

Mark Twain's Letters — Volume 2 (1867-1875) eBook

Mark Twain's Letters — Volume 2 (1867-1875) by Mark Twain

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VOLUME II.

To Bret Harte, in San Francisco:

Westminster hotel, May 1, 1867. Dear Bret,—I take my pen in hand to inform you that I am well and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same God's blessing.

The book is out, and is handsome. It is full of damnable errors of grammar and deadly inconsistencies of spelling in the Frog sketch because I was away and did not read the proofs; but be a friend and say nothing about these things. When my hurry is over, I will send you an autograph copy to pisen the children with.

I am to lecture in Cooper Institute next Monday night. Pray for me.

We sail for the Holy Land June 8. Try to write me (to this hotel,) and it will be forwarded to Paris, where we remain 10 or 15 days.

Regards and best wishes to Mrs. Bret and the family.
Truly Yr Friend

Mark.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

Westminsterhotel, May 1, 1867. *Dear folks*,—Don't expect me to write for a while. My hands are full of business on account of my lecture for the 6th inst., and everything looks shady, at least, if not dark. I have got a good agent—but now after we have hired Cooper Institute and gone to an expense in one way or another of \$500, it comes out that I have got to play against Speaker Colfax at Irving Hall, Ristori, and also the double troupe of Japanese jugglers, the latter opening at the great Academy of Music—and with all this against me I have taken the largest house in New York and cannot back water. Let her slide! If nobody else cares I don't.

I'll send the book soon. I am awfully hurried now, but not worried.
Yrs.

Sam.

The Cooper Union lecture proved a failure, and a success. When it became evident to Fuller that the venture was not going to pay, he sent out a flood of complimentaries to the school-teachers of New York City and the surrounding districts. No one seems to have declined them. Clemens lectured to a jammed house and acquired much reputation. Lecture proposals came from several directions, but he could not accept them now. He wrote home that he was eighteen Alta letters behind and had refused



everything. Thos. Nast, the cartoonist, then in his first fame, propped a joint tour, Clemens to lecture while he, Nast, would illustrate with “lightning” sketches; but even this could not be considered now. In a little while he would sail, and the days were overfull. A letter written a week before he sailed is full of the hurry and strain of these last days.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

*Westminster hotel, new York, June 1, 1867. Dear folks,—*I know I ought to write oftener (just got your last,) and more fully, but I cannot overcome my repugnance to telling what I am doing or what I expect to do or propose to do. Then, what have I left to write about? Manifestly nothing.



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It isn't any use for me to talk about the voyage, because I can have no faith in that voyage till the ship is under way. How do I know she will ever sail? My passage is paid, and if the ship sails, I sail in her—but I make no calculations, have bought no cigars, no sea-going clothing—have made no preparation whatever—shall not pack my trunk till the morning we sail. Yet my hands are full of what I am going to do the day before we sail—and what isn't done that day will go undone.

All I do know or feel, is, that I am wild with impatience to move—move —move! Half a dozen times I have wished I had sailed long ago in some ship that wasn't going to keep me chained here to chafe for lagging ages while she got ready to go. Curse the endless delays! They always kill me—they make me neglect every duty and then I have a conscience that tears me like a wild beast. I wish I never had to stop anywhere a month. I do more mean things, the moment I get a chance to fold my hands and sit down than ever I can get forgiveness for.

Yes, we are to meet at Mr. Beach's next Thursday night, and I suppose we shall have to be gotten up regardless of expense, in swallow-tails, white kids and everything en regle.

I am resigned to Rev. Mr. Hutchinson's or anybody else's supervision. I don't mind it. I am fixed. I have got a splendid, immoral, tobacco-smoking, wine-drinking, godless room-mate who is as good and true and right-minded a man as ever lived—a man whose blameless conduct and example will always be an eloquent sermon to all who shall come within their influence. But send on the professional preachers—there are none I like better to converse with. If they're not narrow minded and bigoted they make good companions.

I asked them to send the N. Y. Weekly to you—no charge. I am not going to write for it. Like all other, papers that pay one splendidly it circulates among stupid people and the 'canaille.' I have made no arrangement with any New York paper—I will see about that Monday or Tuesday.

Love to all
Good bye,
Yrs affy

Sam.

The "immoral" room-mate whose conduct was to be an "eloquent example" was Dan Slote, immortalized in the *Innocents* as "Dan"—a favorite on the ship, and later beloved by countless readers.

There is one more letter, written the night before the Quaker City sailed—a letter which in a sense marks the close of the first great period of his life—the period of aimless wandering—adventure —youth. Perhaps a paragraph of explanation should precede this

letter. Political changes had eliminated Orion in Nevada, and he was now undertaking the practice of law. "Bill Stewart" was Senator Stewart, of Nevada, of whom we shall



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hear again. The “Sandwich Island book,” as may be imagined, was made up of his letters to the Sacramento Union. Nothing came of the venture, except some chapters in ‘*Roughing It*’, rewritten from the material. “Zeb and John Leavenworth” were pilots whom he had known on the river.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family in St. Louis:

New York, June 7th, 1867. Dear folks, I suppose we shall be many a league at sea tomorrow night, and goodness knows I shall be unspeakably glad of it.

I haven’t got anything to write, else I would write it. I have just written myself clear out in letters to the *Alta*, and I think they are the stupidest letters that were ever written from New York. Corresponding has been a perfect drag ever since I got to the states. If it continues abroad, I don’t know what the *Tribune* and *Alta* folks will think. I have withdrawn the *Sandwich Island book*—it would be useless to publish it in these dull publishing times. As for the *Frog book*, I don’t believe that will ever pay anything worth a cent. I published it simply to advertise myself—not with the hope of making anything out of it.

Well, I haven’t anything to write, except that I am tired of staying in one place—that I am in a fever to get away. Read my *Alta* letters—they contain everything I could possibly write to you. Tell Zeb and John Leavenworth to write me. They can get plenty of gossip from the pilots.

An importing house sent two cases of exquisite champagne aboard the ship for me today—*Veuve Clicquot* and *Lac d’Or*. I and my room-mate have set apart every Saturday as a solemn fast day, wherein we will entertain no light matters of frivolous conversation, but only get drunk. (That is a joke.) His mother and sisters are the best and most homelike people I have yet found in a brown stone front. There is no style about them, except in house and furniture.

I wish Orion were going on this voyage, for I believe he could not help but be cheerful and jolly. I often wonder if his law business is going satisfactorily to him, but knowing that the dull season is setting in now (it looked like it had already set in before) I have felt as if I could almost answer the question myself—which is to say in plain words, I was afraid to ask. I wish I had gone to Washington in the winter instead of going West. I could have gouged an office out of Bill Stewart for him, and that would atone for the loss of my home visit. But I am so worthless that it seems to me I never do anything or accomplish anything that lingers in my mind as a pleasant memory. My mind is stored full of unworthy conduct toward Orion and towards you all, and an accusing conscience gives me peace only in excitement and restless moving from place to place. If I could say I had done one thing for any of you that entitled me to your good opinion, (I say nothing of your love, for I am sure of that,

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no matter how unworthy of it I may make myself, from Orion down you have always given me that, all the days of my life, when God Almighty knows I seldom deserve it,) I believe I could go home and stay there and I know I would care little for the world's praise or blame. There is no satisfaction in the world's praise anyhow, and it has no worth to me save in the way of business. I tried to gather up its compliments to send to you, but the work was distasteful and I dropped it.

You observe that under a cheerful exterior I have got a spirit that is angry with me and gives me freely its contempt. I can get away from that at sea, and be tranquil and satisfied—and so, with my parting love and benediction for Orion and all of you, I say goodbye and God bless you all—and welcome the wind that wafts a weary soul to the sunny lands of the Mediterranean!

Yrs. Forever,

Sam.

VII.

Letters 1867. The traveler. The voyage of the "Quaker city"

Mark Twain, now at sea, was writing many letters; not personal letters, but those unique descriptive relations of travel which would make him his first great fame—those fresh first impressions preserved to us now as chapters of *The Innocents Abroad*. Yet here and there in the midst of sight-seeing and reporting he found time to send a brief line to those at home, merely that they might have a word from his own hand, for he had ordered the papers to which he was to contribute—the *Alta* and the *New York Tribune*—sent to them, and these would give the story of his travels. The home letters read like notebook entries.

Letters to Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

Fayal(Azores,) June 20th, 1867.

Dear folks,—We are having a lively time here, after a stormy trip. We meant to go to San Miguel, but were driven here by stress of weather. Beautiful climate.

Yrs.

Affect.

Sam.

Gibraltar, June 30th, 1867.

Dear folks,—Arrived here this morning, and am clear worn out with riding and climbing in and over and around this monstrous rock and its fortifications. Summer climate and

very pleasant.

Yrs.
Sam.

Tangier, Morocco, (Africa), July 1, 1867.

Dear folks, Half a dozen of us came here yesterday from Gibraltar and some of the company took the other direction; went up through Spain, to Paris by rail. We decided that Gibraltar and San Roque were all of Spain that we wanted to see at present and are glad we came here among the Africans, Moors, Arabs and Bedouins of the desert. I would not give this experience for all the balance of the trip combined. This is the infernalst hive of infernally costumed barbarians I have ever come across yet.

Yrs.
Sam.



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*At sea, July 2, 1867. Dr. Folks,—*We are far up the intensely blue and ravishingly beautiful Mediterranean. And now we are just passing the island of Minorca. The climate is perfectly lovely and it is hard to drive anybody to bed, day or night. We remain up the whole night through occasionally, and by this means enjoy the rare sensation of seeing the sun rise. But the sunsets are soft, rich, warm and superb!

We had a ball last night under the awnings of the quarter deck, and the share of it of three of us was masquerade. We had full, flowing, picturesque Moorish costumes which we purchased in the bazaars of Tangier.

Yrs.

Sam.

Marseilles, France, July 5, 1867.

We are here. Start for Paris tomorrow. All well. Had gorgeous 4th of July jollification yesterday at sea.

Yrs.

Sam.

The reader may expand these sketchy outlines to his heart's content by following the chapters in *The Innocents Abroad*, which is very good history, less elaborated than might be supposed. But on the other hand, the next letter adds something of interest to the book-circumstances which a modest author would necessarily omit.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

*Yalta, Russia, Aug. 25, 1867. Dear folks,—*We have been representing the United States all we knew how today. We went to Sebastopol, after we got tired of Constantinople (got your letter there, and one at Naples,) and there the Commandant and the whole town came aboard and were as jolly and sociable as old friends. They said the Emperor of Russia was at Yalta, 30 miles or 40 away, and urged us to go there with the ship and visit him—promised us a cordial welcome. They insisted on sending a telegram to the Emperor, and also a courier overland to announce our coming. But we knew that a great English Excursion party, and also the Viceroy of Egypt, in his splendid yacht, had been refused an audience within the last fortnight, so we thought it not safe to try it. They said, no difference—the Emperor would hardly visit our ship, because that would be a most extraordinary favor, and one which he uniformly refuses to accord under any circumstances, but he would certainly receive us at his palace. We still declined. But we had to go to Odessa, 250 miles away, and there the Governor General urged us, and sent a telegram to the Emperor, which we hardly expected to be answered, but it was, and promptly. So we sailed back to Yalta.



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We all went to the palace at noon, today, (3 miles) in carriages and on horses sent by the Emperor, and we had a jolly time. Instead of the usual formal audience of 15 minutes, we staid 4 hours and were made a good deal more at home than we could have been in a New York drawing-room. The whole tribe turned out to receive our party-Emperor, Empress, the oldest daughter (Grand-Duchess Marie, a pretty girl of 14,) a little Grand Duke, her brother, and a platoon of Admirals, Princes, Peers of the Empire, *etc.*, and in a little while an aid-de-camp arrived with a request from the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's brother, that we would visit his palace and breakfast with him. The Emperor also invited us, on behalf of his absent eldest son and heir (aged 22,) to visit his palace and consider it a visit to him. They all talk English and they were all very neatly but very plainly dressed. You all dress a good deal finer than they were dressed. The Emperor and his family threw off all reserve and showed us all over the palace themselves. It is very rich and very elegant, but in no way gaudy.

I had been appointed chairman of a committee to draught an address to the Emperor in behalf of the passengers, and as I fully expected, and as they fully intended, I had to write the address myself. I didn't mind it, because I have no modesty and would as soon write to an Emperor as to anybody else—but considering that there were 5 on the committee I thought they might have contributed one paragraph among them, anyway. They wanted me to read it to him, too, but I declined that honor—not because I hadn't cheek enough (and some to spare,) but because our Consul at Odessa was along, and also the Secretary of our Legation at St. Petersburg, and of course one of those ought to read it. The Emperor accepted the address—it was his business to do it—and so many others have praised it warmly that I begin to imagine it must be a wonderful sort of document and herewith send you the original draught of it to be put into alcohol and preserved forever like a curious reptile.

They live right well at the Grand Duke Michael's their breakfasts are not gorgeous but very excellent—and if Mike were to say the word I would go there and breakfast with him tomorrow.

Yrs aff

Sam.

P. S. [Written across the face of the last page.] They had told us it would be polite to invite the Emperor to visit the ship, though he would not be likely to do it. But he didn't give us a chance—he has requested permission to come on board with his family and all his relations tomorrow and take a sail, in case it is calm weather. I can, entertain them. My hand is in, now, and if you want any more Emperors feted in style, trot them out.



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The next letter is of interest in that it gives us the program and volume of his work. With all the sight seeing he was averaging a full four letters a week—long letters, requiring careful observation and inquiry. How fresh and impressionable and full of vigor he was, even in that fierce southern heat! No one makes the Mediterranean trip in summer today, and the thought of adding constant letter-writing to steady travel through southern France, Italy, Greece, and Turkey in blazing midsummer is stupefying. And Syria and Egypt in September!

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

Constantinople, Sept. 1, '67.

Dear folks,—All well. Do the Alta's come regularly? I wish I knew whether my letters reach them or not. Look over the back papers and see.

I wrote them as follows:

- 1 Letter from Fayal, in the Azores Islands.
- 1 from Gibraltar, in Spain.
- 1 from Tangier, in Africa.
- 2 from Paris and Marseilles, in France.
- 1 from Genoa, in Italy.
- 1 from Milan.
- 1 from Lake Como.
- 1 from some little place in Switzerland—have forgotten the name.
- 4 concerning Lecce, Bergamo, Padua, Verona, Battlefield of Marengo, Pestachio, and some other cities in Northern Italy.
- 2 from Venice.
- 1 about Bologna.
- 1 from Florence.
- 1 from Pisa.
- 1 from Leghorn.
- 1 from Rome and Civita Vecchia.
- 2 from Naples.
- 1 about Pazzuoli, where St. Paul landed, the Baths of Nero, and the ruins of Baia, Virgil's tomb, the Elysian Fields, the Sunken Cities and the spot where Ulysses landed.
- 1 from Herculaneum and Vesuvius.
- 1 from Pompeii.
- 1 from the Island of Ischia.
- 1 concerning the Volcano of Stromboli, the city and Straits of Messina, the land of Sicily, Scylla and Charybdis *etc.*
- 1 about the Grecian Archipelago.
- 1 about a midnight visit to Athens, the Piraeus and the ruins of the Acropolis.
- 1 about the Hellespont, the site of ancient Troy, the Sea of



Marmara, *etc.*

2 about Constantinople, the Golden Horn and the beauties of the Bosphorus.

1 from Odessa and Sebastopol in Russia, the Black Sea, *etc.*

2 from Yalta, Russia, concerning a visit to the Czar.

And yesterday I wrote another letter from Constantinople and

1 today about its neighbor in Asia, Scatter. I am not done with Turkey yet. Shall write 2 or 3 more.

I have written to the New York Herald 2 letters from Naples, (no name signed,) and 1 from Constantinople.

To the New York Tribune I have written

1 from Fayal.

1 from Civita Vecchia in the Roman States.

2 from Yalta, Russia.

And 1 from Constantinople.

I have never seen any of these letters in print except the one to the Tribune from Fayal and that was not worth printing.



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We sail hence tomorrow, perhaps, and my next letters will be mailed at Smyrna, in Syria. I hope to write from the Sea of Tiberius, Damascus, Jerusalem, Joppa, and possibly other points in the Holy Land. The letters from Egypt, the Nile and Algiers I will look out for, myself. I will bring them in my pocket.

They take the finest photographs in the world here. I have ordered some. They will be sent to Alexandria, Egypt.

You cannot conceive of anything so beautiful as Constantinople, viewed from the Golden Horn or the Bosphorus. I think it must be the handsomest city in the world. I will go on deck and look at it for you, directly. I am staying in the ship, tonight. I generally stay on shore when we are in port. But yesterday I just ran myself down. Dan Slote, my room-mate, is on shore. He remained here while we went up the Black Sea, but it seems he has not got enough of it yet. I thought Dan had got the state-room pretty full of rubbish at last, but a while ago his dragoman arrived with a bran new, ghastly tomb-stone of the Oriental pattern, with his name handsomely carved and gilded on it, in Turkish characters. That fellow will buy a Circassian slave, next.

I am tired. We are going on a trip, tomorrow. I must to bed. Love to all.

Yrs
Sam.

U. S. Consul's office, Beirut, Syria, Sept. 11. (1867)

Dear folks,—We are here, eight of us, making a contract with a dragoman to take us to Baalbek, then to Damascus, Nazareth, &c. then to Lake Genassareth (Sea of Tiberias,) then South through all the celebrated Scriptural localities to Jerusalem—then to the Dead Sea, the Cave of Macpelah and up to Joppa where the ship will be. We shall be in the saddle three weeks—we have horses, tents, provisions, arms, a dragoman and two other servants, and we pay five dollars a day apiece, in gold.

Love to all, yrs.

Sam.

We leave tonight, at two o'clock in the morning.

There appear to be no further home letters written from Syria—and none from Egypt. Perhaps with the desert and the delta the heat at last became too fearful for anything beyond the actual requirements of the day. When he began his next it was October, and the fiercer travel was behind him.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:



Caghari, Sardinia, Oct. 12, 1867.

