spectacle. She said those gentle words and wept those compassionate tears, although one of those perishing men had grossly insulted her with a coarse name three days before when she had sent him a message asking him to surrender. That was their leader, Sir William Glasdale, a most valorous knight. He was clothed all in steel; so he plunged under the water like a lance, and of course came up no more. We soon patched a sort of bridge together and threw ourselves against the last stronghold of the English power that barred Orleans from friends and supplies. Before the sun was quite down Joan’s forever memorable day’s work was finished, her banner floated from the fortress of the Tourelles, her promise was fulfilled, she had raised the siege of Orleans!

England had resented the Yankee, but it welcomed Joan. Andrew Lang adored it, and some years later contemplated dedicating his own book, ‘The Maid of France’, to Mark Twain.’—[His letter proposing this dedication, received in 1909, appears to have been put aside and forgotten by Mr. Clemens, whose memory had not improved with failing health.]

Brander Matthews ranks Huck Finn before Joan of Arc, but that is understandable. His literary culture and research enable him, in some measure, to comprehend the production of Joan; whereas to him Huck is pure magic. Huck is not altogether magic to those who know the West—the character of that section and the Mississippi River, especially of an older time—it is rather inspiration resulting from these existing things. Joan is a truer literary magic—the reconstruction of a far-vanished life and time. To incarnate, as in a living body of the present, that marvelous child whose life was all that was pure and exalted and holy, is veritable necromancy and something more. It is the apotheosis of history.



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Throughout his life Joan of Arc had been Mark Twain's favorite character in the world's history. His love for her was a beautiful and a sacred thing. He adored young maidenhood always and nobility of character, and he was always the champion of the weak and the oppressed. The combination of these characteristics made him the ideal historian of an individuality and of a career like hers. It is fitting that in his old age (he was nearing sixty when it was finished) he should have written this marvelously beautiful thing. He could not have written it at an earlier time. It had taken him all these years to prepare for it; to become softened, to acquire the delicacy of expression, the refinement of feeling, necessary to the achievement.

It was the only book of all he had written that Mark Twain considered worthy of this dedication:

1870 *To my wife* 1895
Olivia Langdon Clemens
this book

is tendered on our wedding anniversary in grateful recognition of her twenty-five years of valued service as my literary adviser and editor.

The author

The Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc was a book not understood in the beginning, but to-day the public, that always renders justice in the end, has reversed its earlier verdict. The demand for Joan has multiplied many fold and it continues to multiply with every year. Its author lived long enough to see this change and to be comforted by it, for though the creative enthusiasm in his other books soon passed, his glory in the tale of Joan never died. On his seventy-third birthday, when all of his important books were far behind him, and he could judge them without prejudice, he wrote as his final verdict:

Nov. 30, 1908

I like the Joan of Arc best of all my books; & it is the best; I know it perfectly well. And besides, it furnished me seven times the pleasure afforded me by any of the others: 12 years of preparation & a years of writing. The others needed no preparation, & got none.

MarkTwain.

CXCVI

MR. ROGERS AND HELEN KELLER



It was during the winter of '96, in London, that Clemens took an active interest in the education of Helen Keller and enlisted the most valuable adherent in that cause, that is to say, Henry H. Rogers. It was to Mrs. Rogers that he wrote, heading his letter:

For & in behalf
of Helen Keller,
Stone blind & deaf,
& formerly dumb.



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Dear Mrs. Rogers,—Experience has convinced me that when one wished to set a hard-worked man at something which he mightn't prefer to be bothered with it is best to move upon him behind his wife. If she can't convince him it isn't worth while for other people to try. Mr. Rogers will remember our visit with that astonishing girl at Lawrence Hutton's house when she was fourteen years old. Last July, in Boston, when she was 16 she underwent the Harvard examination for admission to Radcliffe College. She passed without a single condition. She was allowed only the same amount of time that is granted to other applicants, & this was shortened in her case by the fact that the question-papers had to be read to her. Yet she scored an average of 90, as against an average of 78 on the part of the other applicants. It won't do for America to allow this marvelous child to retire from her studies because of poverty. If she can go on with them she will make a fame that will endure in history for centuries. Along her special lines she is the most extraordinary product of all the ages. There is danger that she must retire from the struggle for a college degree for lack of support for herself & for Miss Sullivan (the teacher who has been with her from the start—Mr. Rogers will remember her). Mrs. Hutton writes to ask me to interest rich Englishmen in her case, & I would gladly try, but my secluded life will not permit it. I see nobody. Nobody knows my address. Nothing but the strictest hiding can enable me to write my book in time. So I thought of this scheme: Beg you to lay siege to your husband & get him to interest himself and Messrs. John D. & William Rockefeller & the other Standard Oil chiefs in Helen's case; get them to subscribe an annual aggregate of six or seven hundred or a thousand dollars—& agree to continue this for three or four years, until she has completed her college course. I'm not trying to limit their generosity—indeed no; they may pile that Standard Oil Helen Keller College Fund as high as they please; they have my consent. Mrs. Hutton's idea is to raise a permanent fund, the interest upon which shall support Helen & her teacher & put them out of the fear of want. I sha'n't say a word against it, but she will find it a difficult & disheartening job, & meanwhile what is to become of that miraculous girl? No, for immediate and sound effectiveness, the thing is for you to plead with Mr. Rogers for this hampered wonder of your sex, & send him clothed with plenary powers to plead with the other chiefs—they have spent mountains of money upon the worthiest benevolences, & I think that the same spirit which moved them to put their hands down through their hearts into their pockets in those cases will answer. "Here!" when its name is called in this one.

There—I don't need to apologize to you or to H. H. for this appeal that I am making; I know you too well for that:



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Good-by, with love to all of you,
S. L. Clemens.

The result of this letter was that Mr. Rogers personally took charge of Helen Keller's fortunes, and out of his own means made it possible for her to continue her education and to achieve for herself the enduring fame which Mark Twain had foreseen.

Mr. Rogers wrote that, by a curious coincidence, a letter had come to him from Mrs. Hutton on the same morning that Mrs. Rogers had received hers from Tedworth Square. Clemens sent grateful acknowledgments to Mrs. Rogers.

Dear Mrs. Rogers,—It is superb! And I am beyond measure grateful to you both. I knew you would be interested in that wonderful girl, & that Mr. Rogers was already interested in her & touched by her; & I was sure that if nobody else helped her you two would; but you have gone far & away beyond the sum I expected—may your lines fall in pleasant places here, & Hereafter for it!

The Huttons are as glad & grateful as they can be, & I am glad for their sakes as well as for Helen's.

I want to thank Mr. Rogers for crucifying himself on the same old cross between Bliss & Harper; & goodness knows I hope he will come to enjoy it above all other dissipations yet, seeing that it has about it the elements of stability & permanency. However, at any time that he says sign we're going to do it.

Ever sincerely yours,
S. L. Clemens.

CXCVII

FINISHING THE BOOK OF TRAVEL

One reading the Equator book to-day, and knowing the circumstances under which it was written, might be puzzled to reconcile the secluded household and its atmosphere of sorrow with certain gaieties of the subject matter. The author himself wondered at it, and to Howells wrote:

I don't mean that I am miserable; no-worse than that—indifferent. Indifferent to nearly everything but work. I like that; I enjoy it, & stick to it. I do it without purpose & without ambition; merely for the love of it. Indeed, I am a mud-image; & it puzzles me to know what it is in me that writes & has comedy fancies & finds pleasure in phrasing them. It is the law of our nature, of course, or it wouldn't happen; the thing in me forgets the presence of the



mud-image, goes its own way wholly unconscious of it & apparently of no kinship with it.

He saw little company. Now and, then a good friend, J.Y.W. MacAlister, came in for a smoke with him. Once Clemens sent this line:



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You speak a language which I understand. I would like to see you. Could you come and smoke some manilas; I would, of course, say dine, but my family are hermits & cannot see any one, but I would have a fire in my study, & if you came at any time after your dinner that might be most convenient for you you would find me & a welcome.

Clemens occasionally went out to dinner, but very privately. He dined with Bram Stoker, who invited Anthony Hope and one or two others, and with the Chattos and Mr. Percy Spalding; also with Andrew Lang, who wrote, "Your old friend, Lord Lome, wants to see you again"; with the Henry M. Stanleys and Poultney Bigelow, and with Francis H. Skrine, a government official he had met in India. But in all such affairs he was protected from strangers and his address was kept a secret from the public. Finally, the new-found cousin, Dr. Jim Clemens, fell ill, and the newspapers had it presently that Mark Twain was lying at the point of death. A reporter ferreted him out and appeared at Tedworth Square with cabled instructions from his paper. He was a young man, and innocently enough exhibited his credentials. His orders read:

"If Mark Twain very ill, five hundred words. If dead, send one thousand."

Clemens smiled grimly as he handed back the cable.

"You don't need as much as that," he said. "Just say the report of my death has been grossly exaggerated."

The young man went away quite seriously, and it was not until he was nearly to his office that he saw the joke. Then, of course, it was flashed all over the world.

Clemens kept grinding steadily at the book, for it was to be a very large volume—larger than he had ever written before. To MacAlister, April 6, 1897, he wrote, replying to some invitation:

Ah, but I mustn't stir from my desk before night now when the publisher is hurrying me & I am almost through. I am up at work now—4 o'clock in the morning—and a few more spurts will pull me through. You come down here & smoke; that is better than tempting a working-man to strike & go to tea.

And it would move me too deeply to see Miss Corelli. When I saw her last it was on the street in Homburg, & Susy was walking with me.

On April 13th he makes a note-book entry: "I finished my book to-day," and on the 15th he wrote MacAlister, inclosing some bits of manuscript:

I finished my book yesterday, and the madam edited this stuff out of it—on the ground that the first part is not delicate & the last part is indelicate. Now, there's a nice distinction for you—& correctly stated, too, & perfectly true.

It may interest the reader to consider briefly the manner in which Mark Twain's "editor" dealt with his manuscript, and a few pages of this particular book remain as examples. That he was not always entirely tractable, or at least submissive, but that he did yield, and graciously, is clearly shown.



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In one of her comments Mrs. Clemens wrote:

Page 597. I hate to say it, but it seems to me that you go too minutely into particulars in describing the feats of the aboriginals. I felt it in the boomerang-throwing.

And Clemens just below has written:

Boomerang has been furnished with a special train—that is, I've turned it into "Appendix." Will that answer?

Page 1002. I don't like the "shady-principled cat that has a family in every port."

Then I'll modify him just a little.

Page 1020. 9th line from the top. I think some other word would be better than "stench." You have used that pretty often.

But can't I get it in anywhere? You've knocked it out every time. Out it goes again. And yet "stench" is a noble, good word.

Page 1038. I hate to have your father pictured as lashing a slave boy.

It's out, and my father is whitewashed.

Page 1050. 2d line from the bottom. Change breech-clout. It's a word that you love and I abominate. I would take that and "offal" out of the language.

You are steadily weakening the English tongue, Livy.

Page 1095. Perhaps you don't care, but whoever told you that the Prince's green stones were rubies told an untruth. They were superb emeralds. Those strings of pearls and emeralds were famous all over Bombay.

All right, I'll make them emeralds, but it loses force. Green rubies is a fresh thing. And besides it was one of the Prince's own staff liars that told me.

That the book was not quite done, even after the triumphant entry of April 13th, is shown by another note which followed something more than a month later:

May 18, 1897. Finished the book again—addition of 30,000 words.



And to MacAlister he wrote:

I have finished the book at last—and finished it for good this time. Now I am ready for dissipation with a good conscience. What night will you come down & smoke?

His book finished, Clemens went out rather more freely, and one evening allowed MacAlister to take him around to the Savage Club. There happened to be a majority of the club committee present, and on motion Mark Twain was elected an honorary life member. There were but three others on whom this distinction had been conferred—Stanley, Nansen, and the Prince of Wales. When they told Mark Twain this he said:

“Well, it must make the Prince feel mighty fine.”—[In a volume of Savage Club anecdotes the date of Mark Twain’s election to honorary membership is given as 1899. Clemens’s notebook gives it in 1897.]

He did not intend to rest; in another entry we find:

May 23, 1897. Wrote first chapter of above story to-day.



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The “above story” is a synopsis of a tale which he tried then and later in various forms—a tale based on a scientific idea that one may dream an episode covering a period of years in minute detail in what, by our reckoning, may be no more than a few brief seconds. In this particular form of the story a man sits down to write some memories and falls into a doze. The smell of his cigarette smoke causes him to dream of the burning of his home, the destruction of his family, and of a long period of years following. Awakened a few seconds later, and confronted by his wife and children, he refuses to believe in their reality, maintaining that this condition, and not the other, is the dream. Clemens tried the psychological literary experiment in as many as three different ways during the next two or three years, and each at considerable length; but he developed none of them to his satisfaction, or at least he brought none of them to conclusion. Perhaps the most weird of these attempts, and the most intensely interesting, so long as the verisimilitude is maintained, is a dream adventure in a drop of water which, through an incredible human reduction to microbic, even atomic, proportions, has become a vast tempestuous sea. Mark Twain had the imagination for these undertakings and the literary workmanship, lacking only a definite plan for development of his tale—a lack which had brought so many of his literary ventures to the rocks.