Dear folks,—We have just dropped anchor before this handsome city and—

Algiers, Africa, Oct. 15.

They would not let us land at Caghari on account of cholera. Nothing to write.

Malaga, Spain, Oct. 17. The Captain and I are ashore here under guard, waiting to know whether they will let the ship anchor or not. Quarantine regulations are very strict here on all vessels coming from Egypt. I am a little anxious because I want to go inland to Granada and see the Alhambra. I can go on down by Seville and Cordova, and be picked up at Cadiz.



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Later: We cannot anchor—must go on. We shall be at Gibraltar before midnight and I think I will go horseback (a long days) and thence by rail and diligence to Cadiz. I will not mail this till I see the Gibraltar lights—I begin to think they won't let us in anywhere.

11.30 P. M.—Gibraltar.

At anchor and all right, but they won't let us land till morning—it is a waste of valuable time. We shall reach New York middle of November.

Yours,

Sam.

*Cadiz, Oct 24, 1867. Dear folks,—*We left Gibraltar at noon and rode to Algeciras, (4 hours) thus dodging the quarantine, took dinner and then rode horseback all night in a swinging trot and at daylight took a caleche (a wheeled vehicle) and rode 5 hours—then took cars and traveled till twelve at night. That landed us at Seville and we were over the hard part of our trip, and somewhat tired. Since then we have taken things comparatively easy, drifting around from one town to another and attracting a good deal of attention, for I guess strangers do not wander through Andalusia and the other Southern provinces of Spain often. The country is precisely as it was when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were possible characters.

But I see now what the glory of Spain must have been when it was under Moorish domination. No, I will not say that, but then when one is carried away, infatuated, entranced, with the wonders of the Alhambra and the supernatural beauty of the Alcazar, he is apt to overflow with admiration for the splendid intellects that created them.

I cannot write now. I am only dropping a line to let you know I am well. The ship will call for us here tomorrow. We may stop at Lisbon, and shall at the Bermudas, and will arrive in New York ten days after this letter gets there.

Sam.

This is the last personal letter written during that famous first sea-gipsying, and reading it our regret grows that he did not put something of his Spanish excursion into his book. He never returned to Spain, and he never wrote of it. Only the barest mention of “seven beautiful days” is found in *The Innocents Abroad*.

VIII.

Letters 1867-68. Washington and San Francisco. The proposed book of travel. A new lecture



From Mark Twain's home letters we get several important side-lights on this first famous book. We learn, for in stance, that it was he who drafted the ship address to the Emperor—the opening lines of which became so wearisome when repeated by the sailors. Furthermore, we learn something of the scope and extent of his newspaper correspondence, which must have kept him furiously busy, done as it

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was in the midst of super-heated and continuous sight-seeing. He wrote fifty three letters to the Alta-California, six to the New York Tribune, and at least two to the New York Herald more than sixty, all told, of an average, length of three to four thousand words each. Mark Twain always claimed to be a lazy man, and certainly he was likely to avoid an undertaking not suited to his gifts, but he had energy in abundance for work in his chosen field. To have piled up a correspondence of that size in the time, and under the circumstances already noted, quality considered, may be counted a record in the history of travel letters. They made him famous. Arriving in New York, November 19, 1867, Mark Twain found himself no longer unknown to the metropolis, or to any portion of America. Papers East and West had copied his Alta and Tribune letters and carried his name into every corner of the States and Territories. He had preached a new gospel in travel literature, the gospel of frankness and sincerity that Americans could understand. Also his literary powers had awakened at last. His work was no longer trivial, crude, and showy; it was full of dignity, beauty, and power; his humor was finer, worthier. The difference in quality between the Quaker City letters and those written from the Sandwich Islands only a year before can scarcely be measured. He did not remain in New York, but went down to Washington, where he had arranged for a private secretaryship with Senator William M. Stewart,—[The “Bill” Stewart mentioned in the preceding chapter.] whom he had known in Nevada. Such a position he believed would make but little demand upon his time, and would afford him an insight into Washington life, which he could make valuable in the shape of newspaper correspondence.

But fate had other plans for him. He presently received the following letter:

From Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford
office of the American publishing company.

Hartford, Conn, Nov 21, 1867.
Samuel L. Clemens Esq.
Tribune Office, New York.

Dr. Sir,—We take the liberty to address you this, in place of a letter which we had recently written and was about to forward to you, not knowing your arrival home was expected so soon. We are desirous of obtaining from you a work of some kind, perhaps compiled from your letters from the East, &c., with such interesting additions as may be proper. We are the publishers of A. D. Richardson’s works, and flatter ourselves that we can give an author as favorable terms and do as full justice to his productions as any other house in the country. We are perhaps the oldest subscription house in the country, and have never failed to give a book an immense circulation. We sold about 100,000 copies of Richardson’s



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F. D. & E. (Field, Dungeon and Escape) and are now printing 41,000, of "Beyond the Mississippi," and large orders ahead. If you have any thought of writing a book, or could be induced to do so, we should be pleased to see you; and will do so. Will you do us the favor to reply at once, at your earliest convenience.

Very truly, &c.,
E. Bliss, Jr.

Secty.

Clemens had already the idea of a book in mind and welcomed this proposition.

To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford:

Washington, Dec. 2, 1867.

E. Bliss, Jr. Esq.

Sec'y American Publishing Co.—

Dear sir,—I only received your favor of Nov. 21st last night, at the rooms of the Tribune Bureau here. It was forwarded from the Tribune office, New York, where it had lain eight or ten days. This will be a sufficient apology for the seeming discourtesy of my silence.

I wrote fifty-two (three) letters for the San Francisco "Alta California" during the Quaker City excursion, about half of which number have been printed, thus far. The "Alta" has few exchanges in the East, and I suppose scarcely any of these letters have been copied on this side of the Rocky Mountains. I could weed them of their chief faults of construction and inelegancies of expression and make a volume that would be more acceptable in many respects than any I could now write. When those letters were written my impressions were fresh, but now they have lost that freshness; they were warm then—they are cold, now. I could strike out certain letters, and write new ones wherewith to supply their places. If you think such a book would suit your purpose, please drop me a line, specifying the size and general style of the volume; when the matter ought to be ready; whether it should have pictures in it or not; and particularly what your terms with me would be, and what amount of money I might possibly make out of it. The latter clause has a degree of importance for me which is almost beyond my own comprehension. But you understand that, of course.

I have other propositions for a book, but have doubted the propriety of interfering with good newspaper engagements, except my way as an author could be demonstrated to be plain before me. But I know Richardson, and learned from him some months ago, something of an idea of the subscription plan of publishing. If that is your plan invariably, it looks safe.



BOOKRAGS

I am on the N. Y. Tribune staff here as an “occasional,” among other things, and a note from you addressed to

Very truly &c.

Sam L. Clemens,

New York Tribune Bureau, Washington, will find me, without fail.

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The exchange of these two letters marked the beginning of one of the most notable publishing connections in American literary history. The book, however, was not begun immediately. Bliss was in poor health and final arrangements were delayed; it was not until late in January that Clemens went to Hartford and concluded the arrangement. Meantime, fate had disclosed another matter of even greater importance; we get the first hint of it in the following letter, though to him its beginning had been earlier—on a day in the blue harbor of Smyrna, when young Charles Langdon, a fellow-passenger on the *Quaker City*, had shown to Mark Twain a miniature of young Langdon's sister at home:

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

224 F. Street, Wash., Jan. 8, 1868. *My dear mother and sister*,—And so the old Major has been there, has he? I would like mighty well to see him. I was a sort of benefactor to him once. I helped to snatch him out when he was about to ride into a Mohammedan Mosque in that queer old Moorish town of Tangier, in Africa. If he had got in, the Moors would have knocked his venerable old head off, for his temerity.

I have just arrived from New York—been there ever since Christmas staying at the house of Dan Slote my *Quaker City* room-mate, and having a splendid time. Charley Langdon, Jack Van Nostrand, Dan and I, (all *Quaker City* night-hawks,) had a blow-out at Dan's house and a lively talk over old times. We went through the Holy Land together, and I just laughed till my sides ached, at some of our reminiscences. It was the unholyest gang that ever cavorted through Palestine, but those are the best boys in the world. We needed Moulton badly. I started to make calls, New Year's Day, but I anchored for the day at the first house I came to—Charlie Langdon's sister was there (beautiful girl,) and Miss Alice Hooker, another beautiful girl, a niece of Henry Ward Beecher's. We sent the old folks home early, with instructions not to send the carriage till midnight, and then I just staid there and worried the life out of those girls. I am going to spend a few days with the Langdon's in Elmira, New York, as soon as I get time, and a few days at Mrs. Hooker's in Hartford, Conn., shortly.

Henry Ward Beecher sent for me last Sunday to come over and dine (he lives in Brooklyn, you know,) and I went. Harriet Beecher Stowe was there, and Mrs. and Miss Beecher, Mrs. Hooker and my old *Quaker City* favorite, Emma Beach.

We had a very gay time, if it was Sunday. I expect I told more lies than I have told before in a month.

I went back by invitation, after the evening service, and finished the blow-out, and then staid all night at Mr. Beach's. Henry Ward is a brick.

I found out at 10 o'clock, last night, that I was to lecture tomorrow evening and so you must be aware that I have been working like sin all night to get a lecture written. I have

finished it, I call it “Frozen Truth.” It is a little top-heavy, though, because there is more truth in the title than there is in the lecture.



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But thunder, I mustn't sit here writing all day, with so much business before me.

Good by, and kind regards to all.

Yrs affy

Sam L. Clemens.

Jack Van Nostrand of this letter is "Jack" of the Innocents. Emma Beach was the daughter of Moses S. Beach, of the 'New York Sun.' Later she became the wife of the well-known painter, Abbot H. Thayer.

We do not hear of Miss Langdon again in the letters of that time, but it was not because she was absent from his thoughts. He had first seen her with her father and brother at the old St. Nicholas Hotel, on lower Broadway, where, soon after the arrival of the Quaker City in New York, he had been invited to dine. Long afterward he said: "It is forty years ago; from that day to this she has never been out of my mind."

From his next letter we learn of the lecture which apparently was delivered in Washington.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

Wash. Jan. 9, 1868. *My dear mother and sister,*—That infernal lecture is over, thank Heaven! It came near being a villainous failure. It was not advertised at all. The manager was taken sick yesterday, and the man who was sent to tell me, never got to me till afternoon today. There was the dickens to pay. It was too late to do anything—too late to stop the lecture. I scared up a door-keeper, and was ready at the proper time, and by pure good luck a tolerably good house assembled and I was saved! I hardly knew what I was going to talk about, but it went off in splendid style. I was to have preached again Saturday night, but I won't—I can't get along without a manager.

I have been in New York ever since Christmas, you know, and now I shall have to work like sin to catch up my correspondence.

And I have got to get up that book, too. Cut my letters out of the *Alta's* and send them to me in an envelop. Some, here, that are not mailed yet, I shall have to copy, I suppose.

I have got a thousand things to do, and am not doing any of them. I feel perfectly savage.

Good bye

Yrs aff

Sam.



On the whole, matters were going well with him. His next letter is full of his success—overflowing with the boyish radiance which he never quite outgrew.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

Hartford, Conn. Jan. 24-68. Dear mother and sister,—This is a good week for me. I stopped in the Herald office as I came through New York, to see the boys on the staff, and young James Gordon Bennett asked me to write twice a week, impersonally, for the Herald, and said if I would I might have full swing, and (write) about anybody and everybody I wanted to. I said I must have the very fullest possible swing, and he said “all right.” I said “It’s a contract—” and that settled that matter.

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I'll make it a point to write one letter a week, any-how.

But the best thing that has happened was here. This great American Publishing Company kept on trying to bargain with me for a book till I thought I would cut the matter short by coming up for a talk. I met Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in Brooklyn, and with his usual whole-souled way of dropping his own work to give other people a lift when he gets a chance, he said, "Now, here, you are one of the talented men of the age—nobody is going to deny that—but in matters of business, I don't suppose you know more than enough to come in when it rains. I'll tell you what to do, and how to do it." And he did.

And I listened well, and then came up here and made a splendid contract for a Quaker City book of 5 or 600 large pages, with illustrations, the manuscript to be placed in the publishers' hands by the middle of July. My percentage is to be a fifth more than they have ever paid any author, except Horace Greeley. Beecher will be surprised, I guess, when he hears this.

But I had my mind made up to one thing—I wasn't going to touch a book unless there was money in it, and a good deal of it. I told them so. I had the misfortune to "bust out" one author of standing. They had his manuscript, with the understanding that they would publish his book if they could not get a book from me, (they only publish two books at a time, and so my book and Richardson's Life of Grant will fill the bill for next fall and winter)—so that manuscript was sent back to its author today.

These publishers get off the most tremendous editions of their books you can imagine. I shall write to the Enterprise and Alta every week, as usual, I guess, and to the Herald twice a week—occasionally to the Tribune and the Magazines (I have a stupid article in the Galaxy, just issued) but I am not going to write to this, that and the other paper any more.

The Chicago Tribune wants letters, but I hope and pray I have charged them so much that they will not close the contract. I am gradually getting out of debt, but these trips to New York do cost like sin. I hope you have cut out and forwarded my printed letters to Washington—please continue to do so as they arrive.

I have had a tip-top time, here, for a few days (guest of Mr. Jno. Hooker's family—Beecher's relatives—in a general way of Mr. Bliss, also, who is head of the publishing firm.) Puritans are mighty straight-laced and they won't let me smoke in the parlor, but the Almighty don't make any better people.

Love to all—good-bye. I shall be in New York 3 days—then go on to the Capital.

Yrs affly, especially Ma.,
Yr Sam.

I have to make a speech at the annual Herald dinner on the 6th of May.

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No formal contract for the book had been made when this letter was written. A verbal agreement between Bliss and Clemens had been reached, to be ratified by an exchange of letters in the near future. Bliss had made two propositions, *viz.*, ten thousand dollars, cash in hand, or a 5-per-cent. royalty on the selling price of the book. The cash sum offered looked very large to Mark Twain, and he was sorely tempted to accept it. He had faith, however, in the book, and in Bliss's ability to sell it. He agreed, therefore, to the royalty proposition; "The best business judgment I ever displayed" he often declared in after years. Five per cent. royalty sounds rather small in these days of more liberal contracts. But the American Publishing Company sold its books only by subscription, and the agents' commissions and delivery expenses ate heavily into the profits. Clemens was probably correct in saying that his percentage was larger than had been paid to any previous author except Horace Greeley. The John Hooker mentioned was the husband of Henry Ward Beecher's sister, Isabel. It was easy to understand the Beecher family's robust appreciation of Mark Twain.

From the office of Dan Slote, his room-mate of the Quaker City —"Dan" of the Innocents—Clemens wrote his letter that closed the agreement with Bliss.

To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford:

Office of *Slote & Woodman*, Blank Book Manufacturers,
Nos. 119-121 William St.
New York, January 27, 1868.

Mr. E. Bliss, Jr.
Sec'y American Publishing Co.
Hartford Conn.

Dear sir, Your favor of Jan. 25th is received, and in reply, I will say that I accede to your several propositions, *viz.*: That I furnish to the American Publishing Company, through you, with MSS sufficient for a volume of 500 to 600 pages, the subject to be the Quaker City, the voyage, description of places, &c., and also embodying the substance of the letters written by me during that trip, said MSS to be ready about the first of August, next, I to give all the usual and necessary attention in preparing said MSS for the press, and in preparation of illustrations, in correction of proofs—no use to be made by me of the material for this work in any way which will conflict with its interest —the book to be sold by the American Publishing Co., by subscription —and for said *Ms* and labor on my part said Company to pay me a copyright of 5 percent, upon the subscription price of the book for all copies sold.

As further proposed by you, this understanding, herein set forth shall be considered a binding contract upon all parties concerned, all minor details to be arranged between us hereafter.



Very truly yours,
Sam. L. Clemens.



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(Private and General.)

I was to have gone to Washington tonight, but have held over a day, to attend a dinner given by a lot of newspaper Editors and literary scalliwags, at the Westminster Hotel. Shall go down to-morrow, if I survive the banquet.

Yrs truly
Sam. Clemens.

Mark Twain, in Washington, was in line for political preferment: His wide acquaintance on the Pacific slope, his new fame and growing popularity, his powerful and dreaded pen, all gave him special distinction at the capital. From time to time the offer of one office or another tempted him, but he wisely, or luckily, resisted. In his letters home are presented some of his problems.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

224 F. Street Washington Feb. 6, 1868. *My dear mother and sister*,—For two months there have been some fifty applications before the government for the postmastership of San Francisco, which is the heaviest concentration of political power on the coast and consequently is a post which is much coveted.,

When I found that a personal friend of mine, the Chief Editor of the Alta was an applicant I said I didn't want it—I would not take \$10,000 a year out of a friend's pocket.

The two months have passed, I heard day before yesterday that a new and almost unknown candidate had suddenly turned up on the inside track, and was to be appointed at once. I didn't like that, and went after his case in a fine passion. I hunted up all our Senators and representatives and found that his name was actually to come from the President early in the morning.

Then Judge Field said if I wanted the place he could pledge me the President's appointment—and Senator Conness said he would guarantee me the Senate's confirmation. It was a great temptation, but it would render it impossible to fill my book contract, and I had to drop the idea.

I have to spend August and September in Hartford which isn't San Francisco. Mr. Conness offers me any choice out of five influential California offices. Now, some day or other I shall want an office and then, just my luck, I can't get it, I suppose.

They want to send me abroad, as a Consul or a Minister. I said I didn't want any of the pie. God knows I am mean enough and lazy enough, now, without being a foreign consul.

Sometime in the course of the present century I think they will create a Commissioner of Patents, and then I hope to get a berth for Orion.



I published 6 or 7 letters in the Tribune while I was gone, now I cannot get them. I suppose I must have them copied.

Love to all

Sam.