CXCVIII

A SUMMER IN SWITZERLAND

The Queen’s Jubilee came along—June 22, 1897, being the day chosen to celebrate the sixty-year reign. Clemens had been asked to write about it for the American papers, and he did so after his own ideas, illustrating some of his material with pictures of his own selection. The selections were made from various fashion-plates, which gave him a chance to pick the kind of a prince or princess or other royal figure that he thought fitted his description without any handicap upon his imagination. Under his portrait of Henry V. (a very correctly dressed person in top hat and overcoat) he wrote:

In the original the King has a crown on. That is no kind of a thing for the King to wear when he has come home on business. He ought to wear something he can collect taxes in. You will find this representation of Henry V. active, full of feeling, full of sublimity. I have pictured him looking out over the battle of Agincourt and studying up where to begin.

Mark Twain’s account of the Jubilee probably satisfied most readers; but James Tufts, then managing editor of the San Francisco Examiner, had a rather matter-of-fact Englishman on the staff, who, after reading the report, said:

“Well, Jim Tufts, I hope you are satisfied with that Mark Twain cable.”



“Why, yes,” said Tufts; “aren’t you?”

“I should say not. Just look what he says about the number of soldiers. He says, ‘I never saw so many soldiers anywhere except on the stage of a theater.’ Why, Tufts, don’t you know that the soldiers in the theater are the same old soldiers marching around and around? There aren’t more than a hundred soldiers in the biggest army ever put on the stage.”



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It was decided to vacate the house in Tedworth Square and go to Switzerland for the summer. Mrs. Crane and Charles Langdon's daughter, Julia, joined them early in July, and they set out for Switzerland a few days later. Just before leaving, Clemens received an offer from Pond of fifty thousand dollars for one hundred and twenty-five nights on the platform in America. It was too great a temptation to resist at once, and they took it under advisement. Clemens was willing to accept, but Mrs. Clemens opposed the plan. She thought his health no longer equal to steady travel. She believed that with continued economy they would be able to manage their problem without this sum. In the end the offer was declined.

They journeyed to Switzerland by way of Holland and Germany, the general destination being Lucerne. They did not remain there, however. They found a pretty little village farther up the lake—Weggis, at the foot of the Rigi—where, in the Villa Buhlegg, they arranged for the summer at very moderate rates indeed. Weggis is a beautiful spot, looking across the blue water to Mount Pilatus, the lake shore dotted with white villages. Down by the water, but a few yards from the cottage—for it was scarcely a villa except by courtesy—there was a little inclosure, and a bench under a large tree, a quiet spot where Clemens often sat to rest and smoke. The fact is remembered there to-day, and recorded. A small tablet has engraved upon it "Mark Twain Ruhe." Farther along the shore he discovered a neat, white cottage where some kindly working-people agreed to rent him an upper room for a study. It was a sunny room with windows looking out upon the lake, and he worked there steadily. To Twichell he wrote:

This is the charmingest place we have ever lived in for repose and restfulness, superb scenery whose beauty undergoes a perpetual change from one miracle to another, yet never runs short of fresh surprises and new inventions. We shall always come here for the summers if we can.

The others have climbed the Rigi, he says, and he expects to some day if Twichell will come and climb it with him. They had climbed it together during that summer vagabondage, nineteen years before.

He was full of enthusiasm over his work. To F. H. Skrine, in London, he wrote that he had four or five books all going at once, and his note-book contains two or three pages merely of titles of the stories he proposed to write.

But of the books begun that summer at Weggis none appears to have been completed. There still exists a bulky, half-finished manuscript about Tom and Huck, most of which was doubtless written at this time, and there is the tale already mentioned, the "dream" story; and another tale with a plot of intricate psychology and crime; still another with the burning title of "Hell-Fire Hotchkiss"—a story of Hannibal life—and some short stories. Clemens appeared to be at this time out of tune with fiction. Perhaps his long book of travel had disqualified his invention. He realized that these various literary projects

were leading nowhere, and one after another he dropped them. The fact that proofs of the big book were coming steadily may also have interfered with his creative faculty.



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As was his habit, Clemens formed the acquaintance of a number of the native residents, and enjoyed talking to them about their business and daily affairs. They were usually proud and glad of these attentions, quick to see the humor of his remarks.

But there was an old watchmaker—an ‘Uhrmacher’ who remained indifferent. He would answer only in somber monosyllables, and he never smiled. Clemens at last brought the cheapest kind of a watch for repairs.

“Be very careful of this watch,” he said. “It is a fine one.”

The old man merely glared at him.

“It is not a valuable watch. It is a worthless watch.”

“But I gave six francs for it in Paris.”

“Still, it is a cheap watch,” was the unsmiling answer. Defeat waits somewhere for every conqueror.

Which recalls another instance, though of a different sort. On one of his many voyages to America, he was sitting on deck in a steamer-chair when two little girls stopped before him. One of them said, hesitatingly:

“Are you Mr. Mark Twain?”

“Why, yes, dear, they call me that.”

“Won’t you please say something funny?”

And for the life of him he couldn’t make the required remark.

In one of his letters to Twichell of that summer, Clemens wrote of the arrival there of the colored jubilee singers, always favorites of his, and of his great delight in them.

We went down to the village hotel & bought our tickets & entered the beer-hall, where a crowd of German & Swiss men & women sat grouped around tables with their beer-mugs in front of them—self-contained & unimpressible-looking people—an indifferent & unposted & disheartening audience—& up at the far end of the room sat the jubilees in a row. The singers got up & stood—the talking & glass-jingling went on. Then rose & swelled out above those common earthly sounds one of those rich chords, the secret of whose make only the jubilees possess, & a spell fell upon that house. It was fine to see the faces light up with the pleased wonder & surprise of it. No one was indifferent any more; & when the singers finished the camp was theirs. It was a triumph. It reminded me of Lancelot riding in Sir Kay’s armor, astonishing complacent knights who thought they had struck a soft thing. The jubilees sang a lot of pieces.



Arduous & painstaking cultivation has not diminished or artificialized their music, but on the contrary—to my surprise—has mightily reinforced its eloquence and beauty. Away back in the beginning—to my mind—their music made all other vocal music cheap; & that early notion is emphasized now. It is entirely beautiful to me; & it moves me infinitely more than any other music can. I think that in the jubilees & their songs America has produced the perfectest flower of the ages; & I wish it were a foreign product, so that she would worship it & lavish money on it & go properly crazy over



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it. Now, these countries are different: they would do all that if it were native. It is true they praise God, but that is merely a formality, & nothing in it; they open out their whole hearts to no foreigner.

As the first anniversary of Susy's death drew near the tension became very great. A gloom settled on the household, a shadow of restraint. On the morning of the 18th Clemens went early to his study. Somewhat later Mrs. Clemens put on her hat and wrap, and taking a small bag left the house. The others saw her go toward the steamer-landing, but made no inquiries as to her destination. They guessed that she would take the little boat that touched at the various points along the lake shore. This she did, in fact, with no particular plan as to where she would leave it. One of the landing-places seemed quiet and inviting, and there she went ashore, and taking a quiet room at a small inn spent the day in reading Susy's letters. It was evening when she returned, and her husband, lonely and anxious, was waiting for her at the landing. He had put in the day writing the beautiful poem, "In Memoriam," a strain lofty, tender, and dirge-like-liquidly musical, though irregular in form.—[Now included in the Uniform Edition.]

CXCIX

WINTER IN VIENNA

They remained two months in Weggis—until toward the end of September; thence to Vienna, by way of Innsbruck, in the Tyrol, "where the mountains seem more approachable than in Switzerland." Clara Clemens wished to study the piano under Leschetizky, and this would take them to Austria for the winter. Arriving at Vienna, they settled in the Hotel Metropole, on the banks of the Danube. Their rooms, a corner suite, looked out on a pretty green square, the Merzimplatz, and down on the Franz Josef quay. A little bridge crosses the river there, over which all kinds of life are continually passing. On pleasant days Clemens liked to stand on this bridge and watch the interesting phases of the Austrian capital. The Vienna humorist, Poetzl, quickly formed his acquaintance, and they sometimes stood there together. Once while Clemens was making some notes, Poetzl interested the various passers by asking each one—the errand-boy, the boot-black, the chestnut-vender, cabmen, and others—to guess who the stranger was and what he wanted. Most of them recognized him when their attention was called, for the newspapers had proudly heralded his arrival and his picture was widely circulated.

Clemens had scarcely arrived in Vienna, in fact, before he was pursued by photographers, journalists, and autograph-hunters. The Viennese were his fond admirers, and knowing how the world elsewhere had honored him they were determined not to be outdone. The 'Neues Wiener Tageblatt', a fortnight after his arrival, said:



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It is seldom that a foreign author has found such a hearty reception in Vienna as that accorded to Mark Twain, who not only has the reputation of being the foremost humorist in the whole civilized world, but one whose personality arouses everywhere a peculiar interest on account of the genuine American character which sways it.

He was the guest of honor at the Concordia Club soon after his arrival, and the great ones of Vienna assembled to do him honor. Charlemagne Tower, then American minister, was also one of the guests. Writers, diplomats, financiers, municipal officials, everybody in Vienna that was worth while, was there. Clemens gave them a surprise, for when Ferdinand Gross, Concordia president, introduced him first in English, then in German, Mark Twain made his reply wholly in the latter language.

The paper just quoted gives us a hint of the frolic and wassail of that old 'Festkneipe' when it says:

At 9 o'clock Mark Twain appeared in the salon, and amid a storm of applause took his seat at the head of the table. His characteristic shaggy and flowing mane of hair adorning a youthful countenance attracted the attention at once of all present. After a few formal convivial commonplaces the president of the Concordia, Mr. Ferdinand Gross, delivered an excellent address in English, which he wound up with a few German sentences. Then Mr. Tower was heard in praise of his august countryman. In the course of his remarks he said he could hardly find words enough to express his delight at the presence of the popular American. Then followed the greatest attraction of the evening, an impromptu speech by Mark Twain in the German language, which it is true he has not fully mastered, but which he nevertheless controls sufficiently well to make it difficult to detect any harsh foreign accent. He had entitled his speech, "Die Schrecken der Deutschen Sprache" (the terrors of the German language). At times he would interrupt himself in English and ask, with a stuttering smile, "How do you call this word in German" or "I only know that in mother-tongue." The Festkneipe lasted far into the morning hours.

It was not long after their arrival in Vienna that the friction among the unamalgamated Austrian states flamed into a general outbreak in the Austrian Reichsrath, or Imperial Parliament. We need not consider just what the trouble was. Any one wishing to know can learn from Mark Twain's article on the subject, for it is more clearly pictured there than elsewhere. It is enough to say here that the difficulty lay mainly between the Hungarian and German wings of the house; and in the midst of it Dr. Otto Lecher made his famous speech, which lasted twelve hours without a break, in order to hold the floor against the opposing forces. Clemens was in the gallery most of the time while that speech, with its riotous accompaniment, was in progress.—["When that house is legislating you can't tell it



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from artillery practice.” From Mark Twain’s report, “Stirring Times in Austria,” in *Literary Essays*,]—He was intensely interested. Nothing would appeal to him more than that, unless it should be some great astronomic or geologic change. He was also present somewhat later when a resolution was railroaded through which gave the chair the right to invoke the aid of the military, and he was there when the military arrived and took the insurgents in charge. It was a very great occasion, a “tremendous episode,” he says. The memory of it will outlast all the others that exist to-day. In the whole history of free parliament the like of it had been seen but three times before. It takes imposing place among the world’s unforgettable things. I think that in my lifetime I have not twice seen abiding history made before my eyes, but I know that I have seen it once.

Wild reports were sent to the American press; among them one that Mark Twain had been hustled out with the others, and that, having waved his handkerchief and shouted “Hoch die Deutschen!” he had been struck by an officer of the law. Of course nothing of the kind happened. The sergeant-at-arms, who came to the gallery where he sat, said to a friend who suggested that Clemens be allowed to remain:

“Oh, I know him very well. I recognize him by his pictures, and I should be very glad to let him stay, but I haven’t any choice because of the strictness of the order.”

Clemens, however, immediately ran across a *London Times* correspondent, who showed him the way into the first gallery, which it seems was not emptied, so he lost none of the exhibit.

Mark Twain’s report of the Austrian troubles, published in *Harper’s Magazine* the following March and now included with the *Literary Essays*, will keep that episode alive and important as literature when otherwise it would have been merely embalmed, and dimly remembered, as history.

It was during these exciting political times in Vienna that a representative of a New York paper wrote, asking for a Mark Twain interview. Clemens replied, giving him permission to call. When the reporter arrived Clemens was at work writing in bed, as was so much his habit. At the doorway the reporter paused, waiting for a summons to enter. The door was ajar and he heard Mrs. Clemens say:

“Youth, don’t you think it will be a little embarrassing for him, your being in bed?”

And he heard Mark Twain’s easy, gentle, deliberate voice reply:

“Why, Livy, if you think so, we might have the other bed made up for him.”

Clemens became a privileged character in Vienna. Official rules were modified for his benefit. Everything was made easy for him. Once, on a certain grand occasion, when

nobody was permitted to pass beyond a prescribed line, he was stopped by a guard, when the officer in charge suddenly rode up:

“Let him pass,” he commanded. “Lieber Gott! Don’t you see it’s Herr Mark Twain?”

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The Clemens apartments at the Metropole were like a court, where with those of social rank assembled the foremost authors, journalists, diplomats, painters, philosophers, scientists, of Europe, and therefore of the world. A sister of the Emperor of Germany lived at the Metropole that winter and was especially cordial. Mark Twain's daily movements were chronicled as if he had been some visiting potentate, and, as usual, invitations and various special permissions poured in. A Vienna paper announced:

He has been feted and dined from morn till eve. The homes of the aristocracy are thrown open to him, counts and princes delight to do him honor, and foreign audiences hang upon the words that fall from his lips, ready to burst out any instant into roars of laughter.