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Orion Clemens was once more a candidate for office: Nevada had become a State; with regularly elected officials, and Orion had somehow missed being chosen. His day of authority had passed, and the law having failed to support him, he was again back at his old occupation, setting type in St. Louis. He was, as ever, full of dreams and inventions that would some day lead to fortune. With the gift of the Sellers imagination, inherited by all the family, he lacked the driving power which means achievement. More and more as the years went by he would lean upon his brother for moral and physical support. The chances for him in Washington do not appear to have been bright. The political situation under Andrew Johnson was not a happy one.

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

224 F. Street, wash., Feb. 21. (1868) *My dear Bro.*,—I am glad you do not want the clerkship, for that Patent Office is in such a muddle that there would be no security for the permanency of a place in it. The same remark will apply to all offices here, now, and no doubt will, till the close of the present administration.

Any man who holds a place here, now, stands prepared at all times to vacate it. You are doing, now, exactly what I wanted you to do a year ago.

We chase phantoms half the days of our lives.

It is well if we learn wisdom even then, and save the other half.

I am in for it. I must go on chasing them until I marry—then I am done with literature and all other bosh,—that is, literature wherewith to please the general public.

I shall write to please myself, then. I hope you will set type till you complete that invention, for surely government pap must be nauseating food for a man—a man whom God has enabled to saw wood and be independent. It really seemed to me a falling from grace, the idea of going back to San Francisco nothing better than a mere postmaster, albeit the public would have thought I came with gilded honors, and in great glory.

I only retain correspondence enough, now, to make a living for myself, and have discarded all else, so that I may have time to spare for the book. Drat the thing, I wish it were done, or that I had no other writing to do.

This is the place to get a poor opinion of everybody in. There isn't one man in Washington, in civil office, who has the brains of Anson Burlingame—and I suppose if China had not seized and saved his great talents to the world, this government would have discarded him when his time was up.

There are more pitiful intellects in this Congress! Oh, geeminy! There are few of them that I find pleasant enough company to visit.



I am most infernally tired of Wash. and its “attractions.” To be busy
is a man’s only happiness—and I am—otherwise I should die
Yrs. aff

Sam.

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The secretarial position with Senator Stewart was short-lived. One cannot imagine Mark Twain as anybody's secretary, and doubtless there was little to be gained on either side by the arrangement. They parted without friction, though in later years, when Stewart had become old and irascible, he used to recount a list of grievances and declare that he had been obliged to threaten violence in order to bring Mark to terms; but this was because the author of *Roughing It* had in that book taken liberties with the Senator, to the extent of an anecdote and portrait which, though certainly harmless enough, had for some reason given deep offense. Mark Twain really had no time for secretary work. For one thing he was associated with John Swinton in supplying a Washington letter to a list of newspapers, and then he was busy collecting his Quaker City letters, and preparing the copy for his book. Matters were going well enough, when trouble developed from an unexpected quarter. The *Alta-California* had copyrighted the letters and proposed to issue them in book form. There had been no contract which would prevent this, and the correspondence which Clemens undertook with the *Alta* management led to nothing. He knew that he had powerful friends among the owners, if he could reach them personally, and he presently concluded to return to San Francisco, make what arrangement he could, and finish his book there. It was his fashion to be prompt; in his next letter we find him already on the way.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

At sea, Sunday, March 15, Lat. 25. (1868) Dear folks,—I have nothing to write, except that I am well—that the weather is fearfully hot—that the *Henry Chauncey* is a magnificent ship—that we have twelve hundred, passengers on board—that I have two staterooms, and so am not crowded—that I have many pleasant friends here, and the people are not so stupid as on the *Quaker City*—that we had Divine Service in the main saloon at 10.30 this morning—that we expect to meet the upward bound vessel in Latitude 23, and this is why I am writing now.

We shall reach Aspinwall Thursday morning at 6 o'clock, and San Francisco less than two weeks later. I worry a great deal about being obliged to go without seeing you all, but it could not be helped.

Dan Slote, my splendid room-mate in the *Quaker City* and the noblest man on earth, will call to see you within a month. Make him dine with you and spend the evening. His house is my home always in. New York.

Yrs affy,

Sam.

The San Francisco trip proved successful. Once on the ground Clemens had little difficulty in convincing the *Alta* publishers that they had received full value in the newspaper use of the letters, and that the book rights remained with the author. A letter to Bliss conveys the situation.



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To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford:

San Francisco, May 5, '68.

E. Bliss, Jr. Esq.

Dr. Sir,—The Alta people, after some hesitation, have given me permission to use my printed letters, and have ceased to think of publishing them themselves in book form. I am steadily at work, and shall start East with the completed Manuscript, about the middle of June.

I lectured here, on the trip, the other night—over sixteen hundred dollars in gold in the house—every seat taken and paid for before night.

Yrs truly,
Mark Twain.

But he did not sail in June. His friends persuaded him to cover his lecture circuit of two years before, telling the story of his travels. This he did with considerable profit, being everywhere received with great honors. He ended this tour with a second lecture in San Francisco, announced in a droll and characteristic fashion which delighted his Pacific admirers, and insured him a crowded house.—[See Mark Twain: A Biography, chap xlvi, and Appendix H.] His agreement had been to deliver his *Ms.* about August 1st. Returning by the Chauncey, July 28th, he was two days later in Hartford, and had placid the copy for the new book in Bliss's hands. It was by no means a compilation of his newspaper letters. His literary vision was steadily broadening. All of the letters had been radically edited, some had been rewritten, some entirely eliminated. He probably thought very well of the book, an opinion shared by Bliss, but it is unlikely that either of them realized that it was to become a permanent classic, and the best selling book of travel for at least fifty years.

IX.

Letters 1868-70. Courtship, and "The innocents abroad"

The story of Mark Twain's courtship has been fully told in the completer story of his life; it need only be briefly sketched here as a setting for the letters of this period. In his letter of January 8th we note that he expects to go to Elmira for a few days as soon as he has time. But he did not have time, or perhaps did not receive a pressing invitation until he had returned with his *Ms.* from California. Then, through young Charles Langdon, his Quaker City shipmate, he was invited to Elmira. The invitation was given for a week, but through a subterfuge—unpremeditated, and certainly fair enough in a matter of love—he was enabled to considerably prolong his visit. By the end of his stay he had become really "like one of the family," though certainly not yet accepted as

such. The fragmentary letter that follows reflects something of his pleasant situation. The Mrs. Fairbanks mentioned in this letter had



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been something more than a “shipmother” to Mark Twain. She was a woman of fine literary taste, and Quaker City correspondent for her husband’s paper, the Cleveland Herald. She had given Mark Twain sound advice as to his letters, which he had usually read to her, and had in no small degree modified his early natural tendency to exaggeration and outlandish humor. He owed her much, and never failed to pay her tribute.

Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

Elmira, N.Y. Aug. 26, 1868. *Dear folks*,—You see I am progressing—though slowly. I shall be here a week yet maybe two—for Charlie Langdon cannot get away until his father’s chief business man returns from a journey—and a visit to Mrs. Fairbanks, at Cleveland, would lose half its pleasure if Charlie were not along. Moulton of St. Louis ought to be there too. We three were Mrs. F’s “cubs,” in the Quaker City. She took good care that we were at church regularly on Sundays; at the 8-bells prayer meeting every night; and she kept our buttons sewed on and our clothing in order—and in a word was as busy and considerate, and as watchful over her family of uncouth and unruly cubs, and as patient and as long-suffering, withal, as a natural mother. So we expect.....

Aug. 25th. Didn’t finish yesterday. Something called me away. I am most comfortably situated here. This is the pleasantest family I ever knew. I only have one trouble, and that is they give me too much thought and too much time and invention to the object of making my visit pass delightfully. It needs——

Just how and when he left the Langdon home the letters do not record. Early that fall he began a lecture engagement with James Redpath, proprietor of the Boston Lyceum Bureau, and his engagements were often within reach of Elmira. He had a standing invitation now to the Langdon home, and the end of the week often found him there. Yet when at last he proposed for the hand of Livy Langdon the acceptance was by no means prompt. He was a favorite in the Langdon household, but his suitability as a husband for the frail and gentle daughter was questioned. However, he was carrying everything, just then, by storm. The largest houses everywhere were crowded to hear him. Papers spoke of him as the coming man of the age, people came to their doors to see him pass. There is but one letter of this period, but it gives us the picture.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

Cleveland, Nov. 20, 1868. *Dear folks*,—I played against the Eastern favorite, Fanny Kemble, in Pittsburgh, last night. She had 200 in her house, and I had upwards of 1,500. All the seats were sold (in a driving rain storm, 3 days ago,) as reserved seats at 25 cents extra, even those in the second and third tiers—and when the last seat was gone the box office had not been open more than 2 hours. When I reached the theatre

they were turning people away and the house was crammed, 150 or 200 stood up, all the evening.



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I go to Elmira tonight. I am simply lecturing for societies, at \$100 a pop.

Yrs

Sam.

It would be difficult for any family to refuse relationship with one whose star was so clearly ascending, especially when every inclination was in his favor, and the young lady herself encouraged his suit. A provisional engagement was presently made, but it was not finally ratified until February of the following year. Then in a letter from one of his lecture points he tells his people something of his happiness.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

*Lockport, N. Y. Feb. 27, 1868. Dear folks,—*I enclose \$20 for Ma. I thought I was getting ahead of her little assessments of \$35 a month, but find I am falling behind with her instead, and have let her go without money. Well, I did not mean to do it. But you see when people have been getting ready for months in a quiet way to get married, they are bound to grow stingy, and go to saving up money against that awful day when it is sure to be needed. I am particularly anxious to place myself in a position where I can carry on my married life in good shape on my own hook, because I have paddled my own canoe so long that I could not be satisfied now to let anybody help me—and my proposed father-in-law is naturally so liberal that it would be just like him to want to give us a start in life. But I don't want it that way. I can start myself. I don't want any help. I can run this institution without any outside assistance, and I shall have a wife who will stand by me like a soldier through thick and thin, and never complain. She is only a little body, but she hasn't her peer in Christendom. I gave her only a plain gold engagement ring, when fashion imperatively demands a two-hundred dollar diamond one, and told her it was typical of her future lot—namely, that she would have to flourish on substantials rather than luxuries. (But you see I know the girl—she don't care anything about luxuries.) She is a splendid girl. She spends no money but her usual year's allowance, and she spends nearly every cent of that on other people. She will be a good sensible little wife, without any airs about her. I don't make intercession for her beforehand and ask you to love her, for there isn't any use in that—you couldn't help it if you were to try.

I warn you that whoever comes within the fatal influence of her beautiful nature is her willing slave for evermore. I take my affidavit on that statement. Her father and mother and brother embrace and pet her constantly, precisely as if she were a sweetheart, instead of a blood relation. She has unlimited power over her father, and yet she never uses it except to make him help people who stand in need of help....

But if I get fairly started on the subject of my bride, I never shall get through—and so I will quit right here. I went to Elmira a little over a week ago, and staid four days and then had to go to New York on business.



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.....
No further letters have been preserved until June, when he is in Elmira and with his fiancée reading final proofs on the new book. They were having an idyllic good time, of course, but it was a useful time, too, for Olivia Langdon had a keen and refined literary instinct, and the *Innocents Abroad*, as well as Mark Twain's other books, are better today for her influence. It has been stated that Mark Twain loved the lecture platform, but from his letters we see that even at this early date, when he was at the height of his first great vogue as a public entertainer, he had no love for platform life. Undoubtedly he rejoiced in the brief periods when he was actually before his audience and could play upon it with his master touch, but the dreary intermissions of travel and broken sleep were too heavy a price to pay.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis

Elmira, June 4. (1868) Dear folks,—Livy sends you her love and loving good wishes, and I send you mine. The last 3 chapters of the book came tonight—we shall read it in the morning and then thank goodness, we are done.

In twelve months (or rather I believe it is fourteen,) I have earned just eighty dollars by my pen—two little magazine squibs and one newspaper letter—altogether the idlest, laziest 14 months I ever spent in my life. And in that time my absolute and necessary expenses have been scorchingly heavy—for I have now less than three thousand six hundred dollars in bank out of the eight or nine thousand I have made during those months, lecturing. My expenses were something frightful during the winter. I feel ashamed of my idleness, and yet I have had really no inclination to do anything but court Livy. I haven't any other inclination yet. I have determined not to work as hard traveling, any more, as I did last winter, and so I have resolved not to lecture outside of the 6 New England States next winter. My Western course would easily amount to \$10,000, but I would rather make 2 or 3 thousand in New England than submit again to so much wearing travel. (I have promised to talk ten nights for a thousand dollars in the State of New York, provided the places are close together.) But after all if I get located in a newspaper in a way to suit me, in the meantime, I don't want to lecture at all next winter, and probably shan't. I most cordially hate the lecture field. And after all, I shudder to think that I may never get out of it.

In all conversations with Gough, and Anna Dickinson, Nasby, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Wendell Phillips and the other old stagers, I could not observe that they ever expected or hoped to get out of the business. I don't want to get wedded to it as they are. Livy thinks we can live on a very moderate sum and that we'll not need to lecture. I know very well that she can live on a small allowance, but I am not so sure about myself. I can't scare her by reminding her that her father's family expenses are forty thousand dollars a year, because she produces the documents at once to show that precious little

of this outlay is on her account. But I must not commence writing about Livy, else I shall never stop. There isn't such another little piece of perfection in the world as she is.



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My time is become so short, now, that I doubt if I get to California this summer. If I manage to buy into a paper, I think I will visit you a while and not go to Cal. at all. I shall know something about it after my next trip to Hartford. We all go there on the 10th—the whole family—to attend a wedding, on the 17th. I am offered an interest in a Cleveland paper which would pay me \$2,300 to \$2,500 a year, and a salary added of \$3,000. The salary is fair enough, but the interest is not large enough, and so I must look a little further. The Cleveland folks say they can be induced to do a little better by me, and urge me to come out and talk business. But it don't strike me—I feel little or no inclination to go.

I believe I haven't anything else to write, and it is bed-time. I want to write to Orion, but I keep putting it off—I keep putting everything off. Day after day Livy and I are together all day long and until 10 at night, and then I feel dreadfully sleepy. If Orion will bear with me and forgive me I will square up with him yet. I will even let him kiss Livy.

My love to Mollie and Annie and Sammie and all. Good-bye.
Affectionately,

Sam.

It is curious, with his tendency to optimism and general expansion of futures, that he says nothing of the possible sales of the new book, or of his expectations in that line. It was issued in July, and by June the publishers must have had promising advance orders from their canvassers; but apparently he includes none of these chickens in his financial forecast. Even when the book had been out a full month, and was being shipped at the rate of several hundreds a day, he makes no reference to it in a letter to his sister, other than to ask if she has not received a copy. This, however, was a Mark Twain peculiarity. Writing was his trade; the returns from it seldom excited him. It was only when he drifted into strange and untried fields that he began to chase rainbows, to blow iridescent bubbles, and count unmined gold.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

*Buffalo, Aug. 20, 1869. My dear sister,—*I have only time to write a line. I got your letter this morning and mailed it to Livy. She will be expecting me tonight and I am sorry to disappoint her so, but then I couldn't well get away. I will go next Saturday.

I have bundled up Livy's picture and will try and recollect to mail it tomorrow. It is a porcelaintype and I think you will like it.



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I am sorry I never got to St. Louis, because I may be too busy to go, for a long time. But I have been busy all the time and St. Louis is clear out of the way, and remote from the world and all ordinary routes of travel. You must not place too much weight upon this idea of moving the capital from Washington. St. Louis is in some respects a better place for it than Washington, though there isn't more than a toss-up between the two after all. One is dead and the other in a trance. Washington is in the centre of population and business, while St. Louis is far removed from both. And you know there is no geographical centre any more. The railroads and telegraph have done away with all that. It is no longer a matter of sufficient importance to be gravely considered by thinking men. The only centres, now, are narrowed down to those of intelligence, capital and population. As I said before Washington is the nearest to those and you don't have to paddle across a river on ferry boats of a pattern popular in the dark ages to get to it, nor have to clamber up vilely paved hills in rascally omnibuses along with a herd of all sorts of people after you are there. Secondly, the removal of the capital is one of those old, regular, reliable dodges that are the bread-and meat of back country congressmen. It is agitated every year. It always has been, it always will be; It is not new in any respect. Thirdly. The Capitol has cost \$40,000,000 already and lacks a good deal of being finished, yet. There are single stones in the Treasury building (and a good many of them) that cost twenty-seven thousand dollars apiece—and millions were spent in the construction of that and the Patent Office and the other great government buildings. To move to St. Louis, the country must throw away a hundred millions of capital invested in those buildings, and go right to work to spend a hundred millions on new buildings in St. Louis. Shall we ever have a Congress, a majority of whose members are hopelessly insane? Probably not. But it is possible—unquestionably such a thing is possible. Only I don't believe it will happen in our time; and I am satisfied the capital will not be moved until it does happen. But if St. Louis would donate the ground and the buildings, it would be a different matter. No, Pamela, I don't see any good reason to believe you or I will ever see the capital moved.

I have twice instructed the publishers to send you a book—it was the first thing I did—long before the proofs were finished. Write me if it is not yet done.

Livy says we must have you all at our marriage, and I say we can't. It will be at Christmas or New Years, when such a trip across the country would be equivalent to murder & arson & everything else.—And it would cost five hundred dollars—an amount of money she don't know the value of now, but will before a year is gone. She grieves over it, poor little rascal, but it can't be

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helped. She must wait awhile, till I am firmly on my legs, & then she shall see you. She says her father and mother will invite you just as soon as the wedding date is definitely fixed, anyway—& she thinks that's bound to settle it. But the ice & snow, & the long hard journey, & the injudiciousness of laying out any money except what we are obliged to part with while we are so much in debt, settles the case differently. For it is a debt.

....Mr. Langdon is just as good as bound for \$25,000 for me, and has already advanced half of it in cash. I wrote and asked whether I had better send him my note, or a due-bill, or how he would prefer to have the indebtedness made of record and he answered every other topic in the letter pleasantly but never replied to that at all. Still, I shall give my note into the hands of his business agent here, and pay him the interest as it falls due. We must "go slow." We are not in the Cleveland Herald. We are a hundred thousand times better off, but there isn't so much money in it.

(Remainder missing.)

In spite of the immediate success of his book—a success the like of which had scarcely been known in America—Mark Twain held himself to be, not a literary man, but a journalist: He had no plans for another book; as a newspaper owner and editor he expected, with his marriage, to settle down and devote the rest of his life to journalism. The paper was the Buffalo Express; his interest in it was one-third—the purchase price, twenty-five thousand dollars, of which he had paid a part, Jervis Langdon, his future father-in-law, having furnished cash and security for the remainder. He was already in possession in August, but he was not regularly in Buffalo that autumn, for he had agreed with Redpath to deliver his Quaker City lecture, and the tour would not end until a short time before his wedding-day, February 2, 1870. Our next letter hardly belongs in this collection; as it was doubtless written with at least the possibility of publication in view. But it is too amusing, too characteristic of Mark Twain, to be omitted. It was sent in response to an invitation from the New York Society of California Pioneers to attend a banquet given in New York City, October 13, 1869, and was, of course, read to the assembled diners.

To the New York Society of California Pioneers, in New York City:

Elmira, October 11, 1869. *Gentlemen*,—Circumstances render it out of my power to take advantage of the invitation extended to me through Mr. Simonton, and be present at your dinner at New York. I regret this very much, for there are several among you whom I would have a right to join hands with on the score of old friendship, and I suppose I would have a sublime general right to shake hands with the rest of you on the score of kinship in California ups and downs in search of fortune.



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If I were to tell some of my experience, you would recognize California blood in me; I fancy the old, old story would sound familiar, no doubt. I have the usual stock of reminiscences. For instance: I went to Esmeralda early. I purchased largely in the “Wide West,” “Winnemucca,” and other fine claims, and was very wealthy. I fared sumptuously on bread when flour was \$200 a barrel and had beans for dinner every Sunday, when none but bloated aristocrats could afford such grandeur. But I finished by feeding batteries in a quartz mill at \$15 a week, and wishing I was a battery myself and had somebody to feed me. My claims in Esmeralda are there yet. I suppose I could be persuaded to sell.

I went to Humboldt District when it was new; I became largely interested in the “Alba Nueva” and other claims with gorgeous names, and was rich again—in prospect. I owned a vast mining property there. I would not have sold out for less than \$400,000 at that time. But I will now. Finally I walked home—200 miles partly for exercise, and partly because stage fare was expensive. Next I entered upon an affluent career in Virginia City, and by a judicious investment of labor and the capital of friends, became the owner of about all the worthless wild cat mines there were in that part of the country. Assessments did the business for me there. There were a hundred and seventeen assessments to one dividend, and the proportion of income to outlay was a little against me. My financial barometer went down to 32 Fahrenheit, and the subscriber was frozen out.

I took up extensions on the main lead-extensions that reached to British America, in one direction, and to the Isthmus of Panama in the other—and I verily believe I would have been a rich man if I had ever found those infernal extensions. But I didn't. I ran tunnels till I tapped the Arctic Ocean, and I sunk shafts till I broke through the roof of perdition; but those extensions turned up missing every time. I am willing to sell all that property and throw in the improvements.

Perhaps you remember that celebrated “North Ophir?” I bought that mine. It was very rich in pure silver. You could take it out in lumps as large as a filbert. But when it was discovered that those lumps were melted half dollars, and hardly melted at that, a painful case of “salting” was apparent, and the undersigned adjourned to the poorhouse again.

I paid assessments on “Hale and Norcross” until they sold me out, and I had to take in washing for a living—and the next month that infamous stock went up to \$7,000 a foot.

I own millions and millions of feet of affluent silver leads in Nevada—in fact the entire undercrust of that country nearly, and if Congress would move that State off my property so that I could get at it, I would be wealthy yet. But no, there she squats—and here am I. Failing health persuades me to sell. If you know of any one desiring a permanent investment, I can furnish one that will have the virtue of being eternal.



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I have been through the California mill, with all its “dips, spurs and angles, variations and sinuosities.” I have worked there at all the different trades and professions known to the catalogues. I have been everything, from a newspaper editor down to a cow-catcher on a locomotive, and I am encouraged to believe that if there had been a few more occupations to experiment on, I might have made a dazzling success at last, and found out what mysterious designs Providence had in creating me.

But you perceive that although I am not a Pioneer, I have had a sufficiently variegated time of it to enable me to talk Pioneer like a native, and feel like a Forty-Niner. Therefore, I cordially welcome you to your old-remembered homes and your long deserted firesides, and close this screed with the sincere hope that your visit here will be a happy one, and not embittered by the sorrowful surprises that absence and lapse of years are wont to prepare for wanderers; surprises which come in the form of old friends missed from their places; silence where familiar voices should be; the young grown old; change and decay everywhere; home a delusion and a disappointment; strangers at hearthstone; sorrow where gladness was; tears for laughter; the melancholy-pomp of death where the grace of life has been!

With all good wishes for the Returned Prodigals, and regrets that I cannot partake of a small piece of the fatted calf (rare and no gravy)

I am yours, cordially,

Mark Twain.

In the next letter we find him in the midst of a sort of confusion of affairs, which, in one form or another, would follow him throughout the rest of his life. It was the price of his success and popularity, combined with his general gift for being concerned with a number of things, and a natural tendency for getting into hot water, which becomes more evident as the years and letters pass in review. Orion Clemens, in his attempt to save money for the government, had employed methods and agents which the officials at Washington did not understand, and refused to recognize. Instead of winning the credit and commendation he had expected, he now found himself pursued by claims of considerable proportions. The “land” referred to is the Tennessee tract, the heritage which John Clemens had provided for his children. Mark Twain had long since lost faith in it, and was not only willing, but eager to renounce his rights. “Nasby” is, of course, David R. Locke, of the Toledo Blade, whose popularity at this time both as a lecturer and writer was very great. Clemens had met him here and there on their platform tour, and they had become good friends. Clemens, in fact, had once proposed to Nasby a joint trip to the Pacific coast. The California idea had been given up, but both Mark Twain and Nasby found engagements

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enough, and sufficient profit east of the Mississippi. Boston was often their headquarters that winter ('69 and '70), and they were much together. "Josh Billings," another of Redpath's lecturers, was likewise often to be found in the Lyceum offices. There is a photograph of Mark Twain, Nasby, and Josh Billings together. Clemens also, that winter, met William Dean Howells, then in the early days of his association with the Atlantic Monthly. The two men, so widely different, became firm friends at sight, and it was to Howells in the years to come that Mark Twain would write more letters, and more characteristic letters, than to any other living man. Howells had favorably reviewed 'The Innocents Abroad,' and after the first moment of their introduction had passed Clemens said: "When I read that review of yours I felt like the woman who said that she was so glad that her baby had come white." It was not the sort of thing that Howells would have said, but it was the sort of thing that he could understand and appreciate from Mark Twain. In company with Nasby Clemens, that season, also met Oliver Wendell Holmes. Later he had sent Holmes a copy of his book and received a pleasantly appreciative reply. "I always like," wrote Holmes, "to hear what one of my fellow countrymen, who is not a Hebrew scholar, or a reader of hiero-glyphics, but a good-humored traveler with a pair of sharp, twinkling Yankee (in the broader sense) eyes in his head, has to say about the things that learned travelers often make unintelligible, and sentimental ones ridiculous or absurd I hope your booksellers will sell a hundred thousand copies of your travels." A wish that was realized in due time, though it is doubtful if Doctor Holmes or any one else at the moment believed that a book of that nature and price (it was \$3.50 a copy) would ever reach such a sale.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

Boston, Nov. 9, 1869. My dear sister,—Three or four letters just received from home. My first impulse was to send Orion a check on my publisher for the money he wants, but a sober second thought suggested that if he has not defrauded the government out of money, why pay, simply because the government chooses to consider him in its debt? No: Right is right. The idea don't suit me. Let him write the Treasury the state of the case, and tell them he has no money. If they make his sureties pay, then I will make the sureties whole, but I won't pay a cent of an unjust claim. You talk of disgrace. To my mind it would be just as disgraceful to allow one's self to be bullied into paying that which is unjust.

Ma thinks it is hard that Orion's share of the land should be swept away just as it is right on the point (as it always has been) of becoming valuable. Let her rest easy on that point. This letter is his ample authority to sell my share of the land immediately and appropriate the proceeds—giving no account to me, but repaying the amount to Ma first, or in case of her death, to you or your heirs, whenever in the future he shall be able to do it. Now, I want no hesitation in this matter. I renounce my ownership from this date, for this purpose, provided it is sold just as suddenly as he can sell it.



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In the next place—Mr. Langdon is old, and is trying hard to withdraw from business and seek repose. I will not burden him with a purchase—but I will ask him to take full possession of a coal tract of the land without paying a cent, simply conditioning that he shall mine and throw the coal into market at his own cost, and pay to you and all of you what he thinks is a fair portion of the profits accruing—you can do as you please with the rest of the land. Therefore, send me (to Elmira,) information about the coal deposits so framed that he can comprehend the matter and can intelligently instruct an agent how to find it and go to work.

Tomorrow night I appear for the first time before a Boston audience—4,000 critics—and on the success of this matter depends my future success in New England. But I am not distressed. Nasby is in the same boat. Tonight decides the fate of his brand-new lecture. He has just left my room—been reading his lecture to me—was greatly depressed. I have convinced him that he has little to fear.

I get just about five hundred more applications to lecture than I can possibly fill—and in the West they say “Charge all you please, but come.” I shan’t go West at all. I stop lecturing the 22d of January, sure. But I shall talk every night up to that time. They flood me with high-priced invitations to write for magazines and papers, and publishers besiege me to write books. Can’t do any of these things.

I am twenty-two thousand dollars in debt, and shall earn the money and pay it within two years—and therefore I am not spending any money except when it is necessary.

I had my life insured for \$10,000 yesterday (what ever became of Mr. Moffett’s life insurance?) “for the benefit of my natural heirs”—the same being my mother, for Livy wouldn’t claim it, you may be sure of that. This has taken \$200 out of my pocket which I was going to send to Ma. But I will send her some, soon. Tell Orion to keep a stiff upper lip—when the worst comes to the worst I will come forward. Must talk in Providence, R. I., tonight. Must leave now. I thank Mollie and Orion and the rest for your letters, but you see how I am pushed—ought to have 6 clerks.

Affectionately,

Sam.

By the end of January, 1870 more than thirty thousand copies of the Innocents had been sold, and in a letter to his publisher the author expressed his satisfaction.

To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford:



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Elmira, Jan. 28 '70.

Friend Bliss,--..... Yes, I am satisfied with the way you are running the book. You are running it in staving, tip-top, first-class style. I never wander into any corner of the country but I find that an agent has been there before me, and many of that community have read the book. And

on an average about ten people a day come and hunt me up to thank me and tell me I'm a benefactor! I guess this is a part of the programme we didn't expect in the first place.

I think you are rushing this book in a manner to be proud of; and you will make the finest success of it that has ever been made with a subscription book, I believe. What with advertising, establishing agencies, &c., you have got an enormous lot of machinery under way and hard at work in a wonderfully short space of time. It is easy to see, when one travels around, that one must be endowed with a deal of genuine generalship in order to manœuvre a publication whose line of battle stretches from end to end of a great continent, and whose foragers and skirmishers invest every hamlet and besiege every village hidden away in all the vast space between.

I'll back you against any publisher in America, Bliss—or elsewhere.

Yrs as ever

Clemens.

There is another letter written just at this time which of all letters must not be omitted here. Only five years earlier Mark Twain, poor, and comparatively unknown, had been carrying water while Jim Gillis and Dick Stoker washed out the pans of dirt in search of the gold pocket which they did not find. Clemens must have received a letter from Gillis referring to some particular occasion, but it has disappeared; the reply, however, always remained one of James Gillis's treasured possessions.

To James Gillis, in his cabin on Jackass Hill,
Tuolumne Co., California:

Elmira, N.Y. Jan. 26, '70. *Dear Jim*,—I remember that old night just as well! And somewhere among my relics I have your remembrance stored away. It makes my heart ache yet to call to mind some of those days. Still, it shouldn't—for right in the depths of their poverty and their pocket-hunting vagabondage lay the germ of my coming good fortune. You remember the one gleam of jollity that shot across our dismal sojourn in the rain and mud of Angels' Camp I mean that day we sat around the tavern stove and heard that chap tell about the frog and how they filled him with shot. And you remember how we quoted from the yarn and laughed over it, out there on the hillside while you and dear old Stoker panned and washed. I jotted the story down in my note-book that day,

and would have been glad to get ten or fifteen dollars for it—I was just that blind. But then we were so hard up! I published that



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story, and it became widely known in America, India, China, England—and the reputation it made for me has paid me thousands and thousands of dollars since. Four or five months ago I bought into the Express (I have ordered it sent to you as long as you live—and if the book keeper sends you any bills, you let me hear of it.) I went heavily in debt never could have dared to do that, Jim, if we hadn't heard the jumping Frog story that day.

And wouldn't I love to take old Stoker by the hand, and wouldn't I love to see him in his great specialty, his wonderful rendition of "Rinalds" in the "Burning Shame!" Where is Dick and what is he doing? Give him my fervent love and warm old remembrances.

A week from today I shall be married to a girl even better, and lovelier than the peerless "Chapparal Quails." You can't come so far, Jim, but still I cordially invite you to come, anyhow—and I invite Dick, too. And if you two boys were to land here on that pleasant occasion, we would make you right royally welcome.

Truly your friend,
SAML L. Clemens.

P. S. "California plums are good, Jim—particularly when they are stewed."

Steve Gillis, who sent a copy of his letter to the writer, added: "Dick Stoker—dear, gentle unselfish old Dick—died over three years ago, aged 78. I am sure it will be a melancholy pleasure to Mark to know that Dick lived in comfort all his later life, sincerely loved and respected by all who knew him. He never left Jackass Hill. He struck a pocket years ago containing enough not only to build himself a comfortable house near his old cabin, but to last him, without work, to his painless end. He was a Mason, and was buried by the Order in Sonora. "The 'Quails'—the beautiful, the innocent, the wild little Quails—lived way out in the Chapparal; on a little ranch near the Stanislaus River, with their father and mother. They were famous for their beauty and had many suitors." The mention of "California plums" refers to some inedible fruit which Gillis once, out of pure goodness of heart, bought of a poor wandering squaw, and then, to conceal his motive, declared that they were something rare and fine, and persisted in eating them, though even when stewed they nearly choked him.

X.

Letters 1870-71. Mark Twain in Buffalo. Marriage. The Buffalo express. "Memoranda." Lectures. A new book

Samuel L. Clemens and Olivia Langdon were married in the Langdon home at Elmira, February 2, 1870, and took up their residence in Buffalo in a beautiful home, a wedding



present from the bride's father. The story of their wedding, and the amusing circumstances connected with their establishment in Buffalo, have been told elsewhere. —[Mark Twain: A Biography, chap. lxxiv.]

Mark Twain now believed that he was through with lecturing. Two letters to Redpath, his agent, express his comfortable condition.



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To James Redpath, in Boston:

Buffalo, March 22, 1890.

Dear red,—I am not going to lecture any more forever. I have got things ciphered down to a fraction now. I know just about what it will cost us to live and I can make the money without lecturing. Therefore old man, count me out.

Your friend,
S. L. *Clemens*.

To James Redpath, in Boston:

Elmira, N. Y. May 10, 1870.

Friend Redpath,—I guess I am out of the field permanently.

Have got a lovely wife; a lovely house, bewitchingly furnished; a lovely carriage, and a coachman whose style and dignity are simply awe-inspiring—nothing less—and I am making more money than necessary —by considerable, and therefore why crucify myself nightly on the platform. The subscriber will have to be excused from the present season at least.

Remember me to Nasby, Billings and Fall.—[Redpath's partner in the lecture lyceum.] —Luck to you! I am going to print your menagerie, Parton and all, and make comments.

In next *Galaxy* I give Nasby's friend and mine from Philadelphia (John Quill, a literary thief) a "hyste."

Yours always and after.

Mark.

The reference to the *Galaxy* in the foregoing letter has to do with a department called Memoranda, which he had undertaken to conduct for the new magazine. This work added substantially to his income, and he believed it would be congenial. He was allowed free hand to write and print what he chose, and some of his best work at this time was published in the new department, which he continued for a year. Mark Twain now seemed to have his affairs well regulated. His mother and sister were no longer far away in St. Louis. Soon after his marriage they had, by his advice, taken up residence at Fredonia, New York, where they could be easily visited from Buffalo. Altogether, the outlook seemed bright to Mark Twain and his wife, during the first months of their marriage. Then there came a change. In a letter which Clemens wrote to his mother and sister we get the first chapter of disaster.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y.:



Elmira, N. Y. June 25, 1870. *My dear mother and sister*,—We were called here suddenly by telegram, 3 days ago. Mr. Langdon is very low. We have well-nigh lost hope—all of us except Livy.

Mr. Langdon, whose hope is one of his most prominent characteristics, says himself, this morning, that his recovery is only a possibility, not a probability. He made his will this morning—that is, appointed executors—nothing else was necessary. The household is sad enough Charley is in Bavaria. We telegraphed Munroe & Co. Paris, to notify Charley to come home—they sent the message to Munich. Our message left here at 8 in the morning and Charley's answer arrived less than eight hours afterward. He sailed immediately.



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He will reach home two weeks from now. The whole city is troubled. As I write (at the office,) a dispatch arrives from Charley who has reached London, and will sail thence on 28th. He wants news. We cannot send him any.

Affectionately
Sam.

P. S. I sent \$300 to Fredonia Bank for Ma—It is in her name.

Mrs. Clemens, herself, was not in the best of health at this time, but devotion to her father took her to his bedside, where she insisted upon standing long, hard watches, the strain of which told upon her severely. Meantime, work must go on; the daily demand of the newspaper and the monthly call of the Memoranda could not go unheeded. Also, Bliss wanted a new book, and met Mark Twain at Elmira to arrange for it. In a letter to Orion we learn of this project.