Deaths never came singly in the Clemens family. It was on the 11th of December, 1897, something more than a year after the death of Susy, that Orion Clemens died, at the age of seventy-two. Orion had remained the same to the end, sensitively concerned as to all his brother's doings, his fortunes and misfortunes: soaring into the clouds when any good news came; indignant, eager to lend help and advice in the hour of defeat; loyal, upright, and generally beloved by those who knew and understood his gentle nature. He had not been ill, and, in fact, only a few days before he died had written a fine congratulatory letter on his brother's success in accumulating means for the payment of his debts, entering enthusiastically into some literary plans which Mark Twain then had in prospect, offering himself for caricature if needed.

I would fit in as a fool character, believing, what the Tennessee mountaineers predicted, that I would grow up to be a great man and go to Congress. I did not think it worth the trouble to be a common great man like Andy Johnson. I wouldn't give a pinch of snuff, little as I needed it, to be anybody, less than Napoleon. So when a farmer took my father's offer for some chickens under advisement till the next day I said to myself, "Would Napoleon Bonaparte have taken under advisement till the next day an offer to sell him some chickens?"

To his last day and hour Orion was the dreamer, always with a new plan. It was one morning early that he died. He had seated himself at a table with pencil and paper and was setting down the details of his latest project when death came to him, kindly enough, in the moment of new hope.

There came also, just then, news of the death of their old Hartford butler, George. It saddened them as if it had been a member of the household. Jean, especially, wept bitterly.

CC

MARK TWAIN PAYS HIS DEBTS

'Following the Equator'—[In England, More Tramps Abroad.]—had come from the press in November and had been well received. It was a large, elaborate subscription volume, more elaborate than artistic in appearance. Clemens, wishing to make some acknowledgment to his benefactor, tactfully dedicated it to young Harry Rogers:



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“With recognition of what he is, and an apprehension of what he may become unless he form himself a little more closely upon the model of the author.”

Following the *Equator* was Mark Twain’s last book of travel, and it did not greatly resemble its predecessors. It was graver than the *Innocents Abroad*; it was less inclined to cynicism and burlesque than the *Tramp*. It was the thoughtful, contemplative observation and philosophizing of the soul-weary, world-weary pilgrim who has by no means lost interest, but only his eager, first enthusiasm. It is a gentler book than the *Tramp Abroad*, and for the most part a pleasanter one. It is better history and more informing. Its humor, too, is of a worthier sort, less likely to be forced and overdone. The holy Hindoo pilgrim’s “itinerary of salvation” is one of the richest of all Mark Twain’s fancies, and is about the best thing in the book. The revised philosophies of Pudd’nhead Wilson, that begin each chapter, have many of them passed into our daily speech. That some of Mark Twain’s admirers were disappointed with the new book is very likely, but there were others who could not praise it enough. James Whitcomb Riley wrote:

*Dear Mr. Clemens,—*For a solid week-night sessions—I have been glorying in your last book—and if you’ve ever done anything better, stronger, or of wholesomer uplift I can’t recall it. So here’s my heart and here’s my hand with all the augmented faith and applause of your proudest countryman! It’s just a hail I’m sending you across the spaces—not to call you from your blessed work an instant, but simply to join my voice in the universal cheer that is steadfastly going up for you.

As gratefully as delightedly,
Your abiding friend,
James Whitcomb Riley.

Notwithstanding the belief that the sale of single subscription volumes had about ended, Bliss did well with the new book. Thirty or forty thousand copies were placed without much delay, and the accumulated royalties paid into Mr. Rogers’s hands. The burden of debt had become a nightmare. Clemens wrote:

Let us begin on those debts. I cannot bear the weight any longer. It totally unfits me for work.

This was November 10, 1897. December 29th he wrote:

Land, we are glad to see those debts diminishing. For the first time in my life I am getting more pleasure from paying money out than pulling it in.

To Howells, January 3d, Clemens wrote that they had “turned the corner,” and a month later:



We've lived close to the bone and saved every cent we could, & there's no undisputed claim now that we can't cash. There are only two claims which I dispute & which I mean to look into personally before I pay them. But they are small. Both together they amount to only \$12,500. I hope you will never get the like of the load saddled onto you that was saddled onto me 3 years ago. And yet there is such a solid pleasure in paying the things that I reckon maybe it is worth while to get into that kind of a hobble after all. Mrs. Clemens gets millions of delight out of it; & the children have never uttered one complaint about the scrimping from the beginning.

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By the end of January, 1898, Mark Twain had accumulated enough money to make the final payment to his creditors and stand clear of debt. At the time of his failure he said he had given himself five years in which to clear himself of the heavy obligation. He had achieved that result in less than three. The world heralded it as a splendid triumph.

Miss Katharine I. Harrison, Henry Rogers's secretary, who had been in charge of the details, wrote in her letter announcing his freedom:

"I wish I could shout it across the water to you so that you would get it ten days ahead of this letter."

Miss Harrison's letter shows that something like thirteen thousand dollars would remain to his credit after the last accounts were wiped away.

Clemens had kept his financial progress from the press, but the payment of the final claims was distinctly a matter of news and the papers made the most of it. Head-lines shouted it, there were long editorials in which Mark Twain was heralded as a second Walter Scott, though it was hardly necessary that he should be compared with anybody; he had been in that—as in those peculiarities which had invited his disaster—just himself.

One might suppose now that he had had enough of inventions and commercial enterprises of every sort that is, one who did not know Mark Twain might suppose this; but it would not be true. Within a month after the debts were paid he had negotiated with the great Austrian inventor, Szczepanik, and his business manager for the American rights of a wonderful carpet-pattern machine, obtained an option for these rights at fifteen hundred thousand dollars, and, Sellers-like, was planning to organize a company with a capital of fifteen hundred million dollars to control carpet-weaving industries of the world. He records in his note-book that a certain Mr. Wood, representing the American carpet interests, called upon him and, in the course of their conversation, asked him at what price he would sell his option.

I declined, and got away from the subject. I was afraid he would offer me \$500,000 for it. I should have been obliged to take it, but I was born with a speculative instinct & I did not want that temptation put in my way.

He wrote to Mr. Rogers about the great scheme, inviting the Standard Oil to furnish the capital for it—but it appears not to have borne the test of Mr. Rogers's scrutiny, and is heard of no more.

Szczepanik had invented the 'Fernseher', or Teleelectroscope, the machine by which one sees at a distance. Clemens would have invested heavily in this, too, for he had implicit faith in its future, but the 'Fernseher' was already controlled for the Paris Exposition; so he could only employ Szczepanik as literary material, which he did in two instances:



“The Austrian Edison Keeping School Again” and “From the London Times of 1904”—magazine articles published in the Century later in the year. He was fond of Szczepanik and Szczepanik’s backer, Mr. Kleinburg. In one of his note-book entries he says:



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Szczepanik is not a Paige. He is a gentleman; his backer, Mr. Kleinburg, is a gentleman, too, yet is not a Clemens—that is to say, he is not an ass.

Clemens did not always consult his financial adviser, Rogers, any more than he always consulted his spiritual adviser, Twichell, or his literary adviser, Howells, when he intended to commit heresies in their respective provinces. Somewhat later an opportunity came along to buy an interest in a preparation of skimmed milk, an invalid food by which the human race was going to be healed of most of its ills. When Clemens heard that Virchow had recommended this new restorative, the name of which was plasmon, he promptly provided MacAlister with five thousand pounds to invest in a company then organizing in London. It should be added that this particular investment was not an entire loss, for it paid very good dividends for several years. We shall hear of it again.

For the most part Clemens was content to let Henry Rogers do his financiering, and as the market was low with an upward incline, Rogers put the various accumulations into this thing and that, and presently had some fifty thousand dollars to Mark Twain's credit, a very comfortable balance for a man who had been twice that amount in debt only a few years before. It has been asserted most strenuously, by those in a position to know least about the matter, that Henry Rogers lent, and even gave, Mark Twain large sums, and pointed out opportunities whereby he could make heavily by speculation. No one of these statements is true. Mr. Rogers neither lent nor gave Mark Twain money for investment, and he never allowed him to speculate when he could prevent it. He invested for him wisely, but he never bought for him a share of stock that he did not have the money in hand to pay for in full-money belonging to and earned by Clemens himself. What he did give to Mark Twain was his priceless counsel and time—gifts more precious than any mere sum of money—boons that Mark Twain could accept without humiliation. He did accept them and was unceasingly grateful.—[Mark Twain never lost an opportunity for showing his gratitude to Henry Rogers. The reader is referred to Appendix T, at the end of the last volume, for a brief tribute which Clemens prepared in 1902. Mr. Rogers would not consent to its publication.]

CCI

SOCIAL LIFE IN VIENNA

Clemens, no longer worried about finances and full of ideas and prospects, was writing now at a great rate, mingling with all sorts of social events, lecturing for charities, and always in the lime-light.

I have abundant peace of mind again—no sense of burden. Work is become a pleasure—it is not labor any longer.

He was the lion of the Austrian capital, and it was natural that he should revel in his new freedom and in the universal tribute. Mrs. Clemens wrote that they were besieged with callers of every description:



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Such funny combinations are here sometimes: one duke, several counts, several writers, several barons, two princes, newspaper women, *etc.* I find so far, without exception, that the high-up aristocracy are simple and cordial and agreeable.

When Clemens appeared as a public entertainer all society turned out to hear him and introductions were sought by persons of the most exclusive rank. Once a royal introduction led to an adventure. He had been giving a charity reading in Vienna, and at the end of it was introduced, with Mrs. Clemens, to her Highness, Countess Bardi, a princess of the Portuguese royal house by marriage and sister to the Austrian Archduchess Maria Theresa. They realized that something was required after such an introduction; that, in fact, they must go within a day or two and pay their respects by writing their names in the visitors' book, kept in a sort of anteroom of the royal establishment. A few days later, about noon, they drove to the archducal palace, inquired their way to the royal anteroom, and informed the grandly uniformed portier that they wished to write their names in the visitors' book. The portier did not produce the book, but summoned a man in livery and gold lace and directed him to take them up-stairs, remarking that her Royal Highness was out, but would be in presently. They protested that her Royal Highness was not looking for them, that they were not calling, but had merely come to sign the visitors' book, but he said:

"You are Americans, are you not?"

"Yes, we are Americans."

"Then you are expected. Please go up-stairs."

Mrs. Clemens said:

"Oh no, we are not expected; there is some mistake. Please let us sign the book and we will go away."

But it was no use. He insisted that her Royal Highness would be back in a very little while; that she had commanded him to say so and that they must wait. They were shown up-stairs, Clemens going willingly enough, for he scented an adventure; but Mrs. Clemens was far from happy. They were taken to a splendid drawing-room, and at the doorway she made her last stand, refusing to enter. She declared that there was certainly some mistake, and begged them to let her sign her name in the book and go, without parleying. It was no use. Their conductor insisted that they remove their wraps and sit down, which they finally did—Mrs. Clemens miserable, her husband in a delightful state of anticipation. Writing of it to Twichell that night he said:

I was hoping and praying that the Princess would come and catch us up there, & that those other Americans who were expected would arrive and be taken as impostors by the portier & be shot by the sentinels & then it would all go into the papers & be cabled



all over the world & make an immense stir and be perfectly lovely. Livy was in a state of mind; she said it was too theatrically ridiculous & that I would never be able to keep my mouth shut; that I would be sure to let it out & it would get into the papers, & she tried to make me promise.

“Promise what?” I said.



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“To be quiet about this.”

“Indeed I won’t; it’s the best thing ever happened. I’ll tell it and add to it & I wish Joe & Howells were here to make it perfect; I can’t make all the rightful blunders by myself—it takes all three of us to do justice to an opportunity like this. I would just like to see Howells get down to his work & explain & lie & work his futile & inventionless subterfuges when that Princess comes raging in here & wanting to know.” But Livy could not hear fun—it was not a time to be trying to be funny. We were in a most miserable & shameful situation, & it —Just then the door spread wide & our Princess & 4 more & 3 little Princes flowed in! Our Princess & her sister, the Archduchess Maria Theresa (mother to the imperial heir & to the a young girl Archduchesses present, & aunt to the 3 little Princes), & we shook hands all around & sat down & had a most sociable time for half an hour, & by & by it turned out that we were the right ones & had been sent for by a messenger who started too late to catch us at the hotel. We were invited for a o’clock, but we beat that arrangement by an hour & a half. Wasn’t it a rattling good comedy situation? Seems a kind of pity we were the right ones. It would have been such nuts to see the right ones come and get fired out, & we chatting along comfortably & nobody suspecting us for impostors.

Mrs. Clemens to Mrs. Crane:

Of course I know that I should have courtesied to her Imperial Majesty & not quite so deep to her Royal Highness, and that Mr. Clemens should have kissed their hands; but it was all so unexpected that I had no time to prepare, and if I had had I should not have been there; I only went in to help Mr. C. with my bad German. When our minister’s wife is going to be presented to the Archduchess she practises her courtesying beforehand.

They had met royalty in simple American fashion and no disaster had followed.