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

Elmira, July 15, 1870 my dear Bro.,—Per contract I must have another 600-page book ready for my publisher Jan. z, and I only began it today. The subject of it is a secret, because I may possibly change it. But as it stands, I propose to do up Nevada and Cal., beginning with the trip across the country in the stage. Have you a memorandum of the route we took—or the names of any of the Stations we stopped at? Do you remember any of the scenes, names, incidents or adventures of the coach trip?—for I remember next to nothing about the matter. Jot down a foolscap page of items for me. I wish I could have two days' talk with you.

I suppose I am to get the biggest copyright, this time, ever paid on a subscription book in this country.

Give our love to Mollie.—Mr. Langdon is very low.

Yr Bro
Sam.

The “biggest copyright,” mentioned in this letter, was a royalty of 7 1/2 per cent., which Bliss had agreed to pay, on the retail price of the book. The book was *Roughing It*, though this title was not decided upon until considerably later. Orion Clemens eagerly furnished a detailed memorandum of the route of their overland journey, which brought this enthusiastic acknowledgment:

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

BUF., 1870.

Dear Bro.,—I find that your little memorandum book is going to be ever so much use to



me, and will enable me to make quite a coherent narrative of the Plains journey instead of slurring it over and jumping 2,000 miles at a stride. The book I am writing will sell. In return for the use of the little memorandum book I shall take the greatest pleasure in forwarding to you the third \$1,000 which the publisher of the forthcoming work sends me or the first \$1,000, I am not particular—they will both be in the first quarterly statement of account from the publisher.

In great haste,
Yr Obliged Bro.
Sam.



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Love to Mollie. We are all getting along tolerably well.

Mr. Langdon died early in August, and Mrs. Clemens returned to Buffalo, exhausted in mind and body. If she hoped for rest now, in the quiet of her own home, she was disappointed, as the two brief letters that follow clearly show.

To Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y.:

Buffalo, Aug. 31, 70. My dear sister,—I know I ought to be thrashed for not writing you, but I have kept putting it off. We get heaps of letters every day; it is a comfort to have somebody like you that will let us shirk and be patient over it. We got the book and I did think I wrote a line thanking you for it—but I suppose I neglected it.

We are getting along tolerably well. Mother [Mrs. Langdon] is here, and Miss Emma Nye. Livy cannot sleep since her father's death—but I give her a narcotic every night and make her. I am just as busy as I can be —am still writing for the *Galaxy* and also writing a book like the "Innocents" in size and style. I have got my work ciphered down to days, and I haven't a single day to spare between this and the date which, by written contract I am to deliver the M.S. of the book to the publisher.

—In a hurry
Affectionately
Sam

To Orion Clemens, in St, Louis:

BUF. Sept. 9th, 1870. *My dear Bro,*—O here! I don't want to be consulted at all about Tenn. I don't want it even mentioned to me. When I make a suggestion it is for you to act upon it or throw it aside, but I beseech you never to ask my advice, opinion or consent about that hated property. If it was because I felt the slightest personal interest in the infernal land that I ever made a suggestion, the suggestion would never be made.

Do exactly as you please with the land—always remember this—that so trivial a percentage as ten per cent will never sell it.

It is only a bid for a somnambulist.

I have no time to turn round, a young lady visitor (schoolmate of Livy's) is dying in the house of typhoid fever (parents are in South Carolina) and the premises are full of nurses and doctors and we are all fagged out.

Yrs.
Sam.

Miss Nye, who had come to cheer her old schoolmate, had been prostrated with the deadly fever soon after her arrival. Another period of anxiety and nursing followed.



Mrs. Clemens, in spite of her frail health, devoted much time to her dying friend, until by the time the end came she was herself in a precarious condition. This was at the end of September. A little more than a month later, November 7th, her first child, Langdon Clemens, was prematurely born. To the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and wife, of Hartford, Mark Twain characteristically announced the new arrival.

To Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and wife, in Hartford, Conn.:



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*Buffalo, Nov 12, '70. Dear uncle and aunt,—*I came into the world on the 7th inst., and consequently am about five days old, now. I have had wretched health ever since I made my appearance. First one thing and then another has kept me under the weather, and as a general thing I have been chilly and uncomfortable.

I am not corpulent, nor am I robust in any way. At birth I only weighed 4 1/2 pounds with my clothes on—and the clothes were the chief feature of the weight, too, I am obliged to confess. But I am doing finely, all things considered. I was at a standstill for 3 days and a half, but during the last 24 hours I have gained nearly an ounce, avoirdupois.

They all say I look very old and venerable—and I am aware, myself, that I never smile. Life seems a serious thing, what I have seen of it—and my observation teaches me that it is made up mainly of hiccups, unnecessary washings, and colic. But no doubt you, who are old, have long since grown accustomed and reconciled to what seems to me such a disagreeable novelty.

My father said, this morning, when my face was in repose and thoughtful, that I looked precisely as young Edward Twichell of Hartford used to look some is months ago—chin, mouth, forehead, expression—everything.

My little mother is very bright and cheery, and I guess she is pretty happy, but I don't know what about. She laughs a great deal, notwithstanding she is sick abed. And she eats a great deal, though she says that is because the nurse desires it. And when she has had all the nurse desires her to have, she asks for more. She is getting along very well indeed.

My aunt Susie Crane has been here some ten days or two weeks, but goes home today, and Granny Fairbanks of Cleveland arrives to take her place.
—[Mrs. Fairbanks, of the Quaker City excursion.]

Very lovingly,
Langdon Clemens.

P. S. Father said I had better write because you would be more interested in me, just now, than in the rest of the family.

Clemens had made the acquaintance of the Rev. Joseph Hopkins Twichell and his wife during his several sojourns in Hartford, in connection with his book publication, and the two men had immediately become firm friends. Twichell had come to Elmira in February to the wedding to assist Rev. Thos. K. Beecher in the marriage ceremony. Joseph Twichell was a devout Christian, while Mark Twain was a doubter, even a scoffer, where orthodoxy was concerned, yet the sincerity and humanity of the two men drew them together; their friendship was lifelong.



A second letter to Twichell, something more than a month later, shows a somewhat improved condition in the Clemens household.

To Rev. Twichell, in Hartford:

BUF. Dec. 19th, 1870. *Dear J. H.*,—All is well with us, I believe—though for some days the baby was quite ill. We consider him nearly restored to health now, however. Ask my brother about us—you will find him at Bliss's publishing office, where he is gone to edit Bliss's new paper—left here last Monday. Make his and his wife's acquaintance. Take Mrs. T. to see them as soon as they are fixed.



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Livy is up, and the prince keeps her busy and anxious these latter days and nights, but I am a bachelor up stairs and don't have to jump up and get the soothing syrup—though I would as soon do it as not, I assure you. (Livy will be certain to read this letter.)

Tell Harmony (Mrs. T.) that I do hold the baby, and do it pretty handily, too, although with occasional apprehensions that his loose head will fall off. I don't have to quiet him—he hardly ever utters a cry. He is always thinking about something. He is a patient, good little baby.

Smoke? I always smoke from 3 till 5 Sunday afternoons—and in New York the other day I smoked a week, day and night. But when Livy is well I smoke only those two hours on Sunday. I'm "boss" of the habit, now, and shall never let it boss me any more. Originally, I quit solely on Livy's account, (not that I believed there was the faintest reason in the matter, but just as I would deprive myself of sugar in my coffee if she wished it, or quit wearing socks if she thought them immoral,) and I stick to it yet on Livy's account, and shall always continue to do so, without a pang. But somehow it seems a pity that you quit, for Mrs. T. didn't mind it if I remember rightly. Ah, it is turning one's back upon a kindly Providence to spurn away from us the good creature he sent to make the breath of life a luxury as well as a necessity, enjoyable as well as useful, to go and quit smoking when then ain't any sufficient excuse for it! Why, my old boy, when they use to tell me I would shorten my life ten years by smoking, they little knew the devotee they were wasting their puerile word upon—they little knew how trivial and valueless I would regard a decade that had no smoking in it! But I won't persuade you, Twichell—I won't until I see you again—but then we'll smoke for a week together, and then shut off again.

I would have gone to Hartford from New York last Saturday, but I got so homesick I couldn't. But maybe I'll come soon.

No, Sir, catch me in the metropolis again, to get homesick.

I didn't know Warner had a book out.

We send oceans and continents of love—I have worked myself down, today.

Yrs always

Mark.

With his establishment in Buffalo, Clemens, as already noted, had persuaded his sister, now a widow, and his mother, to settle in Fredonia, not far away. Later, he had found a position for Orion, as editor of a small paper which Bliss had established. What with these several diversions and the sorrows and sicknesses of his own household, we can readily imagine that literary work had been performed under difficulties. Certainly, humorous writing under such disturbing conditions could not have been easy, nor could



we expect him to accept an invitation to be present and make a comic speech at an agricultural dinner, even though Horace Greeley would preside. However, he sent to the secretary of the association a letter which might be read at the gathering:

To A. B. Crandall, in Woodberry Falls, N. Y., to be read at an agricultural dinner:



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Buffalo, Dec. 26, 1870.

Gentlemen,—I thank you very much for your invitation to the Agricultural dinner, and would promptly accept it and as promptly be there but for the fact that Mr. Greeley is very busy this month and has requested me to clandestinely continue for him in *The Tribune* the articles “What I Know about Farming.” Consequently the necessity of explaining to the readers of that journal why buttermilk cannot be manufactured profitably at 8 cents a quart out of butter that costs 60 cents a pound compels my stay at home until the article is written.

With reiterated thanks, I am

Yours truly,
Mark Twain.

In this letter Mark Twain made the usual mistake as to the title of the Greeley farming series, “What I Know of Farming” being the correct form.

The *Buffalo Express*, under Mark Twain’s management, had become a sort of repository for humorous efforts, often of an indifferent order. Some of these things, signed by *nom de plumes*, were charged to Mark Twain. When Bret Harte’s “Heathen Chinee” devastated the country, and was so widely parodied, an imitation of it entitled, “Three Aces,” and signed “Carl Byng,” was printed in the *Express*. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, then editor of *Every Saturday*, had not met Mark Twain, and, noticing the verses printed in the exchanges over his signature, was one of those who accepted them as Mark Twain’s work. He wrote rather an uncomplimentary note in *Every Saturday* concerning the poem and its authorship, characterizing it as a feeble imitation of Bret Harte’s “Heathen Chinee.” Clemens promptly protested to Aldrich, then as promptly regretted having done so, feeling that he was making too much of a small matter. Hurriedly he sent a second brief note.

To Thomas Bailey Aldrich, editor of “*Every Saturday*,”
Boston, Massachusetts:

Buffalo, Jan. 22, 1870. *Dear sir*,—Please do not publish the note I sent you the other day about “Hy. Slocum’s” plagiarism entitled “Three Aces”—it is not important enough for such a long paragraph. Webb writes me that he has put in a paragraph about it, too—and I have requested him to suppress it. If you would simply state, in a line and a half under “Literary Notes,” that you mistook one “Hy. Slocum” (no, it was one “Carl Byng,” I perceive) “Carl Byng” for Mark Twain, and that it was the former who wrote the plagiarism entitled “Three Aces,” I think that would do a fair justice without any unseemly display. But it is hard to be accused of plagiarism—a crime I never have committed in my life.

Yrs. Truly
Mark Twain.



But this came too late. Aldrich replied that he could not be prevented from doing him justice, as forty-two thousand copies of the first note, with the editor's apology duly appended, were already in press. He would withdraw his apology in the next number of *Every Saturday*, if Mark Twain said so. Mark Twain's response this time assumed the proportions of a letter.

To Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in Boston:



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472 *Delaware st., Buffalo*, Jan. 28. *Dear Mr. Aldrich*,—No indeed, don't take back the apology! Hang it, I don't want to abuse a man's civility merely because he gives me the chance.

I hear a good deal about doing things on the "spur of the moment" —I invariably regret the things I do on the spur of the moment. That disclaimer of mine was a case in point. I am ashamed every time I think of my bursting out before an unconcerned public with that bombastic pow-wow about burning publishers' letters, and all that sort of imbecility, and about my not being an imitator, *etc.* Who would find out that I am a natural fool if I kept always cool and never let nature come to the surface? Nobody.

But I did hate to be accused of plagiarizing Bret Harte, who trimmed and trained and schooled me patiently until he changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse grotesquenesses to a writer of paragraphs and chapters that have found a certain favor in the eyes of even some of the very decentest people in the land—and this grateful remembrance of mine ought to be worth its face, seeing that Bret broke our long friendship a year ago without any cause or provocation that I am aware of.

Well, it is funny, the reminiscences that glare out from murky corners of one's memory, now and then, without warning. Just at this moment a picture flits before me: Scene—private room in Barnum's Restaurant, Virginia, Nevada; present, Artemus Ward, Joseph T. Goodman, (editor and proprietor Daily "Enterprise"), and "Dan de Quille" and myself, reporters for same; remnants of the feast thin and scattering, but such tautology and repetition of empty bottles everywhere visible as to be offensive to the sensitive eye; time, 2.30 A.M.; Artemus thickly reciting a poem about a certain infant you wot of, and interrupting himself and being interrupted every few lines by poundings of the table and shouts of "Splendid, by Shorzhe!" Finally, a long, vociferous, poundiferous and vitreous jingling of applause announces the conclusion, and then Artemus: "Let every man 'at loves his fellow man and 'preciates a poet 'at loves his fellow man, stan' up!—Stan' up and drink health and long life to Thomas Bailey Aldrich!—and drink it stanning!" (On all hands fervent, enthusiastic, and sincerely honest attempts to comply.) Then Artemus: "Well—consider it stanning, and drink it just as ye are!" Which was done.

You must excuse all this stuff from a stranger, for the present, and when I see you I will apologize in full.

Do you know the prettiest fancy and the neatest that ever shot through Harte's brain? It was this: When they were trying to decide upon a vignette for the cover of the *Overland*, a grizzly bear (of the arms of the State of California) was chosen. Nahl Bras. carved him and the page was printed, with him in it, looking thus: [Rude sketch of a grizzly bear.]



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As a bear, he was a success—he was a good bear—. But then, it was objected, that he was an objectless bear—a bear that meant nothing in particular, signified nothing,— simply stood there snarling over his shoulder at nothing—and was painfully and manifestly a boorish and ill-natured intruder upon the fair page. All hands said that—none were satisfied. They hated badly to give him up, and yet they hated as much to have him there when there was no paint to him. But presently Harte took a pencil and drew these two simple lines under his feet and behold he was a magnificent success!—the ancient symbol of California savagery snarling at the approaching type of high and progressive Civilization, the first Overland locomotive!: [Sketch of a small section of railway track.]

I just think that was nothing less than inspiration itself.

Once more I apologize, and this time I do it “stanning!”

Yrs. Truly

SAML. L. *Clemens*.

The “two simple lines,” of course, were the train rails under the bear’s feet, and completed the striking cover design of the Overland monthly.

The brief controversy over the “Three Aces” was the beginning of along and happy friendship between Aldrich and Mark Twain. Howells, Aldrich, Twichell, and Charles Dudley Warner—these were Mark Twain’s intimates, men that he loved, each for his own special charm and worth.

Aldrich he considered the most brilliant of living men.

In his reply to Clemens’s letter, Aldrich declared that he was glad now that, for the sake of such a letter, he had accused him falsely, and added:

“Mem. Always abuse people.

“When you come to Boston, if you do not make your presence manifest to me, I’ll put in a !! in ‘Every Saturday’ to the effect that though you are generally known as Mark Twain your favorite nom de plume is ‘Barry Gray.’”

Clemens did not fail to let Aldrich know when he was in Boston again, and the little coterie of younger writers forgathered to give him welcome.

Buffalo agreed with neither Mrs. Clemens nor the baby. What with nursing and anguish of mind, Mark Twain found that he could do nothing on the new book, and that he must give up his magazine department. He had lost interest in his paper and his



surroundings in general. Journalism and authorship are poor yoke-mates. To Onion Clemens, at this time editing Bliss's paper at Hartford, he explained the situation.

To Onion Clemens, in Hartford:

*Buffalo, 4th 1871. My dear Bro,—*What I wanted of the "Liar" Sketch, was to work it into the California book—which I shall do. But day before yesterday I concluded to go out of the Galaxy on the strength of it, so I have turned it into the last Memoranda I shall ever write, and published it as a "specimen chapter" of my forthcoming book.



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I have written the Galaxy people that I will never furnish them another article long or short, for any price but \$500.00 cash—and have requested them not to ask me for contributions any more, even at that price.

I hope that lets them out, for I will stick to that. Now do try and leave me clear out of the 'Publisher' for the present, for I am endangering my reputation by writing too much—I want to get out of the public view for awhile.

I am still nursing Livy night and day and cannot write anything. I am nearly worn out. We shall go to Elmira ten days hence (if Livy can travel on a mattress then,) and stay there till I have finished the California book—say three months. But I can't begin work right away when I get there—must have a week's rest, for I have been through 30 days' terrific siege.

That makes it after the middle of March before I can go fairly to work—and then I'll have to hump myself and not lose a moment. You and Bliss just put yourselves in my place and you will see that my hands are full and more than full.

When I told Bliss in N. Y. that I would write something for the Publisher I could not know that I was just about to lose fifty days. Do you see the difference it makes? Just as soon as ever I can, I will send some of the book M.S. but right in the first chapter I have got to alter the whole style of one of my characters and re-write him clear through to where I am now. It is no fool of a job, I can tell you, but the book will be greatly bettered by it. Hold on a few days—four or five—and I will see if I can get a few chapters fixed to send to Bliss.

I have offered this dwelling house and the Express for sale, and when we go to Elmira we leave here for good. I shall not select a new home till the book is finished, but we have little doubt that Hartford will be the place.

We are almost certain of that. Ask Bliss how it would be to ship our furniture to Hartford, rent an upper room in a building and unbox it and store it there where somebody can frequently look after it. Is not the idea good? The furniture is worth \$10,000 or \$12,000 and must not be jammed into any kind of a place and left unattended to for a year.

The first man that offers \$25,000 for our house can take it—it cost that. What are taxes there? Here, all bunched together—of all kinds, they are 7 per cent—simply ruin.

The things you have written in the Publisher are tip-top.