We have already made mention of the distinguished visitors who gathered in the Clemens apartments at the Hotel Metropole. They were of many nations and ranks. It was the winter in London of twenty-five years before over again. Only Mark Twain was not the same. Then he had been unsophisticated, new, not always at his ease; now he was the polished familiar of courts and embassies—at home equally with poets and princes, authors and ambassadors and kings. Such famous ones were there as Vereshchagin, Leschetizky, Mark Hambourg, Dvorak, Lenbach, and Jokai, with diplomats of many nations. A list of foreign names may mean little to the American reader, but among them were Neigra, of Italy; Paraty, of Portugal; Lowenhaupt, of Sweden; and Ghiki, of Rumania. The Queen of Rumania, Carmen Sylva, a poetess in her own right, was a friend and warm admirer of Mark Twain. The Princess Metternich, and Madame de Laschowska, of Poland, were among those who came, and there were Nansen and his wife, and Campbell-Bannerman, who was afterward British Premier. Also there was Spiridon, the painter, who made portraits of Clara Clemens and her father, and other artists and potentates—the list is too long.



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Those were brilliant, notable gatherings and are remembered in Vienna today. They were not always entirely harmonious, for politics was in the air and differences of opinion were likely to be pretty freely expressed.

Clemens and his family, as Americans, did not always have a happy time of it. It was the eve of the Spanish American War and most of continental Europe sided with Spain. Austria, in particular, was friendly to its related nation; and from every side the Clemenses heard how America was about to take a brutal and unfair advantage of a weaker nation for the sole purpose of annexing Cuba.

Charles Langdon and his son Jervis happened to arrive in Vienna about this time, bringing straight from America the comforting assurance that the war was not one of conquest or annexation, but a righteous defense of the weak. Mrs. Clemens gave a dinner for them, at which, besides some American students, were Mark Hambourg, Gabrilowitsch, and the great Leschetizky himself. Leschetizky, an impetuous and eloquent talker, took this occasion to inform the American visitors that their country was only shamming, that Cuba would soon be an American dependency. No one not born to the language could argue with Leschetizky. Clemens once wrote of him:

He is a most capable and felicitous talker—was born for an orator, I think. What life, energy, fire in a man past 70! & how he does play! He is easily the greatest pianist in the world. He is just as great & just as capable today as ever he was.

Last Sunday night, at dinner with us, he did all the talking for 3 hours, and everybody was glad to let him. He told his experiences as a revolutionist 50 years ago in '48, & his battle-pictures were magnificently worded. Poetzi had never met him before. He is a talker himself & a good one—but he merely sat silent & gazed across the table at this inspired man, & drank in his words, & let his eyes fill & the blood come & go in his face & never said a word.

Whatever may have been his doubts in the beginning concerning the Cuban War, Mark Twain, by the end of May, had made up his mind as to its justice. When Theodore Stanton invited him to the Decoration Day banquet to be held in Paris, he replied:

I thank you very much for your invitation and I would accept if I were foot-free. For I should value the privilege of helping you do honor to the men who rewelded our broken Union and consecrated their great work with their lives; and also I should like to be there to do, homage to our soldiers and sailors of today who are enlisted for another most righteous war, and utter the hope that they may make short and decisive work of it and leave Cuba free and fed when they face for home again. And finally I should like to be present and see you interweave those two flags which, more than any others, stand for freedom and progress in the earth—flags which represent two kindred nations, each great and strong by itself, competent sureties for the peace of the world when they stand together.



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That is to say, the flags of England and America. To an Austrian friend he emphasized this thought:

The war has brought England and America close together—and to my mind that is the biggest dividend that any war in this world has ever paid. If this feeling is ever to grow cold again I do not wish to live to see it.

And to Twichell, whose son David had enlisted:

You are living your war-days over again in Dave & it must be strong pleasure mixed with a sauce of apprehension

I have never enjoyed a war, even in history, as I am enjoying this one, for this is the worthiest one that was ever fought, so far as my knowledge goes. It is a worthy thing to fight for one's own country. It is another sight finer to fight for another man's. And I think this is the first time it has been done.

But it was a sad day for him when he found that the United States really meant to annex the Philippines, and his indignation flamed up. He said:

“When the United States sent word to Spain that the Cuban atrocities must end she occupied the highest moral position ever taken by a nation since the Almighty made the earth. But when she snatched the Philippines she stained the flag.”

CCII

LITERARY WORK IN VIENNA

One must wonder, with all the social demands upon him, how Clemens could find time to write as much as he did during those Vienna days. He piled up a great heap of manuscript of every sort. He wrote Twichell:

There may be idle people in the world, but I am not one of them.

And to Howells:

I couldn't get along without work now. I bury myself in it up to the ears. Long hours—8 & 9 on a stretch sometimes. It isn't all for print, by any means, for much of it fails to suit me; 50,000 words of it in the past year. It was because of the deadness which invaded me when Susy died.

He projected articles, stories, critiques, essays, novels, autobiography, even plays; he covered the whole literary round. Among these activities are some that represent Mark Twain's choicest work. “Concerning the Jews,” which followed the publication of his



“Stirring Times in Austria” (grew out of it, in fact), still remains the best presentation of the Jewish character and racial situation. Mark Twain was always an ardent admirer of the Jewish race, and its oppression naturally invited his sympathy. Once he wrote to Twichell:

The difference between the brain of the average Christian and that of the average Jew—certainly in Europe—is about the difference between a tadpole’s brain & an archbishop’s. It is a marvelous race; by long odds the most marvelous race the world has produced, I suppose.

Yet he did not fail to see its faults and to set them down in his summary of Hebrew character. It was a reply to a letter written to him by a lawyer, and he replied as a lawyer might, compactly, logically, categorically, conclusively. The result pleased him. To Mr. Rogers he wrote:



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The Jew article is my “gem of the ocean.” I have taken a world of pleasure in writing it & doctoring it & fussing at it. Neither Jew nor Christian will approve of it, but people who are neither Jews nor Christian will, for they are in a condition to know the truth when they see it.

Clemens was not given to race distinctions. In his article he says:

I am quite sure that (bar one) I have no race prejudices, and I think I have no color prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. Indeed I know it. I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being, that is enough for me; he can't be any worse.

We gather from something that follows that the one race which he bars is the French, and this, just then, mainly because of the Dreyfus agitations.

He also states in this article:

I have no special regard for Satan, but I can at least claim that I have no prejudice against him. It may even be that I lean a little his way on account of his not having a fair show.

Clemens indeed always had a friendly feeling toward Satan (at least, as he conceived him), and just at this time addressed a number of letters to him concerning affairs in general—cordial, sympathetic, informing letters enough, though apparently not suited for publication. A good deal of the work done at this period did not find its way into print. An interview with Satan; a dream-story concerning a platonic sweetheart, and some further comment on Austrian politics, are among the condemned manuscripts.

Mark Twain's interest in Satan would seem later to have extended to his relatives, for there are at least three bulky manuscripts in which he has attempted to set down some episodes in the life of one “Young Satan,” a nephew, who appears to have visited among the planets and promoted some astonishing adventures in Austria several centuries ago. The idea of a mysterious, young, and beautiful stranger who would visit the earth and perform mighty wonders, was always one which Mark Twain loved to play with, and a nephew of Satan's seemed to him properly qualified to carry out his intention. His idea was that this celestial visitant was not wicked, but only indifferent to good and evil and suffering, having no personal knowledge of any of these things. Clemens tried the experiment in various ways, and portions of the manuscript are absorbingly interesting, lofty in conception, and rarely worked out—other portions being merely grotesque, in which the illusion of reality vanishes.

Among the published work of the Vienna period is an article about a morality play, the “Master of Palmyra,”—[About play-acting, Forum, October, 1898.]—by Adolf Wilbrandt, an impressive play presenting Death, the all-powerful, as the principal part.



The Cosmopolitan Magazine for August published “At the Appetite-Cure,” in which Mark Twain, in the guise of humor, set forth a very sound and sensible idea concerning dietetics, and in October the same magazine published his first article on “Christian Science and the Book of Mrs. Eddy.” As we have seen, Clemens had been always deeply interested in mental healing, and in closing this humorous skit he made due acknowledgments to the unseen forces which, properly employed, through the imagination work physical benefits:



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“Within the last quarter of a century,” he says, “in America, several sects of curers have appeared under various names and have done notable things in the way of healing ailments without the use of medicines.”

Clemens was willing to admit that Mrs. Eddy and her book had benefited humanity, but he could not resist the fun-making which certain of her formulas and her phrasing invited. The delightful humor of the *Cosmopolitan* article awoke a general laugh, in which even devout Christian Scientists were inclined to join.—[It was so popular that John Brisben Walker voluntarily added a check for two hundred dollars to the eight hundred dollars already paid.]—Nothing that he ever did exhibits more happily that peculiar literary gift upon which his fame rests.

But there is another story of this period that will live when most of those others mentioned are but little remembered. It is the story of “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg.” This is a tale that in its own way takes its place with the half-dozen great English short stories of the world—with such stories as “The Fall of the House of Usher,” by Poe; “The Luck of Roaring Camp,” by Harte; “The Man Who Would be King,” by Kipling; and “The Man Without a Country,” by Hale. As a study of the human soul, its flimsy pretensions and its pitiful frailties, it outranks all the rest. In it Mark Twain’s pessimistic philosophy concerning the “human animal” found a free and moral vent. Whatever his contempt for a thing, he was always amused at it; and in this tale we can imagine him a gigantic Pantagruel dangling a ridiculous manikin, throwing himself back and roaring out his great bursting guffaws at its pitiful antics. The temptation and the downfall of a whole town was a colossal idea, a sardonic idea, and it is colossally and sardonically worked out.

Human weakness and rotten moral force were never stripped so bare or so mercilessly jeered at in the marketplace. For once Mark Twain could hug himself with glee in derision of self-righteousness, knowing that the world would laugh with him, and that none would be so bold as to gainsay his mockery. Probably no one but Mark Twain ever conceived the idea of demoralizing a whole community—of making its “nineteen leading citizens” ridiculous by leading them into a cheap, glittering temptation, and having them yield and openly perjure themselves at the very moment when their boasted incorruptibility was to amaze the world. And it is all wonderfully done. The mechanism of the story is perfect, the drama of it is complete. The exposure of the nineteen citizens in the very sanctity of the church itself, and by the man they have discredited, completing the carefully prepared revenge of the injured stranger, is supreme in its artistic triumph. “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg” is one of the mightiest sermons against self-righteousness ever preached. Its philosophy, that every man is strong until his price is named; the futility of the prayer not to be led into temptation, when it is only by resisting temptation that men grow strong—these things blaze out in a way that makes us fairly blink with the truth of them.



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It is Mark Twain's greatest short story. It is fine that it should be that, as well as much more than that; for he was no longer essentially a story-teller. He had become more than ever a moralist and a sage. Having seen all of the world, and richly enjoyed and deeply suffered at its hands, he sat now as in a seat of judgment, regarding the passing show and recording his philosophies.

CCIII

AN IMPERIAL TRAGEDY

For the summer they went to Kaltenleutgeben, just out of Vienna, where they had the Villa Paulhof, and it was while they were there, September 10, 1898, that the Empress Elizabeth of Austria was assassinated at Geneva by an Italian vagabond, whose motive seemed to have been to gain notoriety. The news was brought to them one evening, just at supper-time, by Countess Wydenbouck-Esterhazy.

Clemens wrote to Twichell:

That good & unoffending lady, the Empress, is killed by a madman, & I am living in the midst of world-history again. The Queen's Jubilee last year, the invasion of the Reichsrath by the police, & now this murder, which will still be talked of & described & painted a thousand years from now. To have a personal friend of the wearer of two crowns burst in at the gate in the deep dusk of the evening & say, in a voice broken with tears, "My God! the Empress is murdered," & fly toward her home before we can utter a question—why, it brings the giant event home to you, makes you a part of it & personally interested; it is as if your neighbor Antony should come flying & say, "Caesar is butchered—the head of the world is fallen!"

Of course there is no talk but of this. The mourning is universal and genuine, the consternation is stupefying. The Austrian Empire is being draped with black. Vienna will be a spectacle to see by next Saturday, when the funeral cortege marches.

Clemens and the others went into Vienna for the funeral ceremonies and witnessed them from the windows of the new Krantz Hotel, which faces the Capuchin church where the royal dead lie buried. It was a grandly impressive occasion, a pageant of uniforms of the allied nations that made up the Empire of Austria. Clemens wrote of it at considerable length, and sent the article to Mr. Rogers to offer to the magazines. Later, however, he recalled it just why is not clear. In one place he wrote:

Twice the Empress entered Vienna in state; the first time was in 1854, when she was a bride of seventeen, & when she rode in measureless pomp through a world of gay flags & decorations down the streets, walled on both hands with the press of shouting & welcoming subjects; & the second time was last Wednesday, when she entered the city



in her coffin, & moved down the same streets in the dead of night under waving black flags, between human walls again, but everywhere was a deep stillness now & a stillness emphasized rather



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than broken by the muffled hoofbeats of the long cavalcade over pavements cushioned with sand, & the low sobbing of gray-headed women who had witnessed the first entrance, forty-four years before, when she & they were young & unaware.... She was so blameless—the Empress; & so beautiful in mind & heart, in person & spirit; & whether with the crown upon her head, or without it & nameless, a grace to the human race, almost a justification of its creation; would be, indeed, but that the animal that struck her down re-establishes the doubt.