In haste,
Yr Bro

Sam



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There are no further letters until the end of April, by which time the situation had improved. Clemens had sold his interest in the Express (though at a loss), had severed his magazine connection, and was located at Quarry Farm, on a beautiful hilltop above Elmira, the home of Mrs. Clemens's sister, Mrs. Theodore Crane. The pure air and rest of that happy place, where they were to spend so many idyllic summers, had proved beneficial to the sick ones, and work on the new book progressed in consequence. Then Mark Twain's old editor, "Joe" Goodman, came from Virginia City for a visit, and his advice and encouragement were of the greatest value. Clemens even offered to engage Goodman on a salary, to remain until he had finished his book. Goodman declined the salary, but extended his visit, and Mark Twain at last seems to have found himself working under ideal conditions. He jubilantly reports his progress.

To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford:

Elmira, Monday. May 15th 1871 *friend Bliss*,—Yrs rec'd enclosing check for \$703.35
The old "Innocents" holds out handsomely.

I have *Ms.* enough on hand now, to make (allowing for engravings) about 400 pages of the book—consequently am two-thirds done. I intended to run up to Hartford about the middle of the week and take it along; because it has chapters in it that ought by all means to be in the prospectus; but I find myself so thoroughly interested in my work, now (a thing I have not experienced for months) that I can't bear to lose a single moment of the inspiration. So I will stay here and peg away as long as it lasts. My present idea is to write as much more as I have already written, and then cull from the mass the very best chapters and discard the rest. I am not half as well satisfied with the first part of the book as I am with what I am writing now. When I get it done I want to see the man who will begin to read it and not finish it. If it falls short of the "Innocents" in any respect I shall lose my guess.

When I was writing the "Innocents" my daily stunt was 30 pages of *Ms* and I hardly ever got beyond it; but I have gone over that nearly every day for the last ten. That shows that I am writing with a red-hot interest. Nothing grieves me now—nothing troubles me, nothing bothers me or gets my attention—I don't think of anything but the book, and I don't have an hour's unhappiness about anything and don't care two cents whether school keeps or not. It will be a bully book. If I keep up my present lick three weeks more I shall be able and willing to scratch out half of the chapters of the Overland narrative—and shall do it.

You do not mention having received my second batch of *Ms*, sent a week or two ago—about 100 pages.

If you want to issue a prospectus and go right to canvassing, say the word and I will forward some more *Ms*—or send it by hand—special messenger. Whatever chapters you think are unquestionably good, we will retain of course, so they can go into a



prospectus as well one time as another. The book will be done soon, now. I have 1200 pages of *Ms* already written and am now writing 200 a week—more than that, in fact; during the past week wrote 23 one day, then 30, 33, 35, 52, and 65. —How's that?



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It will be a starchy book, and should be full of snappy pictures —especially pictures worked in with the letterpress. The dedication will be worth the price of the volume—thus:

To the Late Cain.
This Book is Dedicated:

Not on account of respect for his memory, for it merits little respect; not on account of sympathy with him, for his bloody deed placed him without the pale of sympathy, strictly speaking: but out of a mere human commiseration for him that it was his misfortune to live in a dark age that knew not the beneficent Insanity Plea.

I think it will do.

Yrs. *Clemens*.

P. S.—The reaction is beginning and my stock is looking up. I am getting the bulliest offers for books and almanacs; am flooded with lecture invitations, and one periodical offers me \$6,000 cash for 12 articles, of any length and on any subject, treated humorously or otherwise.

The suggested dedication “to the late Cain” may have been the humoristic impulse of the moment. At all events, it did not materialize.

Clemens’s enthusiasm for work was now such that he agreed with Redpath to return to the platform that autumn, and he began at once writing lectures. His disposal of the Buffalo paper had left him considerably in debt, and platforming was a sure and quick method of retrenchment. More than once in the years ahead Mark Twain would return to travel and one-night stands to lift a burden of debt. Brief letters to Redpath of this time have an interest and even a humor of their own.

Letters to James Redpath, in Boston:

Elmira, June 27, 1871. *Dear red*,—Wrote another lecture—a third one—today. It is the one I am going to deliver. I think I shall call it “Reminiscences of Some Pleasant Characters Whom I Have Met,” (or should the “whom” be left out?) It covers my whole acquaintance—kings, lunatics, idiots and all. Suppose you give the item a start in the Boston papers. If I write fifty lectures I shall only choose one and talk that one only.

No sir: Don’t you put that scarecrow (portrait) from the *Galaxy* in, I won’t stand that nightmare.

Yours,

Mark.



Elmira, July 10, 1871. *Dear Redpath*,—I never made a success of a lecture delivered in a church yet. People are afraid to laugh in a church. They can't be made to do it in any possible way.

Success to Fall's carbuncle and many happy returns.

Yours,

Mark.

To Mr. Fall, in Boston:

Elmira, N. Y. July 20, 1871.

Friend fall,—Redpath tells me to blow up. Here goes! I wanted you to scare Rondout off with a big price. \$125 ain't big. I got \$100 the first time I ever talked there and now they have a much larger hall. It is a hard town to get to—I run a chance of getting caught by the ice and missing next engagement. Make the price \$150 and let them draw out.

Yours

Mark



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Letters to James Redpath, in Boston:

Hartford, Tuesday Aug. 8, 1871. Dear red,—I am different from other women; my mind changes oftener. People who have no mind can easily be steadfast and firm, but when a man is loaded down to the guards with it, as I am, every heavy sea of foreboding or inclination, maybe of indolence, shifts the cargo. See? Therefore, if you will notice, one week I am likely to give rigid instructions to confine me to New England; next week, send me to Arizona; the next week withdraw my name; the next week give you full untrammelled swing; and the week following modify it. You must try to keep the run of my mind, Redpath, it is your business being the agent, and it always was too many for me. It appears to me to be one of the finest pieces of mechanism I have ever met with. Now about the West, this week, I am willing that you shall retain all the Western engagements. But what I shall want next week is still with God.

Let us not profane the mysteries with soiled hands and prying eyes of sin.

Yours,

Mark.

P. S. Shall be here 2 weeks, will run up there when Nasby comes.

Elmira, N. Y. Sept. 15, 1871.

Dear Redpath,—I wish you would get me released from the lecture at Buffalo. I mortally hate that society there, and I don't doubt they hired me. I once gave them a packed house free of charge, and they never even had the common politeness to thank me. They left me to shift for myself, too, a la Bret Harte at Harvard. Get me rid of Buffalo! Otherwise I'll have no recourse left but to get sick the day I lecture there. I can get sick easy enough, by the simple process of saying the word—well never mind what word—I am not going to lecture there.

Yours,

Mark.

Buffalo, Sept. 26, 1871.

Dear Redpath,—We have thought it all over and decided that we can't possibly talk after Feb. 2.

We shall take up our residence in Hartford 6 days from now

Yours

Mark.

XI.

*Letters 1871-72. Removal to Hartford. A lecture tour. "Roughing it."
First letter to Howells*

The house they had taken in Hartford was the Hooker property on Forest Street, a handsome place in a distinctly literary neighborhood. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Dudley Warner, and other well-known writers were within easy walking distance; Twichell was perhaps half a mile away. It was the proper environment for Mark Twain. He settled his little family there,

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and was presently at Redpath's office in Boston, which was a congenial place, as we have seen before. He did not fail to return to the company of Nasby, Josh Billings, and those others of Redpath's "attractions" as long and as often as distance would permit. Bret Harte, who by this time had won fame, was also in Boston now, and frequently, with Howells, Aldrich, and Mark Twain, gathered in some quiet restaurant corner for a luncheon that lasted through a dim winter afternoon—a period of anecdote, reminiscence, and mirth. They were all young then, and laughed easily. Howells, has written of one such luncheon given by Ralph Keeler, a young Californian—a gathering at which James T. Fields was present "Nothing remains to me of the happy time but a sense of idle and aimless and joyful talk-play, beginning and ending nowhere, of eager laughter, of countless good stories from Fields, of a heat-lightning shimmer of wit from Aldrich, of an occasional concentration of our joint mockeries upon our host, who took it gladly."

But a lecture circuit cannot be restricted to the radius of Boston. Clemens was presently writing to Redpath from Washington and points farther west.

To James Redpath, in Boston:

Washington, Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1871.

Dear red,—I have come square out, thrown "Reminiscences" overboard, and taken "Artemus Ward, Humorist," for my subject. Wrote it here on Friday and Saturday, and read it from *Ms* last night to an enormous house. It suits me and I'll never deliver the nasty, nauseous "Reminiscences" any more.

Yours,
Mark.

The Artemus Ward lecture lasted eleven days, then he wrote:

To Redpath and Fall, in Boston:

Buffalodepot, Dec. 8, 1871.

Redpath & fall, Boston,—Notify all hands that from this time I shall talk nothing but selections from my forthcoming book "Roughing It." Tried it last night. Suits me tip-top.
SAM'L L. Clemens.

The Roughing It chapters proved a success, and continued in high favor through the rest of the season.

To James Redpath, in Boston:



Logansport, Ind. Jan. 2, 1872. Friend Redpath,—Had a splendid time with a splendid audience in Indianapolis last night—a perfectly jammed house, just as I have had all the time out here. I like the new lecture but I hate the “Artemus Ward” talk and won’t talk it any more. No man ever approved that choice of subject in my hearing, I think.

Give me some comfort. If I am to talk in New York am I going to have a good house? I don’t care now to have any appointments cancelled. I’ll even “fetch” those Dutch Pennsylvanians with this lecture.

Have paid up \$4000 indebtedness. You are the, last on my list. Shall begin to pay you in a few days and then I shall be a free man again.

Yours,

Mark.



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With his debts paid, Clemens was anxious to be getting home. Two weeks following the above he wrote Redpath that he would accept no more engagements at any price, outside of New England, and added, "The fewer engagements I have from this time forth the better I shall be pleased." By the end of February he was back in Hartford, refusing an engagement in Boston, and announcing to Redpath, "If I had another engagement I'd rot before I'd fill it." From which we gather that he was not entirely happy in the lecture field. As a matter of fact, Mark Twain loathed the continuous travel and nightly drudgery of platform life. He was fond of entertaining, and there were moments of triumph that repaid him for a good deal, but the tyranny of a schedule and timetables was a constant exasperation. Meantime, *Roughing It* had appeared and was selling abundantly. Mark Twain, free of debt, and in pleasant circumstances, felt that the outlook was bright. It became even more so when, in March, the second child, a little girl, Susy, was born, with no attending misfortunes. But, then, in the early summer little Langdon died. It was seldom, during all of Mark Twain's life, that he enjoyed more than a brief period of unmixed happiness. It was in June of that year that Clemens wrote his first letter to William Dean Howells the first of several hundred that would follow in the years to come, and has in it something that is characteristic of nearly all the Clemens-Howells letters—a kind of tender playfulness that answered to something in Howells's make-up, his sense of humor, his wide knowledge of a humanity which he pictured so amusingly to the world.

To William Dean Howells, in Boston:

Hartford, June 15, 1872. Friend Howells,—Could you tell me how I could get a copy of your portrait as published in *Hearth and Home*? I hear so much talk about it as being among the finest works of art which have yet appeared in that journal, that I feel a strong desire to see it. Is it suitable for framing? I have written the publishers of *H & H* time and again, but they say that the demand for the portrait immediately exhausted the edition and now a copy cannot be had, even for the European demand, which has now begun. Bret Harte has been here, and says his family would not be without that portrait for any consideration. He says his children get up in the night and yell for it. I would give anything for a copy of that portrait to put up in my parlor. I have Oliver Wendell Holmes and Bret Harte's, as published in *Every Saturday*, and of all the swarms that come every day to gaze upon them none go away that are not softened and humbled and made more resigned to the will of God. If I had yours to put up alongside of them, I believe the combination would bring more souls to earnest reflection and ultimate conviction of their lost condition,



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than any other kind of warning would. Where in the nation can I get that portrait? Here are heaps of people that want it,—that need it. There is my uncle. He wants a copy. He is lying at the point of death. He has been lying at the point of death for two years. He wants a copy—and I want him to have a copy. And I want you to send a copy to the man that shot my dog. I want to see if he is dead to every human instinct.

Now you send me that portrait. I am sending you mine, in this letter; and am glad to do it, for it has been greatly admired. People who are judges of art, find in the execution a grandeur which has not been equalled in this country, and an expression which has not been approached in any.

Yrs truly,
S. L. Clemens.

P. S. 62,000 copies of “*Roughing It*” sold and delivered in 4 months.

The Clemens family did not spend the summer at Quarry Farm that year. The sea air was prescribed for Mrs. Clemens and the baby, and they went to Saybrook, Connecticut, to Fenwick Hall. Clemens wrote very little, though he seems to have planned *Tom Sawyer*, and perhaps made its earliest beginning, which was in dramatic form.

His mind, however, was otherwise active. He was always more or less given to inventions, and in his next letter we find a description of one which he brought to comparative perfection.

He had also conceived the idea of another book of travel, and this was his purpose of a projected trip to England.

To Orion Clemens, in Hartford:

Fenwickhall, Saybrook, Conn.

Aug. 11, 1872.

My dear Bro.—I shall sail for England in the *Scotia*, Aug. 21.

But what I wish to put on record now, is my new invention—hence this note, which you will preserve. It is this—a self-pasting scrap-book—good enough idea if some juggling tailor does not come along and ante-date me a couple of months, as in the case of the elastic veststrap.

The nuisance of keeping a scrap-book is: 1. One never has paste or gum tragacanth handy; 2. Mucilage won't stick, or stay, 4 weeks; 3. Mucilage sucks out the ink and makes the scraps unreadable; 4. To daub and paste 3 or 4 pages of scraps is tedious, slow, nasty and tiresome. My idea is this: Make a scrap-book with leaves veneered or



coated with gum-stickum of some kind; wet the page with sponge, brush, rag or tongue, and dab on your scraps like postage stamps.

Lay on the gum in columns of stripes.

Each stripe of gum the length of say 20 ems, small pica, and as broad as your finger; a blank about as broad as your finger between each 2 stripes—so in wetting the paper you need not wet any more of the gum than your scrap or scraps will cover—then you may shut up the book and the leaves won't stick together.



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Preserve, also, the envelope of this letter—postmark ought to be good evidence of the date of this great humanizing and civilizing invention.

I'll put it into Dan Slote's hands and tell him he must send you all over America, to urge its use upon stationers and booksellers—so don't buy into a newspaper. The name of this thing is "Mark Twain's Self-Pasting Scrapbook."

All well here. Shall be up a P. M. Tuesday. Send the carriage.

Yr Bro.

S. L. Clemens.

The Dan Slote of this letter is, of course, his old Quaker City shipmate, who was engaged in the blank-book business, the firm being Slote & Woodman, located at 119 and 121 William Street, New York.

XII.

Letters 1872-73. Mark Twain in England. London honors. Acquaintance with Dr. John Brown. A lecture triumph. "The gilded age"

Clemens did, in fact, sail for England on the given date, and was lavishly received there. All literary London joined in giving him a good time. He had not as yet been received seriously by the older American men of letters, but England made no question as to his title to first rank. Already, too, they classified him as of the human type of Lincoln, and reveled in him without stint. Howells writes: "In England, rank, fashion, and culture rejoiced in him. Lord Mayors, Lord Chief justices, and magnates of many kinds were his hosts." He was treated so well and enjoyed it all so much that he could not write a book—the kind of book he had planned. One could not poke fun at a country or a people that had welcomed him with open arms. He made plenty of notes, at first, but presently gave up the book idea and devoted himself altogether to having a good time. He had one grievance—a publisher by the name of Hotten, a sort of literary harpy, of which there were a great number in those days of defective copyright, not merely content with pilfering his early work, had reprinted, under the name of Mark Twain, the work of a mixed assortment of other humorists, an offensive volume bearing the title, *Screamers and Eye-openers*, by Mark Twain. They besieged him to lecture in London, and promised him overflowing houses. Artemus Ward, during his last days, had earned London by storm with his platform humor, and they promised Mark Twain even greater success. For some reason, however, he did not welcome the idea; perhaps there was too much gaiety. To Mrs. Clemens he wrote:

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:



London, Sep. 15, 1872. Livy, darling, everybody says lecture-lecture-lecture—but I have not the least idea of doing it—certainly not at present. Mr. Dolby, who took Dickens to America, is coming to talk business to me tomorrow, though I have sent him word once before, that I can't be hired to talk here, because I have no time to spare.



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There is too much sociability—I do not get along fast enough with work. Tomorrow I lunch with Mr. Toole and a Member of Parliament—Toole is the most able Comedian of the day. And then I am done for a while. On Tuesday I mean to hang a card to my keybox, inscribed—“Gone out of the City for a week”—and then I shall go to work and work hard. One can’t be caught in a hive of 4,000,000 people, like this.

I have got such a perfectly delightful razor. I have a notion to buy some for Charley, Theodore and Slee—for I know they have no such razors there. I have got a neat little watch-chain for Annie—\$20.

I love you my darling. My love to all of you.

SAML.

That Mark Twain should feel and privately report something of his triumphs we need not wonder at. Certainly he was never one to give himself airs, but to have the world’s great literary center paying court to him, who only ten years before had been penniless and unknown, and who once had been a barefoot Tom Sawyer in Hannibal, was quite startling. It is gratifying to find evidence of human weakness in the following heart-to-heart letter to his publisher, especially in view of the relating circumstances.

To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford:

London, Sept. 28, 1872. Friend Bliss,—I have been received in a sort of tremendous way, tonight, by the brains of London, assembled at the annual dinner of the Sheriffs of London—mine being (between you and me) a name which was received with a flattering outburst of spontaneous applause when the long list of guests was called.

I might have perished on the spot but for the friendly support and assistance of my excellent friend Sir John Bennett—and I want you to paste the enclosed in a couple of the handsomest copies of the “Innocents” and “Roughing It,” and send them to him. His address is

“Sir John Bennett,
Cheapside,
London.”
Yrs Truly
S. L. Clemens.