They passed a quiet summer at Kaltenleutgeben. Clemens wrote some articles, did some translating of German plays, and worked on his “Gospel,” an elaboration of his old essay on contenting one’s soul through selfishness, later to be published as ‘What is Man?’ A. C. Dunham and Rev. Dr. Parker, of Hartford, came to Vienna, and Clemens found them and brought them out to Kaltenleutgeben and read them chapters of his doctrines, which, he said, Mrs. Clemens would not let him print. Dr. Parker and Dunham returned to Hartford and reported Mark Twain more than ever a philosopher; also that he was the “center of notability and his house a court.”

CCIV

THE SECOND WINTER IN VIENNA

The Clemens family did not return to the Metropole for the winter, but went to the new Krantz, already mentioned, where they had a handsome and commodious suite looking down on the Neuer Markt and on the beautiful facade of the Capuchin church, with the great cathedral only a step away. There they passed another brilliant and busy winter. Never in Europe had they been more comfortably situated; attention had been never more lavishly paid to them. Their drawing-room was a salon which acquired the name of the “Second Embassy.” Clemens in his note-book wrote:

During 8 years now I have filled the position—with some credit, I trust, of self-appointed ambassador-at-large of the United States of America —without salary.

Which was a joke; but there was a large grain of truth in it, for Mark Twain, more than any other American in Europe, was regarded as typically representing his nation and received more lavish honors.

It had become the fashion to consult him on every question of public interest, for he was certain to say something worth printing, whether seriously or otherwise. When the Tsar of Russia proposed the disarmament of the nations William T. Stead, editor of the Review of Reviews, wrote for Mark Twain’s opinion. He replied:



Dear Mr. Steady,—The Tsar is ready to disarm. I am ready to disarm. Collect the others; it should not be much of a task now.

Mark Twain.



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He was on a tide of prosperity once more, one that was to continue now until the end. He no longer had any serious financial qualms. He could afford to be independent. He refused ten thousand dollars for a tobacco indorsement, though he liked the tobacco well enough; and he was aware that even royalty was willing to put a value on its opinions. He declined ten thousand dollars a year for five years to lend his name as editor of a humorous periodical, though there was no reason to suppose that the paper would be otherwise than creditably conducted. He declined lecture propositions from Pond at the rate of about one a month. He could get along without these things, he said, and still preserve some remnants of self-respect. In a letter to Rogers he said:

Pond offers me \$10,000 for 10 nights, but I do not feel strongly tempted. Mrs. Clemens ditto.

Early in 1899 he wrote to Howells that Mrs. Clemens had proved to him that they owned a house and furniture in Hartford, that his English and American copyrights paid an income on the equivalent of two hundred thousand dollars, and that they had one hundred and seven thousand dollars' accumulation in the bank.

"I have been out and bought a box of 6c. cigars," he says; "I was smoking 4 1/2c. before."

The things that men are most likely to desire had come to Mark Twain, and no man was better qualified to rejoice in them. That supreme, elusive thing which we call happiness might have been his now but for the tragedy of human bereavement and the torture of human ills. That he did rejoice—reveled indeed like a boy in his new fortunes, the honors paid him, and in all that gay Viennese life—there is no doubt. He could wave aside care and grief and remorse, forget their very existence, it seemed; but in the end he had only driven them ahead a little way and they waited by his path. Once, after reciting his occupations and successes, he wrote:

All these things might move and interest one. But how, desperately more I have been moved to-night by the thought of a little old copy in the nursery of 'At the Back of the North Wind'. Oh, what happy days they were when that book was read, and how Susy loved it!... Death is so kind, benignant, to whom he loves, but he goes by us others & will not look our way.

And to Twichell a few days later:

A Hartford with no Susy in it—& no Ned Bunce!—It is not the city of Hartford, it is the city of Heartbreak.... It seems only a few weeks since I saw Susy last—yet that was 1895 & this is 1899....

My work does not go well to-day. It failed yesterday—& the day before & the day before that. And so I have concluded to put the *Ms.* in the waste-basket & meddle with some

other subject. I was trying to write an article advocating the quadrupling of the salaries of our ministers & ambassadors, & the devising of an official dress for them to wear.



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It seems an easy theme, yet I couldn't do the thing to my satisfaction. All I got out of it was an article on Monaco & Monte Carlo—matters not connected with the subject at all. Still, that was something—it's better than a total loss.

He finished the article—"Diplomatic Pay and Clothes"—in which he shows how absurd it is for America to expect proper representation on the trifling salaries paid to her foreign ministers, as compared with those allowed by other nations.

He prepared also a reminiscent article—the old tale of the shipwrecked Hornet and the magazine article intended as his literary debut a generation ago. Now and again he worked on some one of the several unfinished longer tales, but brought none of them to completion. The German drama interested him. Once he wrote to Mr. Rogers that he had translated "In Purgatory" and sent it to Charles Frohman, who pronounced it "all jabber and no play."

Curious, too, for it tears these Austrians to pieces with laughter. When I read it, now, it seems entirely silly; but when I see it on the stage it is exceedingly funny.

He undertook a play for the Burg Theater, a collaboration with a Vienna journalist, Siegmund Schlesinger. Schlesinger had been successful with several dramas, and agreed with Clemens to do some plays dealing with American themes. One of them was to be called "Die Goldgräberin," that is, "The Woman Gold-Miner." Another, "The Rival Candidates," was to present the humors of female suffrage. Schlesinger spoke very little English, and Clemens always had difficulty in comprehending rapid-fire German. So the work did not progress very well. By the time they had completed a few scenes of mining-drama the interest died, and they good-naturedly agreed that it would be necessary to wait until they understood each other's language more perfectly before they could go on with the project. Frau Kati Schratt, later morganatic wife of Emperor Franz Josef, but then leading comedienne of the Burg Theater, is said to have been cast for the leading part in the mining-play; and Director-General Herr Schlenther, head of the Burg Theater management, was deeply disappointed. He had never doubted that a play built by Schlesinger and Mark Twain, with Frau Schratt in the leading role, would have been a great success.

Clemens continued the subject of Christian Science that winter. He wrote a number of articles, mainly criticizing Mrs. Eddy and her financial methods, and for the first time conceived the notion of a book on the subject. The new hierarchy not only amused but impressed him. He realized that it was no ephemeral propaganda, that its appeal to human need was strong, and that its system of organization was masterful and complete. To Twichell he wrote:



Somehow I continue to feel sure of that cult's colossal future.... I am selling my Lourdes stock already & buying Christian Science trust. I regard it as the Standard Oil of the future.



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He laid the article away for the time and, as was his custom, put the play quite out of his mind and invented a postal-check which would be far more simple than post-office orders, because one could buy them in any quantity and denomination and keep them on hand for immediate use, making them individually payable merely by writing in the name of the payee. It seems a fine, simple scheme, one that might have been adopted by the government long ago; but the idea has been advanced in one form or another several times since then, and still remains at this writing unadopted. He wrote John Hay about it, remarking at the close that the government officials would probably not care to buy it as soon as they found they couldn't kill Christians with it.

He prepared a lengthy article on the subject, in dialogue form, making it all very clear and convincing, but for some reason none of the magazines would take it. Perhaps it seemed too easy, too simple, too obvious. Great ideas, once developed, are often like that.

CCV

SPEECHES THAT WERE NOT MADE

In a volume of Mark Twain's collected speeches there is one entitled "German for the Hungarians—Address at the jubilee Celebration of the Emancipation of the Hungarian Press, March 26, 1899." An introductory paragraph states that the ministers and members of Parliament were present, and that the subject was the "Ausgleich"—i.e., the arrangement for the apportionment of the taxes between Hungary and Austria. The speech as there set down begins:

Now that we are all here together I think that it will be a good idea to arrange the Ausgleich. If you will act for Hungary I shall be quite willing to act for Austria, and this is the very time for it.

It is an excellent speech, full of good-feeling and good-humor, but it was never delivered. It is only a speech that Mark Twain intended to deliver, and permitted to be copied by a representative of the press before he started for Budapest.

It was a grand dinner, brilliant and inspiring, and when, Mark Twain was presented to that distinguished company he took a text from something the introducer had said and became so interested in it that his prepared speech wholly disappeared from his memory.

I think I will never embarrass myself with a set speech again [he wrote Twichell]. My memory is old and rickety and cannot stand the strain. But I had this luck. What I did was to furnish a text for a part of the splendid speech which was made by the greatest living orator of the European world—a speech which it was a great delight to listen to,



although I did not understand any word of it, it being in Hungarian. I was glad I came, it was a great night, & I heard all the great men in the German tongue.

The family accompanied Clemens to Budapest, and while there met Franz, son of Louis Kossuth, and dined with him.



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I assure you [wrote Mrs. Clemens] that I felt stirred, and I kept saying to myself “This is Louis Kossuth’s son.” He came to our room one day, and we had quite a long and a very pleasant talk together. He is a man one likes immensely. He has a quiet dignity about him that is very winning. He seems to be a man highly esteemed in Hungary. If I am not mistaken, the last time I saw the old picture of his father it was hanging in a room that we turned into a music-room for Susy at the farm.

They were most handsomely treated in Budapest. A large delegation greeted them on arrival, and a carriage and attendants were placed continually at their disposal. They remained several days, and Clemens showed his appreciation by giving a reading for charity.

It was hinted to Mark Twain that spring, that before leaving Vienna, it would be proper for him to pay his respects to Emperor Franz Josef, who had expressed a wish to meet him. Clemens promptly complied with the formalities and the meeting was arranged. He had a warm admiration for the Austrian Emperor, and naturally prepared himself a little for what he wanted to say to him. He claimed afterward that he had compacted a sort of speech into a single German sentence of eighteen words. He did not make use of it, however. When he arrived at the royal palace and was presented, the Emperor himself began in such an entirely informal way that it did not occur to his visitor to deliver his prepared German sentence. When he returned from the audience he said:

“We got along very well. I proposed to him a plan to exterminate the human race by withdrawing the oxygen from the air for a period of two minutes. I said Szczepanik would invent it for him. I think it impressed him. After a while, in the course of our talk I remembered and told the Emperor I had prepared and memorized a very good speech but had forgotten it. He was very agreeable about it. He said a speech wasn’t necessary. He seemed to be a most kind-hearted emperor, with a great deal of plain, good, attractive human nature about him. Necessarily he must have or he couldn’t have unbent to me as he did. I couldn’t unbend if I were an emperor. I should feel the stiffness of the position. Franz Josef doesn’t feel it. He is just a natural man, although an emperor. I was greatly impressed by him, and I liked him exceedingly. His face is always the face of a pleasant man and he has a fine sense of humor. It is the Emperor’s personality and the confidence all ranks have in him that preserve the real political serenity in what has an outside appearance of being the opposite. He is a man as well as an emperor—an emperor and a man.”

Clemens and Howells were corresponding with something of the old-time frequency. The work that Mark Twain was doing—thoughtful work with serious intent—appealed strongly to Howells. He wrote:



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You are the greatest man of your sort that ever lived, and there is no use saying anything else You have pervaded your century almost more than any other man of letters, if not more; and it is astonishing how you keep spreading You are my “shadow of a great rock in a weary land” more than any other writer.

Clemens, who was reading Howells’s serial, “Their Silver-Wedding journey,” then running in Harper’s Magazine, responded:

You are old enough to be a weary man with paling interests, but you do not show it; you do your work in the same old, delicate & delicious & forceful & searching & perfect way. I don’t know how you can—but I suspect. I suspect that to you there is still dignity in human life, & that man is not a joke—a poor joke—the poorest that was ever contrived. Since I wrote my Bible—[The “Gospel,” What is Man?](last year), which Mrs. Clemens loathes & shudders over & will not listen to the last half nor allow me to print any part of it, man is not to me the respect-worthy person he was before, & so I have lost my pride in him & can’t write gaily nor praisefully about him any moreNext morning. I have been reading the morning paper. I do it every morning—well knowing that I shall find in it the usual depravities & basenesses & hypocrisies and cruelties that make up civilization & cause me to put in the rest of the day pleading for the damnation of the human race. I cannot seem to get my prayers answered, yet I do not despair.

He was not greatly changed. Perhaps he had fewer illusions and less iridescent ones, and certainly he had more sorrow; but the letters to Howells do not vary greatly from those written twenty-five years before. There is even in them a touch of the old pretense as to Mrs. Clemens’s violence.

I mustn’t stop to play now or I shall never get those helfiard letters answered. (That is not my spelling. It is Mrs. Clemens’s, I have told her the right way a thousand times, but it does no good, she never remembers.)

All through this Vienna period (as during several years before and after) Henry Rogers was in full charge of Mark Twain’s American affairs. Clemens wrote him almost daily, and upon every matter, small or large, that developed, or seemed likely to develop, in his undertakings. The complications growing out of the type machine and Webster failures were endless.—[“I hope to goodness I sha’n’t get you into any more jobs such as the type-setter and Webster business and the Bliss-Harper campaigns have been. Oh, they were sickeners.” (Clemens to Rogers, November 15, 1898.)]—The disposal of the manuscripts alone was work for a literary agent. The consideration of proposed literary, dramatic, and financial schemes must have required not only thought, but time. Yet Mr. Rogers comfortably and genially took care of all these things and his own tremendous affairs besides, and apologized sometimes when he felt, perhaps, that he had wavered a little in his attention. Clemens once wrote him:



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Oh, dear me, you don't have to excuse yourself for neglecting me; you are entitled to the highest praise for being so limitlessly patient and good in bothering with my confused affairs, and pulling me out of a hole every little while. It makes me lazy, the way that Steel stock is rising. If I were lazier—like Rice—nothing could keep me from retiring. But I work right along, like a poor person. I shall figure up the rise, as the figures come in, and push up my literary prices accordingly, till I get my literature up to where nobody can afford it but the family. (N. B.—Look here, are you charging storage? I am not going to stand that, you know.) Meantime, I note those encouraging illogical words of yours about my not worrying because I am to be rich when I am 68; why didn't you have Cheiro make it 90, so that I could have plenty of room? It would be jolly good if some one should succeed in making a play out of "Is He Dead?"—[Clemens himself had attempted to make a play out of his story "Is He Dead?" and had forwarded the *Ms.* to Rogers. Later he wrote: "Put 'Is He Dead?' in the fire. God will bless you. I too. I started to convince myself that I could write a play, or couldn't. I'm convinced. Nothing can disturb that conviction."] —From what I gather from dramatists, he will have his hands something more than full—but let him struggle, let him struggle. Is there some way, honest or otherwise, by which you can get a copy of Mayo's play, "Pudd'nhead Wilson," for me? There is a capable young Austrian here who saw it in New York and wants to translate it and see if he can stage it here. I don't think these people here would understand it or take to it, but he thinks it will pay us to try.

A couple of London dramatists want to bargain with me for the right to make a high comedy out of the "Million-Pound Note." Barkis is willing.

This is but one of the briefer letters. Most of them were much longer and of more elaborate requirements. Also they overflowed with the gaiety of good-fortune and with gratitude. From Vienna in 1899 Clemens wrote:

Why, it is just splendid! I have nothing to do but sit around and watch you set the hen and hatch out those big broods and make my living for me. Don't you wish you had somebody to do the same for you?—a magician who can turn steel add copper and Brooklyn gas into gold. I mean to raise your wages again—I begin to feel that I can afford it. I think the hen ought to have a name; she must be called Unberufen. That is a German word which is equivalent to it "sh! hush' don't let the spirits hear you!" The superstition is that if you happen to let fall any grateful jubilation over good luck that you've had or are hoping to have you must shut square off and say "Unberufen!" and knock wood. The word drives the evil spirits away; otherwise



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they would divine your joy or your hopes and go to work and spoil your game. Set her again—do! Oh, look here! You are just like everybody; merely because I am literary you think I'm a commercial somnambulist, and am not watching you with all that money in your hands. Bless you, I've got a description of you and a photograph in every police-office in Christendom, with the remark appended: "Look out for a handsome, tall, slender young man with a gray mustache and courtly manners and an address well calculated to deceive, calling himself by the name of Smith." Don't you try to get away—it won't work.

From the note-book:

Midnight. At Miss Bailie's home for English governesses. Two comedies & some songs and ballads. Was asked to speak & did it. (And rung in the "Mexican Plug.")

A Voice. "The Princess Hohenlohe wishes you to write on her fan."

"With pleasure—where is she?"

"At your elbow."

I turned & took the fan & said, "Your Highness's place is in a fairy tale; & by & by I mean to write that tale," whereat she laughed a happy girlish laugh, & we moved through the crowd to get to a writing-table—& to get in a strong light so that I could see her better. Beautiful little creature, with the dearest friendly ways & sincerities & simplicities & sweetnesses—the ideal princess of the fairy tales. She is 16 or 17, I judge.

Mental Telegraphy. Mrs. Clemens was pouring out the coffee this morning; I unfolded the Neue Freie Presse, began to read a paragraph & said:

"They've found a new way to tell genuine gems from false——"

"By the Roentgen ray!" she exclaimed.

That is what I was going to say. She had not seen the paper, & there had been no talk about the ray or gems by herself or by me. It was a plain case of telegraphy.

No man that ever lived has ever done a thing to please God—primarily. It was done to please himself, then God next.

The Being who to me is the real God is the one who created this majestic universe & rules it. He is the only originator, the only originator of thoughts; thoughts suggested



from within, not from without; the originator of colors & of all their possible combinations; of forces & the laws that govern them; of forms & shapes of all forms—man has never invented a new one. He is the only originator. He made the materials of all things; He made the laws by which, & by which only, man may combine them into the machines & other things which outside influences suggest to him. He made character—man can portray it but not “create” it, for He is the only creator.

He, is the perfect artisan, the perfect artist.

CCVI

A SUMMER IN SWEDEN



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A part of the tragedy of their trip around the world had been the development in Jean Clemens of a malady which time had identified as epilepsy. The loss of one daughter and the invalidism of another was the burden which this household had now to bear. Of course they did not for a moment despair of a cure for the beautiful girl who had been so cruelly stricken, and they employed any agent that promised relief.

They decided now to go to London, in the hope of obtaining beneficial treatment. They left Vienna at the end of May, followed to the station by a great crowd, who loaded their compartment with flowers and lingered on the platform waving and cheering, some of them in tears, while the train pulled away. Leschetizky himself was among them, and Wilbrandt, the author of the *Master of Palmyra*, and many artists and other notables, "most of whom," writes Mrs. Clemens, "we shall probably never see again in this world."

Their Vienna sojourn had been one of the most brilliant periods of their life, as well as one of the saddest. The memory of Susy had been never absent, and the failing health of Jean was a gathering cloud.

They stopped a day or two at Prague, where they were invited by the Prince of Thurn and Taxis to visit his castle. It gave them a glimpse of the country life of the Bohemian nobility which was most interesting. The Prince's children were entirely familiar with *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, which they had read both in English and in the translation.

They journeyed to London by way of Cologne, arriving by the end of May. Poultney Bigelow was there, and had recently been treated with great benefit by osteopathy (then known as the Swedish movements), as practised by Heinrick Kellgren at Sanna, Sweden. Clemens was all interest concerning Kellgren's method and eager to try it for his daughter's malady. He believed she could be benefited, and they made preparation to spend some months at least in Sanna. They remained several weeks in London, where they were welcomed with hospitality extraordinary. They had hardly arrived when they were invited by Lord Salisbury to Hatfield House, and by James Bryce to Portland Place, and by Canon Wilberforce to Dean's Yard. A rather amusing incident happened at one of the luncheon-parties. Canon Wilberforce was there and left rather early. When Clemens was ready to go there was just one hat remaining. It was not his, and he suspected, by the initials on the inside, that it belonged to Canon Wilberforce. However, it fitted him exactly and he wore it away. That evening he wrote:

*Princeof Wales hotel, de Vere gardens,
July,3, 1899.*



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Dear Canon Wilberforce,—It is 8 P.M. During the past four hours I have not been able to take anything that did not belong to me; during all that time I have not been able to stretch a fact beyond the frontiers of truth try as I might, & meantime, not only my morals have moved the astonishment of all who have come in contact with me, but my manners have gained more compliments than they have been accustomed to. This mystery is causing my family much alarm. It is difficult to account for it. I find I haven't my own hat. Have you developed any novelties of conduct since you left Mr. Murray's, & have they been of a character to move the concern of your friends? I think it must be this that has put me under this happy charm; but, oh dear! I tremble for the other man!

Sincerely yours,
S. L. Clemens.

Scarcely was this note on its way to Wilberforce when the following one arrived, having crossed it in transit:

July 3, 1899.

Dear Mr. Clemens,—I have been conscious of a vivacity and facility of expression this afternoon beyond the normal and I have just discovered the reason!! I have seen the historic signature "Mark Twain" in my hat!! Doubtless you have been suffering from a corresponding dullness & have wondered why. I departed precipitately, the hat stood on my umbrella and was a new Lincoln & Bennett—it fitted me exactly and I did not discover the mistake till I got in this afternoon. Please forgive me. If you should be passing this way to-morrow will you look in and change hats? or shall I send it to the hotel?

I am, very sincerely yrs.,
20 Dean's Yard. *Basil Wilberforce*.

Clemens was demanded by all the bohemian clubs, the White Friars, the Vagabonds, the Savage, the Beefsteak, and the Authors. He spoke to them, and those "Mark Twain Evenings" have become historic occasions in each of the several institutions that gave him welcome. At the Vagabonds he told them the watermelon story, and at the White Friars he reviewed the old days when he had been elected to that society; "days," he said, "when all Londoners were talking about nothing else than that they had discovered Livingstone, and that the lost Sir Roger Tichborne had been found and they were trying him for it."

At the Savage Club, too, he recalled old times and old friends, and particularly that first London visit, his days in the club twenty-seven years before.

"I was 6 feet 4 in those days," he said. "Now I am 5 feet 8 1/2 and daily diminishing in altitude, and the shrinkage of my principles goes on Irving was here then, is here



now. Stanley is here, and Joe Hatton, but Charles Reade is gone and Tom Hood and Harry Lee and Canon Kingsley. In those days you could have carried Kipling around in a lunch-basket; now he fills the world. I was young and foolish then; now I am old and foolisher.”



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At the Authors Club he paid a special tribute to Rudyard Kipling, whose dangerous illness in New York City and whose daughter's death had aroused the anxiety and sympathy of the entire American nation. It had done much to bring England and America closer together, Clemens said. Then he added that he had been engaged the past eight days compiling a pun and had brought it there to lay at their feet, not to ask for their indulgence, but for their applause. It was this:

"Since England and America have been joined in Kipling, may they not be severed in Twain."

Hundreds of puns had been made on his pen-name, but this was probably his first and only attempt, and it still remains the best.

They arrived in Sweden early in July and remained until October. Jean was certainly benefited by the Kellgren treatment, and they had for a time the greatest hopes of her complete recovery. Clemens became enthusiastic over osteopathy, and wrote eloquently to every one, urging each to try the great new curative which was certain to restore universal health. He wrote long articles on Kellgren and his science, largely justified, no doubt, for certainly miraculous benefits were recorded; though Clemens was not likely to underestimate a thing which appealed to both his imagination and his reason. Writing to Twichell he concluded, with his customary optimism over any new benefit:

Ten years hence no sane man will call a doctor except when the knife must be used—and such cases will be rare. The educated physician will himself be an osteopath. Dave will become one after he has finished his medical training. Young Harmony ought to become one now. I do not believe there is any difference between Kellgren's science and osteopathy; but I am sending to America to find out. I want osteopathy to prosper; it is common sense & scientific, & cures a wider range of ailments than the doctor's methods can reach.

Twichell was traveling in Europe that summer, and wrote from Switzerland:

I seemed ever and anon to see you and me swinging along those glorious Alpine woods, staring at the new unfoldings of splendor that every turn brought into view—talking, talking, endlessly talking the days through-days forever memorable to me. That was twenty-one years ago; think of it! We were youngsters then, Mark, and how keen our relish of everything was! Well, I can enjoy myself now; but not with that zest and rapture. Oh, a lot of items of our tramp travel in 1878 that I had long forgotten came back to me as we sped through that enchanted region, and if I wasn't on duty with Venice I'd stop and set down some of them, but Venice must be attended to. For one thing, there is Howells's book to be read at such intervals as can be snatched from the quick-time march on which our rustling leader keeps us. However, in Venice so far we



want to be gazing pretty steadily from morning till night, and by the grace of the gondola we can do it without exhaustion. Really I am drunk with Venice.

But Clemens was full of Sweden. The skies there and the sunsets he thought surpassed any he had ever known. On an evening in September he wrote:



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Dear Joe,—I've no business in here—I ought to be outside. I shall never see another sunset to begin with it this side of heaven. Venice? land, what a poor interest that is! This is the place to be. I have seen about 60 sunsets here; & a good 40 of them were away & beyond anything I had ever imagined before for dainty & exquisite & marvelous beauty & infinite change & variety. America? Italy? the tropics? They have no notion of what a sunset ought to be. And this one—this unspeakable wonder! It discounts all the rest. It brings the tears, it is so unutterably beautiful.

Clemens read a book during his stay in Sweden which interested him deeply. It was the *Open Question*, by Elizabeth Robbins—a fine study of life's sterner aspects. When he had finished he was moved to write the author this encouraging word:

Dear miss Robbins,—A relative of Matthew Arnold lent us your 'Open Question' the other day, and Mrs. Clemens and I are in your debt. I am not able to put in words my feeling about the book—my admiration of its depth and truth and wisdom and courage, and the fine and great literary art and grace of the setting. At your age you cannot have lived the half of the things that are in the book, nor personally penetrated to the deeps it deals in, nor covered its wide horizons with your very own vision—and so, what is your secret? how have you written this miracle? Perhaps one must concede that genius has no youth, but starts with the ripeness of age and old experience.

Well, in any case, I am grateful to you. I have not been so enriched by a book for many years, nor so enchanted by one. I seem to be using strong language; still, I have weighed it.

Sincerely yours,
S. L. Clemens.

CCVII

30, *Wellington court*

Clemens himself took the Kellgren treatment and received a good deal of benefit.

"I have come back in sound condition and braced for work," he wrote MacAlister, upon his return to London. "A long, steady, faithful siege of it, and I begin now in five minutes."

They had settled in a small apartment at 30, Wellington Court, Albert Gate, where they could be near the London branch of the Kellgren institution, and he had a workroom with Chatto & Windus, his publishers. His work, however, was mainly writing speeches, for he was entertained constantly, and it seemed impossible for him to escape. His note-book became a mere jumble of engagements. He did write an article or a story now and then, one of which, "My First Lie, and How I Got Out of It," was made the

important Christmas feature of the 'New York Sunday World.' —[Now included in the Hadleyburg volume; "Complete Works."]