The “relating circumstances” were these: At the abovementioned dinner there had been a roll-call of the distinguished guests present, and each name had been duly applauded. Clemens, conversing in a whisper with his neighbor, Sir John Bennett, did not give very close attention to the names, applauding mechanically with the others. Finally, a name was read that brought out a vehement hand-clapping. Mark

Twain, not to be outdone in cordiality, joined vigorously, and kept his hands going even after the others finished. Then, remarking the general laughter, he whispered to Sir John: "Whose name was that we were just applauding?"

"Mark Twain's."



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We may believe that the “friendly support” of Sir John Bennett was welcome for the moment. But the incident could do him no harm; the diners regarded it as one of his jokes, and enjoyed him all the more for it.

He was ready to go home by November, but by no means had he had enough of England. He really had some thought of returning there permanently. In a letter to Mrs. Crane, at Quarry Farm, he wrote:

“If you and Theodore will come over in the Spring with Livy and me, and spend the summer you will see a country that is so beautiful that you will be obliged to believe in Fairyland..... and Theodore can browse with me among dusty old dens that look now as they looked five hundred years ago; and puzzle over books in the British Museum that were made before Christ was born; and in the customs of their public dinners, and the ceremonies of every official act, and the dresses of a thousand dignitaries, trace the speech and manners of all the centuries that have dragged their lagging decades over England since the Heptarchy fell asunder. I would a good deal rather live here if I could get the rest of you over.”

In a letter home, to his mother and sister, we get a further picture of his enjoyment.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett:

London, Nov. 6, 1872. My dear mother and sister,—I have been so everlasting busy that I couldn't write—and moreover I have been so unceasingly lazy that I couldn't have written anyhow. I came here to take notes for a book, but I haven't done much but attend dinners and make speeches. But have had a jolly good time and I do hate to go away from these English folks; they make a stranger feel entirely at home—and they laugh so easily that it is a comfort to make after-dinner speeches here. I have made hundreds of friends; and last night in the crush of the opening of the New Guild-hall Library and Museum, I was surprised to meet a familiar face every few steps. Nearly 4,000 people, of both sexes, came and went during the evening, so I had a good opportunity to make a great many new acquaintances.

Livy is willing to come here with me next April and stay several months —so I am going home next Tuesday. I would sail on Saturday, but that is the day of the Lord Mayor's annual grand state dinner, when they say 900 of the great men of the city sit down to table, a great many of them in their fine official and court paraphernalia, so I must not miss it. However, I may yet change my mind and sail Saturday. I am looking at a fine Magic lantern which will cost a deal of money, and if I buy it Sammy may come and learn to make the gas and work the machinery, and paint pictures for it on glass. I mean to give exhibitions for charitable purposes in Hartford, and charge a dollar a head.

In a hurry,

Ys affly
Sam.



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He sailed November 12th on the *Batavia*, arriving in New York two weeks later. There had been a presidential election in his absence. General Grant had defeated Horace Greeley, a result, in some measure at least, attributed to the amusing and powerful pictures of the cartoonist, Thomas Nast. Mark Twain admired Greeley's talents, but he regarded him as poorly qualified for the nation's chief executive. He wrote:

To Th. Nast, in Morristown, N. J.:

&nb

sp; *Hartford, Nov. 1872.*

Nast, you more than any other man have won a prodigious victory for Grant—I mean, rather, for civilization and progress. Those pictures were simply marvelous, and if any man in the land has a right to hold his head up and be honestly proud of his share in this year's vast events that man is unquestionably yourself. We all do sincerely honor you, and are proud of you.

Mark Twain.

Perhaps Mark Twain was too busy at this time to write letters. His success in England had made him more than ever popular in America, and he could by no means keep up with the demands on him. In January he contributed to the *New York Tribune* some letters on the Sandwich Islands, but as these were more properly articles they do not seem to belong here. He refused to go on the lecture circuit, though he permitted Redpath to book him for any occasional appearance, and it is due to one of these special engagements that we have the only letter preserved from this time. It is to Howells, and written with that exaggeration with which he was likely to embellish his difficulties. We are not called upon to believe that there were really any such demonstrations as those ascribed to Warner and himself.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Farmington Ave, Hartford Feb. 27. My dear Howells,—I am in a sweat and Warner is in another. I told Redpath some time ago I would lecture in Boston any two days he might choose provided they were consecutive days—

I never dreamed of his choosing days during Lent since that was his special horror—but all at once he telegraphs me, and hollers at me in all manner of ways that I am booked for Boston March 5 of all days in the year—and to make matters just as mixed and uncertain as possible, I can't find out to save my life whether he means to lecture me on the 6th or not.

Warner's been in here swearing like a lunatic, and saying he had written you to come on the 4th,—and I said, "You leather-head, if I talk in Boston both afternoon and evening March 5, I'll have to go to Boston the 4th,"—and then he just kicked up his heels and went off cursing after a fashion I never heard of before.



Now let's just leave this thing to Providence for 24 hours—you bet it will come out all right.

Yours ever
Mark.

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He was writing a book with Warner at this time—The Gilded Age—the two authors having been challenged by their wives one night at dinner to write a better book than the current novels they had been discussing with some severity. Clemens already had a story in his mind, and Warner agreed to collaborate in the writing. It was begun without delay. Clemens wrote the first three hundred and ninety-nine pages, and read there aloud to Warner, who took up the story at this point and continued it through twelve chapters, after which they worked alternately, and with great enjoyment. They also worked rapidly, and in April the story was completed. For a collaboration by two men so different in temperament and literary method it was a remarkable performance. Another thing Mark Twain did that winter was to buy some land on Farmington Avenue and begin the building of a home. He had by no means given up returning to England, and made his plans to sail with Mrs. Clemens and Susy in May. Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira—[Later Mrs. John B. Stanchfield, of New York.]—a girlhood friend of Mrs. Clemens—was to accompany them.

The Daily Graphic heard of the proposed journey, and wrote, asking for a farewell word. His characteristic reply is the only letter of any kind that has survived from that spring.

To the Editor of “The Daily Graphic,” in New York City:

Hartford, Apl. 17, 1873. Ed. Graphic,—Your note is received. If the following two lines which I have cut from it are your natural handwriting, then I understand you to ask me “for a farewell letter in the name of the American people.” Bless you, the joy of the American people is just a little premature; I haven’t gone yet. And what is more, I am not going to stay, when I do go.

Yes, it is true. I am only going to remain beyond the sea, six months, that is all. I love stir and excitement; and so the moment the spring birds begin to sing, and the lagging weariness of summer to threaten, I grow restless, I get the fidgets; I want to pack off somewhere where there’s something going on. But you know how that is—you must have felt that way. This very day I saw the signs in the air of the coming dullness, and I said to myself, “How glad I am that I have already chartered a steamship!” There was absolutely nothing in the morning papers. You can see for yourself what the telegraphic headings were:

By telegraph

A Father Killed by His Son

A Bloody Fight in Kentucky



A Court House Fired, and
Negroes Therein Shot
while Escaping

A Louisiana Massacre

An Eight-year-old murderer
Two to Three Hundred Men Roasted Alive!

A Town in a State of General Riot

A Lively Skirmish in Indiana
(and thirty other similar headings.)



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The items under those headings all bear date yesterday, Apl. 16 (refer to your own paper)—and I give you my word of honor that that string of commonplace stuff was everything there was in the telegraphic columns that a body could call news. Well, said I to myself this is getting pretty dull; this is getting pretty dry; there don't appear to be anything going on anywhere; has this progressive nation gone to sleep? Have I got to stand another month of this torpidity before I can begin to browse among the lively capitals of Europe?

But never mind—things may revive while I am away. During the last two months my next-door neighbor, Chas. Dudley Warner, has dropped his “Back-Log Studies,” and he and I have written a bulky novel in partnership. He has worked up the fiction and I have hurled in the facts. I consider it one of the most astonishing novels that ever was written. Night after night I sit up reading it over and over again and crying. It will be published early in the Fall, with plenty of pictures. Do you consider this an advertisement?—and if so, do you charge for such things when a man is your friend?

Yours truly,

SAML. L. Clemens,
“Mark Twain,”

An amusing, even if annoying, incident happened about the time of Mark Twain's departure. A man named Chew related to Twichell a most entertaining occurrence. Twichell saw great possibilities in it, and suggested that Mark Twain be allowed to make a story of it, sharing the profits with Chew. Chew agreed, and promised to send the facts, carefully set down. Twichell, in the mean time, told the story to Clemens, who was delighted with it and strongly tempted to write it at once, while he was in the spirit, without waiting on Chew. Fortunately, he did not do so, for when Chew's material came it was in the form of a clipping, the story having been already printed in some newspaper. Chew's knowledge of literary ethics would seem to have been slight. He thought himself entitled to something under the agreement with Twichell. Mark Twain, by this time in London, naturally had a different opinion.

To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

London, June 9, '73. Dear old Joe,—I consider myself wholly at liberty to decline to pay Chew anything, and at the same time strongly tempted to sue him into the bargain for coming so near ruining me. If he hadn't happened to send me that thing in print, I would have used the story (like an innocent fool) and would straightway have been hounded to death as a plagiarist. It would have absolutely destroyed me. I cannot conceive of a man being such a hopeless ass (after serving as a legislative reporter, too) as to imagine that I or any other literary man in his senses would consent to chew over old stuff that had already been in print. If that man weren't

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an infant in swaddling clothes, his only reply to our petition would have been, "It has been in print." It makes me as mad as the very Old Harry every time I think of Mr. Chew and the frightfully narrow escape I have had at his hands. Confound Mr. Chew, with all my heart! I'm willing that he should have ten dollars for his trouble of warming over his cold victuals—cheerfully willing to that—but no more. If I had had him near when his letter came, I would have got out my tomahawk and gone for him. He didn't tell the story half as well as you did, anyhow.

I wish to goodness you were here this moment—nobody in our parlor but Livy and me, —and a very good view of London to the fore. We have a luxuriously ample suite of apartments in the Langham Hotel, 3rd floor, our bedroom looking straight up Portland Place and our parlor having a noble array of great windows looking out upon both streets (Portland Place and the crook that joins it to Regent Street.)

9 P.M. Full twilight—rich sunset tints lingering in the west.

I am not going to write anything—rather tell it when I get back. I love you and Harmony, and that is all the fresh news I've got, anyway. And I mean to keep that fresh all the time.

Lovingly

Mark.

P. S.—Am luxuriating in glorious old Pepy's Diary, and smoking.

Letters are exceedingly scarce through all this period. Mark Twain, now on his second visit to London, was literally overwhelmed with honors and entertainment; his rooms at the Langham were like a court. Such men as Robert Browning, Turgenieff, Sir John Millais, and Charles Kingsley hastened to call. Kingsley and others gave him dinners. Mrs. Clemens to her sister wrote: "It is perfectly discouraging to try to write you." The continuous excitement presently told on her. In July all further engagements were canceled, and Clemens took his little family to Scotland, for quiet and rest. They broke the journey at York, and it was there that Mark Twain wrote the only letter remaining from this time.

Part of a letter to Mrs. Jervis Langdon, of Elmira, N. Y.:

For the present we shall remain in this queer old walled town, with its crooked, narrow lanes, that tell us of their old day that knew no wheeled vehicles; its plaster-and-timber dwellings, with upper stories far overhanging the street, and thus marking their date, say



three hundred years ago; the stately city walls, the castellated gates, the ivy-grown, foliage-sheltered, most noble and picturesque ruin of St. Mary's Abbey, suggesting their date, say five hundred years ago, in the heart of Crusading times and the glory of English chivalry and romance; the vast Cathedral of York, with its worn carvings and quaintly pictured windows, preaching of still remoter days; the outlandish



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names of streets and courts and byways that stand as a record and a memorial, all these centuries, of Danish dominion here in still earlier times; the hint here and there of King Arthur and his knights and their bloody fights with Saxon oppressors round about this old city more than thirteen hundred years gone by; and, last of all, the melancholy old stone coffins and sculptured inscriptions, a venerable arch and a hoary tower of stone that still remain and are kissed by the sun and caressed by the shadows every day, just as the sun and the shadows have kissed and caressed them every lagging day since the Roman Emperor's soldiers placed them here in the times when Jesus the Son of Mary walked the streets of Nazareth a youth, with no more name or fame than the Yorkshire boy who is loitering down this street this moment.

Their destination was Edinburgh, where they remained a month. Mrs. Clemens's health gave way on their arrival there, and her husband, knowing the name of no other physician in the place, looked up Dr. John Brown, author of *Rab and His Friends*, and found in him not only a skilful practitioner, but a lovable companion, to whom they all became deeply attached. Little Susy, now seventeen months old, became his special favorite. He named her *Megalops*, because of her great eyes. Mrs. Clemens regained her strength and they returned to London. Clemens, still urged to lecture, finally agreed with George Dolby to a week's engagement, and added a promise that after taking his wife and daughter back to America he would return immediately for a more extended course. Dolby announced him to appear at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, for the week of October 13-18, his lecture to be the old Sandwich Islands talk that seven years before had brought him his first success. The great hall, the largest in London, was thronged at each appearance, and the papers declared that Mark Twain had no more than "whetted the public appetite" for his humor. Three days later, October 1873, Clemens, with his little party, sailed for home. Half-way across the ocean he wrote the friend they had left in Scotland:

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

Mid-Atlantic, Oct. 30, 1873. *Our dear friend the Doctor*,—We have plowed a long way over the sea, and there's twenty-two hundred miles of restless water between us, now, besides the railway stretch. And yet you are so present with us, so close to us that a span and a whisper would bridge the distance.

The first three days were stormy, and wife, child, maid, and Miss Spaulding were all sea-sick 25 hours out of the 24, and I was sorry I ever started. However, it has been smooth, and balmy, and sunny and altogether lovely for a day or two now, and at night there is a broad luminous highway stretching over the sea to the moon, over which the spirits of the sea are traveling up and down all through the secret night and having a genuine good time, I make no doubt.



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Today they discovered a “collie” on board! I find (as per advertisement which I sent you) that they won’t carry dogs in these ships at any price. This one has been concealed up to this time. Now his owner has to pay L10 or heave him overboard. Fortunately the doggie is a performing doggie and the money will be paid. So after all it was just as well you didn’t intrust your collie to us.

A poor little child died at midnight and was buried at dawn this morning—sheeted and shotted, and sunk in the middle of the lonely ocean in water three thousand fathoms deep. Pity the poor mother.

With our love.

S. L. Clemens.

Mark Twain was back in London, lecturing again at the Queen’s Concert Rooms, after barely a month’s absence. Charles Warren Stoddard, whom he had known in California, shared his apartment at the Langham, and acted as his secretary—a very necessary office, for he was besieged by callers and bombarded with letters. He remained in London two months, lecturing steadily at Hanover Square to full houses. It is unlikely that there is any other platform record to match it. One letter of this period has been preserved. It is written to Twichell, near the end of his engagement.

To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

*London, Jan. 5 1874. My dear old Joe,—*I knew you would be likely to graduate into an ass if I came away; and so you have—if you have stopped smoking. However, I have a strong faith that it is not too late, yet, and that the judiciously managed influence of a bad example will fetch you back again.

I wish you had written me some news—Livy tells me precious little. She mainly writes to hurry me home and to tell me how much she respects me: but she’s generally pretty slow on news. I had a letter from her along with yours, today, but she didn’t tell me the book is out. However, it’s all right. I hope to be home 20 days from today, and then I’ll see her, and that will make up for a whole year’s dearth of news. I am right down grateful that she is looking strong and “lovelier than ever.” I only wish I could see her look her level best, once—I think it would be a vision.

I have just spent a good part of this day browsing through the Royal Academy Exhibition of Landseer’s paintings. They fill four or five great salons, and must number a good many hundreds. This is the only opportunity ever to see them, because the finest of them belong to the queen and she keeps them in her private apartments. Ah, they’re wonderfully beautiful! There are such rich moonlights and dusks in “The Challenge” and “The Combat;” and in that long flight of birds across a lake in the subdued flush of sunset (or sunrise—for no man can ever tell tother from which in a picture,

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except it has the filmy morning mist breathing itself up from the water). And there is such a grave analytical profundity in the faces of “The Connoisseurs;” and such pathos in the picture of the fawn suckling its dead mother, on a snowy waste, with only the blood in the footprints to hint that she is not asleep. And the way he makes animals absolute flesh and blood—insomuch that if the room were darkened ever so little and a motionless living animal placed beside a painted one, no man could tell which was which.

I interrupted myself here, to drop a line to Shirley Brooks and suggest a cartoon for Punch. It was this. In one of the Academy salons (in the suite where these pictures are), a fine bust of Landseer stands on a pedestal in the centre of the room. I suggest that some of Landseer’s best known animals be represented as having come down out of their frames in the moonlight and grouped themselves about the bust in mourning attitudes.

Well, old man, I am powerful glad to hear from you and shall be powerful glad to see you and Harmony. I am not going to the provinces because I cannot get halls that are large enough. I always felt cramped in Hanover Square Rooms, but I find that everybody here speaks with awe and respect of that prodigious place, and wonder that I could fill it so long.

I am hoping to be back in 20 days, but I have so much to go home to and enjoy with a jubilant joy, that it seems hardly possible that it can ever come to pass in so uncertain a world as this.

I have read the novel—[The Gilded Age, published during his absence, December, 1873.]—here, and I like it. I have made no inquiries about it, though. My interest in a book ceases with the printing of it.

With a world of love,
SAML.

XIII.

Letters 1874. Hartford and Elmira. A new study. Beginning “Tom Sawyer.” The Sellers play.

Naturally Redpath would not give him any peace now. His London success must not be wasted. At first his victim refused point-blank, and with great brevity. But he was overborne and persuaded, and made occasional appearances, wiring at last this final defiant word:



Telegram to James Redpath, in Boston:

Hartford, March 3, 1874.

James Redpath,—Why don't you congratulate me?

I never expect to stand on a lecture platform again after Thursday night.

Mark.

That he was glad to be home again we may gather from a letter sent at this time to Doctor Brown, of Edinburgh.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:



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Farmington Avenue, Hartford

Feb. 28, 1874.