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Another article of this time was the “St. Joan of Arc,” which several years later appeared in Harper’s Magazine. This article was originally written as the Introduction of the English translation of the official record of the trials and rehabilitation of Joan, then about to be elaborately issued. Clemens was greatly pleased at being invited to prepare the Introduction of this important volume, but a smug person with pedagogic proclivities was in charge of the copy and proceeded to edit Mark Twain’s manuscript; to alter its phrasing to conform to his own ideas of the Queen’s English. Then he had it all nicely typewritten, and returned it to show how much he had improved it, and to receive thanks and compliments. He did not receive any thanks. Clemens recorded a few of the remarks that he made when he saw his edited manuscript:

I will not deny that my feelings rose to 104 in the shade. “The idea! That this long-eared animal this literary kangaroo this illiterate hostler with his skull full of axle-grease--this.....” But I stopped there, for this was not the Christian spirit.

His would-be editor received a prompt order to return the manuscript, after which Clemens wrote a letter, some of which will go very well here.

Dear Mr. X.,—I have examined the first page of my amended Introduction,—& will begin now & jot down some notes upon your corrections. If I find any changes which shall not seem to me to be improvements I will point out my reasons for thinking so. In this way I may chance to be helpful to you, & thus profit you perhaps as much as you have desired to profit me. *First Paragraph.* “Jeanne d’Arc.” This is rather cheaply pedantic, & is not in very good taste. Joan is not known by that name among plain people of our race & tongue. I notice that the name of the Deity occurs several times in the brief instalment of the Trials which you have favored me with. To be consistent, it will be necessary that you strike out “God” & put in “Dieu.” Do not neglect this. *Second Paragraph.* Now you have begun on my punctuation. Don’t you realize that you ought not to intrude your help in a delicate art like that with your limitations? And do you think that you have added just the right smear of polish to the closing clause of the sentence?

Third Paragraph. Ditto.

Fourth Paragraph. Your word “directly” is misleading; it could be construed to mean “at once.” Plain clarity is better than ornate obscurity. I note your sensitive marginal remark: “Rather unkind to French feelings—referring to Moscow.” Indeed I have not been concerning myself about French feelings, but only about stating the facts. I have said several uncourteous things about the French—calling them a “nation of ingrates” in one place—but you have been so busy editing commas & semicolons that you overlooked them & failed to get scared

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at them. The next paragraph ends with a slur at the French, but I have reasons for thinking you mistook it for a compliment. It is discouraging to try to penetrate a mind like yours. You ought to get it out & dance on it.

That would take some of the rigidity out of it. And you ought to use it sometimes; that would help. If you had done this every now & then along through life it would not have petrified.

Fifth Paragraph. Thus far I regard this as your masterpiece! You are really perfect in the great art of reducing simple & dignified speech to clumsy & vapid commonplace.

Sixth Paragraph. You have a singularly fine & aristocratic disrespect for homely & unpretending English. Every time I use "go back" you get out your polisher & slick it up to "return." "Return" is suited only to the drawing-room—it is ducal, & says itself with a simper & a smirk. Seventh Paragraph. "Permission" is ducal. Ducal and affected. "Her" great days were not "over," they were only half over. Didn't you know that? Haven't you read anything at all about Joan of Arc? The truth is you do not pay any attention; I told you on my very first page that the public part of her career lasted two years, & you have forgotten it already. You really must get your mind out and have it repaired; you see yourself that it is all caked together. Eighth Paragraph. She "rode away to assault & capture a stronghold." Very well; but you do not tell us whether she succeeded or not. You should not worry the reader with uncertainties like that. I will remind you once more that clarity is a good thing in literature. An apprentice cannot do better than keep this useful rule in mind.

Ninth Paragraph. "Known" history. That word has a polish which is too indelicate for me; there doesn't seem to be any sense in it. This would have surprised me last week.

. . . "Breaking a lance" is a knightly & sumptuous phrase, & I honor it for its hoary age & for the faithful service it has done in the prize-composition of the school-girl, but I have ceased from employing it since I got my puberty, & must solemnly object to fathering it here. And, besides, it makes me hint that I have broken one of those things before in honor of the Maid, an intimation not justified by the facts. I did not break any lances or other furniture; I only wrote a book about her.

Truly yours,
mark Twain.

It cost me something to restrain myself and say these smooth & half-flattering things of this immeasurable idiot, but I did it, & have never regretted it. For it is higher & nobler to



be kind to even a shad like him than just I could have said hundreds of unpleasant things about this tadpole, but I did not even feel them.

Yet, in the end, he seems not to have sent the letter. Writing it had served every purpose.



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An important publishing event of 1899 was the issue by the American Publishing Company of Mark Twain's "Complete Works in Uniform Edition." Clemens had looked forward to the day when this should be done, perhaps feeling that an assembling of his literary family in symmetrical dress constituted a sort of official recognition of his authorship. Brander Matthews was selected to write the Introduction and prepared a fine "Biographical Criticism," which pleased Clemens, though perhaps he did not entirely agree with its views. Himself of a different cast of mind, he nevertheless admired Matthews.

Writing to Twichell he said:

When you say, "I like Brander Matthews, he impresses me as a man of parts & power," I back you, right up to the hub—I feel the same way. And when you say he has earned your gratitude for cuffing me for my crimes against the Leather-stockings & the Vicar I ain't making any objection. Dern your gratitude! His article is as sound as a nut. Brander knows literature & loves it; he can talk about it & keep his temper; he can state his case so lucidly & so fairly & so forcibly that you have to agree with him even when you don't agree with him; & he can discover & praise such merits as a book has even when they are merely half a dozen diamonds scattered through an acre of mud. And so he has a right to be a critic. To detail just the opposite of the above invoice is to describe me. I haven't any right to criticize books, & I don't do it except when I hate them. I often want to criticize Jane Austen, but her books madden me so that I can't conceal my frenzy from the reader; & therefore I have to stop every time I begin.'—[Once at a dinner given to Matthews, Mark Twain made a speech which consisted almost entirely of intonations of the name "Brander Matthews" to express various shades of human emotion. It would be hopeless, of course, to attempt to convey in print any idea of this effort, which, by those who heard it, is said to have been a masterpiece of vocalization.]

Clemens also introduced the "Uniform Edition" with an Author's Preface, the jurisdiction of which, he said, was "restricted to furnishing reasons for the publication of the collection as a whole."

This is not easy to do. Aside from the ordinary commercial reasons I find none that I can offer with dignity: I cannot say without immodesty that the books have merit; I cannot say without immodesty that the public want a "Uniform Edition"; I cannot say without immodesty that a "Uniform Edition" will turn the nation toward high ideals & elevated thought; I cannot say without immodesty that a "Uniform Edition" will eradicate crime, though I think it will. I find no reason that I can offer without immodesty except the rather poor one that I should like to see a "Uniform Edition" myself. It is nothing; a cat could say it about her kittens. Still, I believe I will stand upon that. I have to have a Preface & a reason, by law of custom, & the reason which I am putting forward is at least without offense.

CCVIII



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MARK TWAIN AND THE WARS

English troubles in South Africa came to a head that autumn. On the day when England's ultimatum to the Boers expired Clemens wrote:

London, 3.07 P.m., Wednesday, October 11, 1899. The time is up! Without a doubt the first shot in the war is being fired to-day in South Africa at this moment. Some man had to be the first to fall; he has fallen. Whose heart is broken by this murder? For, be he Boer or be he Briton, it is murder, & England committed it by the hand of Chamberlain & the Cabinet, the lackeys of Cecil Rhodes & his Forty Thieves, the South Africa Company.

Mark Twain would naturally sympathize with the Boer—the weaker side, the man defending his home. He knew that for the sake of human progress England must conquer and must be upheld, but his heart was all the other way. In January, 1900, he wrote a characteristic letter to Twichell, which conveys pretty conclusively his sentiments concerning the two wars then in progress.

Dear Joe,—Apparently we are not proposing to set the Filipinos free & give their islands to them; & apparently we are not proposing to hang the priests & confiscate their property. If these things are so the war out there has no interest for me.

I have just been examining Chapter LXX of *Following the Equator* to see if the Boer's old military effectiveness is holding out. It reads curiously as if it had been written about the present war.

I believe that in the next chapter my notion of the Boer was rightly conceived. He is popularly called uncivilized; I do not know why. Happiness, food, shelter, clothing, wholesome labor, modest & rational ambitions, honesty, kindness, hospitality, love of freedom & limitless courage to fight for it, composure & fortitude in time of disaster, patience in time of hardship & privation, absence of noise & brag in time of victory, contentment with humble & peaceful life void of insane excitements—if there is a higher & better form of civilization than this I am not aware of it & do not know where to look for it. I suppose that we have the habit of imagining that a lot of artistic & intellectual & other artificialities must be added or it isn't complete. We & the English have these latter; but as we lack the great bulk of those others I think the Boer civilization is the best of the two. My idea of our civilization is that it is a shoddy, poor thing & full of cruelties, vanities, arrogancies, meannesses, & hypocrisies. Provided we could get something better in the place of it. But that is not possible perhaps. Poor as it is, it is better than real savagery, therefore we must stand by it, extend it, & (in public) praise it. And so we must not utter any hurtful word about England in these days, nor fail to hope that she will win in this war, for her defeat & fall would be an irremediable



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disaster for the mangy human race. Naturally, then, I am for England; but she is profoundly in the wrong, Joe, & no (instructed) Englishman doubts it. At least that is my belief.

Writing to Howells somewhat later, he calls the conflict in South Africa, a “sordid and criminal war,” and says that every day he is writing (in his head) bitter magazine articles against it.

But I have to stop with that. Even if wrong—& she is wrong England must be upheld. He is an enemy of the human race who shall speak against her now. Why was the human race created? Or at least why wasn't something creditable created in place of it? . . . I talk the war with both sides—always waiting until the other man introduces the topic. Then I say, “My head is with the Briton, but my heart & such rags of morals as I have are with the Boer—now we will talk, unembarrassed and without prejudice.” And so we discuss & have no trouble. I notice that God is on both sides in this war; thus history repeats itself. But I am the only person who has noticed this; everybody here thinks He is playing the game for this side, & for this side only.

Clemens wrote one article for anonymous publication in the Times. But when the manuscript was ready to mail in an envelope stamped and addressed to Moberly Bell—he reconsidered and withheld it. It still lies in the envelope with the accompanying letter, which says:

Don't give me away, whether you print it or not. But I think you ought to print it and get up a squabble, for the weather is just suitable.

CCIX

PLASMON, AND A NEW MAGAZINE

Clemens was not wholly wedded to osteopathy. The financial interest which he had taken in the new milk albumen, “a food for invalids,” tended to divide his faith and make him uncertain as to which was to be the chief panacea for all ills—osteopathy or plasmon.

MacAlister, who was deeply interested in the plasmon fortunes, was anxious to get the product adopted by the army. He believed, if he could get an interview with the Medical Director-General, he could convince him of its merits. Discussing the matter with Clemens, the latter said:

“MacAlister, you are going at it from the wrong end. You can't go direct to that man, a perfect stranger, and convince him of anything. Who is his nearest friend?”



MacAlister knew a man on terms of social intimacy with the official.

Clemens said, "That is the man to speak to the Director-General."

"But I don't know him, either," said MacAlister.

"Very good. Do you know any one who does know him?"

"Yes, I know his most intimate friend."

"Then he is the man for you to approach. Convince him that plasmon is what the army needs, that the military hospitals are suffering for it. Let him understand that what you want is to get this to the Director-General, and in due time it will get to him in the proper way. You'll see."



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This proved to be a true prophecy. It was only a little while until the British army had experimented with plasmon and adopted it. MacAlister reported the success of the scheme to Clemens, and out of it grew the story entitled, "Two Little Tales," published in November of the following year (1901) in the Century Magazine. Perhaps the reader will remember that in the "Two Little Tales" the Emperor is very ill and the lowest of all his subjects knows a certain remedy, but he cannot seek the Emperor direct, so he wisely approaches him through a series of progressive stages—finally reaching and curing his stricken Majesty.

Clemens had the courage of his investments. He adopted plasmon as his own daily food, and induced various members of the family to take it in its more palatable forms, one of these being a preparation of chocolate. He kept the reading-table by his bed well stocked with a variety of the products and invited various callers to try a complimentary sample lot. It was really an excellent and harmless diet, and both the company and its patients would seem to have prospered—perhaps are prospering still.

There was another business opportunity came along just at this time. S. S. McClure was in England with a proposition for starting a new magazine whose complexion was to be peculiarly American, with Mark Twain as its editor. The magazine was to be called 'The Universal', and by the proposition Clemens was to receive a tenth interest in it for his first year's work, and an added twentieth interest for each of the two succeeding years, with a guarantee that his shares should not earn him less than five thousand dollars the first year, with a proportionate increase as his holdings grew.

The scheme appealed to Clemens, it being understood in the beginning that he was to give very little time to the work, with the privilege of doing it at his home, wherever that might happen to be. He wrote of the matter to Mr. Rogers, explaining in detail, and Rogers replied, approving the plan. Mr. Rogers said he knew that he [Rogers] would have to do most of the work in editing the magazine, and further added:

One thing I shall insist upon, however, if I have anything to do with the matter, and it is this: that when you have made up your mind on the subject you will stick to it. I have not found in your composition that element of stubbornness which is a constant source of embarrassment to me in all friendly and social ways, but which, when applied to certain lines of business, brings in the dollar and fifty-cent pieces. If you accept the position, of course that means that you have to come to this country. If you do, the yachting will be a success.

There was considerable correspondence with McClure over the new periodical. In one letter Clemens set forth his general views of the matter quite clearly:



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Let us not deceive any one, nor allow any one to deceive himself, if it can be prevented. This is not to be comic magazine. It is to be simply a good, clean, wholesome collection of well-written & enticing literary products, like the other magazines of its class; not setting itself to please but one of man's moods, but all of them. It will not play but one kind of music, but all kinds. I should not be able to edit a comic periodical satisfactorily, for lack of interest in the work. I value humor highly, & am constitutionally fond of it, but I should not like it as a steady diet. For its own best interests, humor should take its outings in grave company; its cheerful dress gets heightened color from the proximity of sober hues. For me to edit a comic magazine would be an incongruity & out of character, for of the twenty-three books which I have written eighteen do not deal in humor as their chiefs feature, but are half & half admixtures of fun & seriousness. I think I have seldom deliberately set out to be humorous, but have nearly always allowed the humor to drop in or stay out, according to its fancy. Although I have many times been asked to write something humorous for an editor or a publisher I have had wisdom enough to decline; a person could hardly be humorous with the other man watching him like that. I have never tried to write a humorous lecture; I have only tried to write serious ones—it is the only way not to succeed. I shall write for this magazine every time the spirit moves me; but I look for my largest entertainment in editing. I have been edited by all kinds of people for more than thirty-eight years; there has always been somebody in authority over my manuscript & privileged to improve it; this has fatigued me a good deal, & I have often longed to move up from the dock to the bench & rest myself and fatigue others. My opportunity is come, but I hope I shall not abuse it overmuch. I mean to do my best to make a good magazine; I mean to do my whole duty, & not shirk any part of it. There are plenty of distinguished artists, novelists, poets, story-tellers, philosophers, scientists, explorers, fighters, hunters, followers of the sea, & seekers of adventure; & with these to do the hard & the valuable part of the work with the pen & the pencil it will be comfort & joy to me to walk the quarter-deck & superintend.

Meanwhile McClure's enthusiasm had had time to adjust itself to certain existing facts. Something more than a month later he wrote from America at considerable length, setting forth the various editorial duties and laying stress upon the feature of intimate physical contact with the magazine. He went into the matter of the printing schedule, the various kinds of paper used, the advertising pages, illustrations—into all the detail, indeed, which a practical managing editor must compass in his daily rounds. It was pretty evident that Clemens would not be able to go sailing about on Mr. Rogers's yacht or live at will in London or New York or Vienna or Elmira, but that he would be more or less harnessed to a revolving chair at an editorial desk, the thing which of all fates he would be most likely to dread. The scheme appears to have died there—the correspondence to have closed.



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Somewhat of the inducement in the McClure scheme had been the thought in Clemens's mind that it would bring him back to America. In a letter to Mr. Rogers (January 8, 1900) he said, "I am tired to death of this everlasting exile." Mrs. Clemens often wrote that he was restlessly impatient to return. They were, in fact, constantly discussing the practicability of returning to their own country now and opening the Hartford home. Clemens was ready to do that or to fall in with any plan that would bring him across the water and settle him somewhere permanently. He was tired of the wandering life they had been leading. Besides the long trip of '95 and '96 they had moved two or three times a year regularly since leaving Hartford, nine years before. It seemed to him that they were always packing and unpacking.

"The poor man is willing to live anywhere if we will only let him 'stay put," wrote Mrs. Clemens, but he did want to settle in his own land. Mrs. Clemens, too, was weary with wandering, but the Hartford home no longer held any attraction for her. There had been a time when her every letter dwelt on their hope of returning to it. Now the thought filled her with dread. To her sister she wrote:

Do you think we can live through the first going into the house in Hartford? I feel if we had gotten through the first three months all might be well, but consider the first night.

The thought of the responsibility of that great house—the taking up again of the old life—disheartened her, too. She had added years and she had not gained in health or strength.

When I was comparatively young I found the burden of that house very great. I don't think I was ever fitted for housekeeping. I dislike the practical part of it so much. I hate it when the servants don't do well, and I hate the correcting them. Yet no one ever had better discipline in her domestic affairs or ever commanded more devoted service. Her strength of character and the proportions of her achievement show large when we consider this confession.

They planned to return in the spring, but postponed the date for sailing. Jean was still under Kellgren's treatment, and, though a cure had been promised her, progress was discouragingly slow. They began to look about for summer quarters in or near London.

CCX

LONDON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

All this time Clemens had been tossing on the London social tide. There was a call for him everywhere. No distinguished visitor of whatever profession or rank but must meet Mark Twain. The King of Sweden was among his royal conquests of that season.



He was more happy with men of his own kind. He was often with Moberly Bell, editor of the Times; E. A. Abbey, the painter; Sir Henry Lucy, of Punch (Toby, M.P.); James Bryce, and Herbert Gladstone; and there were a number of brilliant Irishmen who were his special delight. Once with Mrs. Clemens he dined with the author of his old favorite, 'European Morals', William E. H. Lecky. Lady Gregory was there and Sir Dennis Fitz-Patrick; who had been Governor-General at Lahore when they were in India, and a number of other Irish ladies and gentlemen. It was a memorable evening. To Twichell Clemens wrote:



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Joe, do you know the Irish gentleman & the Irish lady, the Scotch gentleman & the Scotch lady? These are darlings, every one. Night before last it was all Irish—24. One would have to travel far to match their ease & sociability & animation & sparkle & absence of shyness & self-consciousness. It was American in these fine qualities. This was at Mr. Lecky's. He is Irish, you know. Last night it was Irish again, at Lady Gregory's. Lord Roberts is Irish, & Sir William Butler, & Kitchener, I think, & a disproportion of the other prominent generals are of Irish & Scotch breed keeping up the traditions of Wellington & Sir Colin Campbell, of the Mutiny. You will have noticed that in S. A., as in the Mutiny, it is usually the Irish & Scotch that are placed in the forefront of the battle.... Sir William Butler said, "the Celt is the spearhead of the British lance."

He mentions the news from the African war, which had been favorable to England, and what a change had come over everything in consequence. The dinner-parties had been lodges of sorrow and depressing. Now everybody was smiling again. In a note-book entry of this time he wrote:

Relief of Mafeking (May 18, 1900). The news came at 9.17 P.M.
Before 10 all London was in the streets, gone mad with joy. By then the news was all over the American continent.

Clemens had been talking copyright a good deal in London, and introducing it into his speeches. Finally, one day he was summoned before a committee of the House of Lords to explain his views. His old idea that the product of a man's brain is his property in perpetuity and not for any term of years had not changed, and they permitted him to dilate on this (to them) curious doctrine. The committee consisted of Lords Monkswell, Knutsford, Avebury, Farrar, and Thwing. When they asked for his views he said:

"In my opinion the copyright laws of England and America need only the removal of the forty-two-year limit and the return to perpetual copyright to be perfect. I consider that at least one of the reasons advanced in justification of limited copyright is fallacious—namely, the one which makes a distinction between an author's property and real estate, and pretends that the two are not created, produced, or acquired in the same way, thus warranting a different treatment of the two by law."

Continuing, he dwelt on the ancient doctrine that there was no property in an idea, showing how the far greater proportion of all property consisted of nothing more than elaborated ideas—the steamship, locomotive, telephone, the vast buildings in the world, how all of these had been constructed upon a basic idea precisely as a book is constructed, and were property only as a book is property, and therefore rightly subject to the same laws. He was carefully and searchingly examined by that shrewd committee. He kept them entertained and interested and left them in good-nature, even if not entirely converted. The papers printed his remarks, and London found them amusing.



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A few days after the copyright session, Clemens, responding to the toast, "Literature," at the Royal Literary Fund Banquet, made London laugh again, and early in June he was at the Savoy Hotel welcoming Sir Henry Irving back to England after one of his successful American tours.

On the Fourth of July (1900) Clemens dined with the Lord Chief-Justice, and later attended an American banquet at the Hotel Cecil. He arrived late, when a number of the guests were already going. They insisted, however, that he make a speech, which he did, and considered the evening ended. It was not quite over. A sequel to his "Luck" story, published nine years before, suddenly developed.

To go back a little, the reader may recall that "Luck" was a story which Twichell had told him as being supposedly true. The hero of it was a military officer who had risen to the highest rank through what at least seemed to be sheer luck, including a number of fortunate blunders. Clemens thought the story improbable, but wrote it and laid it away for several years, offering it at last in the general house-cleaning which took place after the first collapse of the machine. It was published in Harper's Magazine for August, 1891, and something less than a year later, in Rome, an English gentleman—a new acquaintance—said to him:

"Mr. Clemens, shall you go to England?"

"Very likely."

"Shall you take your tomahawk with you?"

"Why—yes, if it shall seem best."

"Well, it will. Be advised. Take it with you."

"Why?"

"Because of that sketch of yours entitled 'Luck.' That sketch is current in England, and you will surely need your tomahawk."

"What makes you think so?"

"I think so because the hero of the sketch will naturally want your scalp, and will probably apply for it. Be advised. Take your tomahawk along."

"Why, even with it I sha'n't stand any chance, because I sha'n't know him when he applies, and he will have my scalp before I know what his errand is."

"Come, do you mean to say that you don't know who the hero of that sketch is?"



“Indeed I haven’t any idea who the hero of the sketch is. Who is it?”

His informant hesitated a moment, then named a name of world-wide military significance.

As Mark Twain finished his Fourth of July speech at the Cecil and started to sit down a splendidly uniformed and decorated personage at his side said:

“Mr. Clemens, I have been wanting to know you a long time,” and he was looking down into the face of the hero of “Luck.”

“I was caught unprepared,” he said in his notes of it. “I didn’t sit down—I fell down. I didn’t have my tomahawk, and I didn’t know what would happen. But he was, composed, and pretty soon I got composed and we had a good, friendly time. If he had ever heard of that sketch of mine he did not manifest it in any way, and at twelve, midnight, I took my scalp home intact.”



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CCXI

DOLLIS HILL AND HOME

It was early in July, 1900, that they removed to Dollis Hill House, a beautiful old residence surrounded by trees on a peaceful hilltop, just outside of London. It was literally within a stone's-throw of the city limits, yet it was quite rural, for the city had not overgrown it then, and it retained all its pastoral features—a pond with lily-pads, the spreading oaks, the wide spaces of grassy lawn. Gladstone, an intimate friend of the owner, had made it a favorite retreat at one period of his life, and the place to-day is converted into a public garden called Gladstone Park. The old English diplomat used to drive out and sit in the shade of the trees and read and talk and translate Homer, and pace the lawn as he planned diplomacy, and, in effect, govern the English empire from that retired spot.

Clemens, in some memoranda made at the moment, doubts if Gladstone was always at peace in his mind in this retirement.

“Was he always really tranquil within,” he says, “or was he only externally so—for effect? We cannot know; we only know that his rustic bench under his favorite oak has no bark on its arms. Facts like this speak louder than words.”

The red-brick residential wave of London was still some distance away in 1900. Clemens says:

The rolling sea of green grass still stretches away on every hand, splotches with shadows of spreading oaks in whose black coolness flocks of sheep lie peacefully dreaming. Dreaming of what? That they are in London, the metropolis of the world, Post-office District, N. W.? Indeed no. They are not aware of it. I am aware of it, but that is all. It is not possible to realize it. For there is no suggestion of city here; it is country, pure & simple, & as still & reposeful as is the bottom of the sea.

They all loved Dollis Hill. Mrs. Clemens wrote as if she would like to remain forever in that secluded spot.

It is simply divinely beautiful & peaceful; . . . the great old trees are beyond everything. I believe nowhere in the world do you find such trees as in England Jean has a hammock swung between two such great trees, & on the other side of a little pond, which is full of white & yellow pond-lilies, there is tall grass & trees & Clara & Jean go there in the afternoons, spread down a rug on the grass in the shade & read & sleep.

They all spent most of their time outdoors at Dollis Hill under those spreading trees.

Clemens to Twichell in midsummer wrote:



I am the only person who is ever in the house in the daytime, but I am working & deep in the luxury of it. But there is one tremendous defect. Livy is all so enchanted with the place & so in love with it that she doesn't know how she is going to tear herself away from it.

Much company came to them at Dollis Hill. Friends drove out from London, and friends from America came often, among them—the Sages, Prof. Willard Fiske, and Brander Matthews with his family. Such callers were served with tea and refreshment on the lawn, and lingered, talking and talking, while the sun got lower and the shadows lengthened, reluctant to leave that idyllic spot.

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“Dollis Hill comes nearer to being a paradise than any other home I ever occupied,” he wrote when the summer was about over.

But there was still a greater attraction than Dollis Hill. Toward the end of summer they willingly left that paradise, for they had decided at last to make that home-returning voyage which had invited them so long. They were all eager enough to go—Clemens more eager than the rest, though he felt a certain sadness, too, in leaving the tranquil spot which in a brief summer they had so learned to love.

Writing to W. H. Helm, a London newspaper man who had spent pleasant hours with him chatting in the shade, he said:

. . . The packing & fussing & arranging have begun, for the removal to America &, by consequence, the peace of life is marred & its contents & satisfactions are departing. There is not much choice between a removal & a funeral; in fact, a removal is a funeral, substantially, & I am tired of attending them.

They closed Dollis Hill, spent a few days at Brown’s Hotel, and sailed for America, on the Minnehaha, October 6, 1900, bidding, as Clemens believed, and hoped, a permanent good-by to foreign travel. They reached New York on the 15th, triumphantly welcomed after their long nine years of wandering. How glad Mark Twain was to get home may be judged from his remark to one of the many reporters who greeted him.

“If I ever get ashore I am going to break both of my legs so I can’t, get away again.”