My dear friend,—We are all delighted with your commendations of the Gilded Age—and the more so because some of our newspapers have set forth the opinion that Warner really wrote the book and I only added my name to the title page in order to give it a larger sale. I wrote the first eleven chapters, every word and every line. I also wrote chapters 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 21, 42, 43, 45, 51, 52, 53, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, and portions of 35, 49 and 56. So I wrote 32 of the 63 chapters entirely and part of 3 others beside.

The fearful financial panic hit the book heavily, for we published it in the midst of it. But nevertheless in the 8 weeks that have now elapsed since the day we published, we have sold 40,000 copies; which gives £3,000 royalty to be divided between the authors. This is really the largest two-months' sale which any American book has ever achieved (unless one excepts the cheaper editions of Uncle Tom's Cabin). The average price of our book is 16 shillings a copy—Uncle Tom was 2 shillings a copy. But for the panic our sale would have been doubled, I verily believe. I do not believe the sale will ultimately go over 100,000 copies.

I shipped to you, from Liverpool, Barley's Illustrations of Judd's "Margaret" (the waiter at the Adelphi Hotel agreeing to ship it securely per parcel delivery,) and I do hope it did not miscarry, for we in America think a deal of Barley's—[Felix Octavius Carr barley, 1822-1888, illustrator of the works of Irving, Cooper, etc. Probably the most distinguished American illustrator of his time.]—work. I shipped the novel ("Margaret") to you from here a week ago.

Indeed I am thankful for the wife and the child—and if there is one individual creature on all this footstool who is more thoroughly and uniformly and unceasingly happy than I am I defy the world to produce him and prove him. In my opinion, he doesn't exist. I was a mighty rough, coarse, unpromising subject when Livy took charge of me 4 years ago, and I may still be, to the rest of the world, but not to her. She has made a very creditable job of me.

Success to the Mark Twain Club!—and the novel shibboleth of the Whistle. Of course any member rising to speak would be required to preface his remark with a keen respectful whistle at the chair—the chair recognizing the speaker with an answering shriek, and then as the speech proceeded its gravity and force would be emphasized and its impressiveness augmented by the continual interjection of whistles in place of punctuation-pauses; and the applause of the audience would be manifested in the same way

They've gone to luncheon, and I must follow. With strong love from us both.



Your friend,
SAML. L. *Clemens*.



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These were the days when the Howells and Clemens families began visiting back and forth between Boston and Hartford, and sometimes Aldrich came, though less frequently, and the gatherings at the homes of Warner and Clemens were full of never-to-be-forgotten happiness. Of one such visit Howells wrote: "In the good-fellowship of that cordial neighborhood we had two such days as the aging sun no longer shines on in his round. There was constant running in and out of friendly houses, where the lively hosts and guests called one another by their christian names or nicknames, and no such vain ceremony as knocking or ringing at doors. Clemens was then building the stately mansion in which he satisfied his love of magnificence as if it had been another sealskin coat, and he was at the crest of the prosperity which enabled him to humor every whim or extravagance."

It was the delight of such a visit that kept Clemens constantly urging its repetition. One cannot but feel the genuine affection of these letters.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Mch. 1, 1876. *My dear Howells*,—Now you will find us the most reasonable people in the world. We had thought of precipitating upon you George Warner and wife one day; Twichell and his jewel of a wife another day, and Chas. Perkins and wife another. Only those—simply members of our family, they are. But I'll close the door against them all—which will "fix" all of the lot except Twichell, who will no more hesitate to climb in at the back window than nothing.

And you shall go to bed when you please, get up when you please, talk when you please, read when you please. Mrs. Howells may even go to New York Saturday if she feels that she must, but if some gentle, unannoying coaxing can beguile her into putting that off a few days, we shall be more than glad, for I do wish she and Mrs. Clemens could have a good square chance to get acquainted with each other. But first and last and all the time, we want you to feel untrammelled and wholly free from restraint, here.

The date suits—all dates suit.

Yrs ever

Mark.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Mch. 20, 1876. *Dear Howells*,—You or Aldrich or both of you must come to Hartford to live. Mr. Hall, who lives in the house next to Mrs. Stowe's (just where we drive in to go to our new house) will sell for \$16,000 or \$17,000. The lot is 85 feet front and 150 deep—long time and easy payments on the purchase? You can



do your work just as well here as in Cambridge, can't you? Come, will one of you boys buy that house? Now say yes.

Mrs. Clemens is an invalid yet, but is getting along pretty fairly.

We send best regards.

Mark.

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April found the Clemens family in Elmira. Mrs. Clemens was not over-strong, and the cares of house-building were many. They went early, therefore, remaining at the Langdon home in the city until Quarry Farm should feel a touch of warmer sun, Clemens wrote the news to Doctor Brown.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

*Elmira, N. Y., April 27, '86. Dear Doctor,—*This town is in the interior of the State of New York—and was my wife's birth-place. We are here to spend the whole summer. Although it is so near summer, we had a great snow-storm yesterday, and one the day before. This is rather breaking in upon our plans, as it may keep us down here in the valley a trifle longer than we desired. It gets fearfully hot here in the summer, so we spend our summers on top of a hill 6 or 700 feet high, about two or three miles from here—it never gets hot up there.

Mrs. Clemens is pretty strong, and so is the "little wifie" barring a desperate cold in the head the child grows in grace and beauty marvellously. I wish the nations of the earth would combine in a baby show and give us a chance to compete. I must try to find one of her latest photographs to enclose in this. And this reminds me that Mrs. Clemens keeps urging me to ask you for your photograph and last night she said, "and be sure to ask him for a photograph of his sister, and Jock—but say Master Jock—do not be headless and forget that courtesy; he is Jock in our memories and our talk, but he has a right to his title when a body uses his name in a letter." Now I have got it all in—I can't have made any mistake this time. Miss Clara Spaulding looked in, a moment, yesterday morning, as bright and good as ever. She would like to lay her love at your feet if she knew I was writing—as would also fifty friends of ours whom you have never seen, and whose homage is as fervent as if the cold and clouds and darkness of a mighty sea did not lie between their hearts and you. Poor old Rab had not many "friends" at first, but if all his friends of today could gather to his grave from the four corners of the earth what a procession there would be! And Rab's friends are your friends.

I am going to work when we get on the hill—till then I've got to lie fallow, albeit against my will. We join in love to you and yours.

Your friend ever,
SAML. L. Clemens.

P. S. I enclose a specimen of villainy. A man pretends to be my brother and my lecture agent—gathers a great audience together in a city more than a thousand miles from here, and then pockets the money and elopes, leaving the audience to wait for the imaginary lecturer! I am after him with the law.

It was a historic summer at the Farm. A new baby arrived in June; a new study was built for Mark Twain by Mrs. Crane, on the hillside near the old quarry; a new book was



begun in it—The Adventures of Tom Sawyer—and a play, the first that Mark Twain had really attempted, was completed—the dramatization of The Gilded Age.

An early word went to Hartford of conditions at the Farm.



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To Rev. and Mrs. Twichell, in Hartford:

Elmira, June 11, 1874.

My dear old Joe and Harmony,—The baby is here and is the great American Giantess—weighing 7 3/4 pounds. We had to wait a good long time for her, but she was full compensation when she did come.

The Modoc was delighted with it, and gave it her doll at once. There is nothing selfish about the Modoc. She is fascinated with the new baby. The Modoc rips and tears around out doors, most of the time, and consequently is as hard as a pine knot and as brown as an Indian. She is bosom friend to all the ducks, chickens, turkeys and guinea hens on the place. Yesterday as she marched along the winding path that leads up the hill through the red clover beds to the summer-house, there was a long procession of these fowls stringing contentedly after her, led by a stately rooster who can look over the Modoc's head. The devotion of these vassals has been purchased with daily largess of Indian meal, and so the Modoc, attended by her bodyguard, moves in state wherever she goes.

Susie Crane has built the loveliest study for me, you ever saw. It is octagonal, with a peaked roof, each octagon filled with a spacious window, and it sits perched in complete isolation on top of an elevation that commands leagues of valley and city and retreating ranges of distant blue hills. It is a cosy nest, with just room in it for a sofa and a table and three or four chairs—and when the storms sweep down the remote valley and the lightning flashes above the hills beyond, and the rain beats upon the roof over my head, imagine the luxury of it! It stands 500 feet above the valley and 2 1/2 miles from it.

However one must not write all day. We send continents of love to you and yours.

Affectionately

Mark.

We have mentioned before that Clemens had settled his mother and sister at Fredonia, New York, and when Mrs. Clemens was in condition to travel he concluded to pay them a visit.

It proved an unfortunate journey; the hot weather was hard on Mrs. Clemens, and harder still, perhaps, on Mark Twain's temper. At any period of his life a bore exasperated him, and in these earlier days he was far more likely to explode than in his mellow age. Remorse always followed—the price he paid was always costly. We cannot know now who was the unfortunate that invited the storm, but in the next letter we get the echoes of it and realize something of its damage.



To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia:

Elmira, Aug. 15. *MX dear mother and sister*,—I came away from Fredonia ashamed of myself; —almost too much humiliated to hold up my head and say good-bye. For I began to comprehend how much harm my conduct might do you socially in your village. I would have gone to that detestable oyster-brained bore and apologized for my inexcusable rudeness to him, but that I was satisfied he was of too small a calibre to know how to receive an apology with magnanimity.



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Pamela appalled me by saying people had hinted that they wished to visit Livy when she came, but that she had given them no encouragement. I feared that those people would merely comprehend that their courtesies were not wanted, and yet not know exactly why they were not wanted.

I came away feeling that in return for your constant and tireless efforts to secure our bodily comfort and make our visit enjoyable, I had basely repaid you by making you sad and sore-hearted and leaving you so. And the natural result has fallen to me likewise—for a guilty conscience has harassed me ever since, and I have not had one short quarter of an hour of peace to this moment.

You spoke of Middletown. Why not go there and live? Mr. Crane says it is only about a hundred miles this side of New York on the Erie road. The fact that one or two of you might prefer to live somewhere else is not a valid objection—there are no 4 people who would all choose the same place—so it will be vain to wait for the day when your tastes shall be a unit. I seriously fear that our visit has damaged you in Fredonia, and so I wish you were out of it.

The baby is fat and strong, and Susie the same. Susie was charmed with the donkey and the doll.

Ys affectionately
SAML.

P. S.—*Dear Ma and Pamela*—I am mainly grieved because I have been rude to a man who has been kind to you—and if you ever feel a desire to apologize to him for me, you may be sure that I will endorse the apology, no matter how strong it may be. I went to his bank to apologize to him, but my conviction was strong that he was not man enough to know how to take an apology and so I did not make it.

William Dean Howells was in those days writing those vividly realistic, indeed photographic stories which fixed his place among American men of letters. He had already written 'Their Wedding Journey' and 'A Chance Acquaintance' when 'A Foregone Conclusion' appeared. For the reason that his own work was so different, and perhaps because of his fondness for the author, Clemens always greatly admired the books of Howells. Howells's exact observation and his gift for human detail seemed marvelous to Mark Twain, who with a bigger brush was inclined to record the larger rather than the minute aspects of life. The sincerity of his appreciation of Howells, however, need not be questioned, nor, for that matter, his detestation of Scott.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Elmira, Aug. 22, 1874. Dear Howells,—I have just finished reading the 'Foregone Conclusion' to Mrs. Clemens and we think you have even outdone yourself. I should think that this must be the daintiest, truest, most admirable workmanship that was ever

put on a story. The creatures of God do not act out their natures more unerringly than yours do. If your genuine stories can die, I wonder by what right old Walter Scott's artificialities shall continue to live.

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I brought Mrs. Clemens back from her trip in a dreadfully broken-down condition—so by the doctor's orders we unpacked the trunks sorrowfully to lie idle here another month instead of going at once to Hartford and proceeding to furnish the new house which is now finished. We hate to have it go longer desolate and tenantless, but cannot help it.

By and by, if the madam gets strong again, we are hoping to have the Grays there, and you and the Aldrich households, and Osgood, down to engage in an orgy with them.

Ys Ever

Mark

Howells was editor of the *Atlantic* by this time, and had been urging Clemens to write something suitable for that magazine. He had done nothing, however, until this summer at Quarry Farm. There, one night in the moonlight, Mrs. Crane's colored cook, who had been a slave, was induced to tell him her story. It was exactly the story to appeal to Mark Twain, and the kind of thing he could write. He set it down next morning, as nearly in her own words and manner as possible, without departing too far from literary requirements. He decided to send this to Howells. He did not regard it very highly, but he would take the chance. An earlier offering to the magazine had been returned. He sent the "True Story," with a brief note:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Elmira, Sept. 2, '74.

My dear Howells,--.....I enclose also a "True Story" which has no humor in it. You can pay as lightly as you choose for that, if you want it, for it is rather out of my line. I have not altered the old colored woman's story except to begin at the beginning, instead of the middle, as she did--and traveled both ways.....

Yrs Ever

Mark.

But Howells was delighted with it. He referred to its "realest kind of black talk," and in another place added, "This little story delights me more and more. I wish you had about forty of them."

Along with the "True Story" Mark Twain had sent the "Fable for Good Old Boys and Girls"; but this Howells returned, not, as he said, because he didn't like it, but because the *Atlantic* on matters of religion was just in that "Good Lord, Good Devil condition when a little fable like yours wouldn't leave it a single Presbyterian, Baptist, Unitarian, Episcopalian, Methodist, or Millerite paying subscriber, while all the deadheads would stick to it and abuse it in the denominational newspapers!" But the shorter *Ms.* had been only a brief diversion. Mark Twain was bowling along at a book and a play. The book

was Tom Sawyer, as already mentioned, and the play a dramatization from The Gilded Age. Clemens had all along intended to dramatize the story of Colonel Sellers, and was one day thunderstruck to receive word from California that a San Francisco dramatist



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had appropriated his character in a play written for John T. Raymond. Clemens had taken out dramatic copyright on the book, and immediately stopped the performance by telegraph. A correspondence between the author and the dramatist followed, leading to a friendly arrangement by which the latter agreed to dispose of his version to Mark Twain. A good deal of discussion from time to time having arisen over the authorship of the Sellers play, as presented by Raymond, certain among the letters that follow may be found of special interest. Meanwhile we find Clemens writing to Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, on these matters and events in general. The book *Ms.*, which he mentions as having put aside, was not touched again for nearly a year.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

Quarryfarm, near Elmira, N. Y.

Sept. 4, 1874.

Dear friend,—I have been writing fifty pages of manuscript a day, on an average, for sometime now, on a book (a story) and consequently have been so wrapped up in it and so dead to anything else, that I have fallen mighty short in letter-writing. But night before last I discovered that that day's chapter was a failure, in conception, moral truth to nature, and execution—enough blemish to impair the excellence of almost any chapter—and so I must burn up the day's work and do it all over again. It was plain that I had worked myself out, pumped myself dry. So I knocked off, and went to playing billiards for a change. I haven't had an idea or a fancy for two days, now—an excellent time to write to friends who have plenty of ideas and fancies of their own, and so will prefer the offerings of the heart before those of the head. Day after to-morrow I go to a neighboring city to see a five-act-drama of mine brought out, and suggest amendments in it, and would about as soon spend a night in the Spanish Inquisition as sit there and be tortured with all the adverse criticisms I can contrive to imagine the audience is indulging in. But whether the play be successful or not, I hope I shall never feel obliged to see it performed a second time. My interest in my work dies a sudden and violent death when the work is done.

I have invented and patented a pretty good sort of scrap-book (I think) but I have backed down from letting it be known as mine just at present—for I can't stand being under discussion on a play and a scrap-book at the same time!

I shall be away two days, and then return to take our tribe to New York, where we shall remain five days buying furniture for the new house, and then go to Hartford and settle solidly down for the winter. After all that fallow time I ought to be able to go to work again on the book. We shall reach Hartford about the middle of September, I judge.

We have spent the past four months up here on top of a breezy hill, six hundred feet high, some few miles from Elmira, N. Y., and overlooking that town; (Elmira is my wife's birthplace and that of Susie and the new baby). This little summer house on the hill-top

(named Quarry Farm because there's a quarry on it,) belongs to my wife's sister, Mrs. Crane.



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A photographer came up the other day and wanted to make some views, and I shall send you the result per this mail.

My study is a snug little octagonal den, with a coal-grate, 6 big windows, one little one, and a wide doorway (the latter opening upon the distant town.) On hot days I spread the study wide open, anchor my papers down with brickbats and write in the midst of the hurricanes, clothed in the same thin linen we make shirts of. The study is nearly on the peak of the hill; it is right in front of the little perpendicular wall of rock left where they used to quarry stones. On the peak of the hill is an old arbor roofed with bark and covered with the vine you call the "American Creeper"—its green is almost bloodied with red. The Study is 30 yards below the old arbor and 200 yards above the dwelling-house—it is remote from all noises.....

Now isn't the whole thing pleasantly situated?

In the picture of me in the study you glimpse (through the left-hand window) the little rock bluff that rises behind the pond, and the bases of the little trees on top of it. The small square window is over the fireplace; the chimney divides to make room for it. Without the stereoscope it looks like a framed picture. All the study windows have Venetian blinds; they long ago went out of fashion in America but they have not been replaced with anything half as good yet.

The study is built on top of a tumbled rock-heap that has morning-glories climbing about it and a stone stairway leading down through and dividing it.

There now—if you have not time to read all this, turn it over to "Jock" and drag in the judge to help.

Mrs. Clemens must put in a late picture of Susie—a picture which she maintains is good, but which I think is slander on the child.

We revisit the Rutland Street home many a time in fancy, for we hold every individual in it in happy and grateful memory.

Goodbye,
Your friend,
SAML. L. *Clemens*.

P. S.—I gave the P. O. Department a blast in the papers about sending misdirected letters of mine back to the writers for reshipment, and got a blast in return, through a New York daily, from the New York postmaster. But I notice that misdirected letters find me, now, without any unnecessary fooling around.

The new house in Hartford was now ready to be occupied, and in a letter to Howells, written a little more than a fortnight after the foregoing, we find them located in "part" of



it. But what seems more interesting is that paragraph of the letter which speaks of close friendly relations still existing with the Warners, in that it refutes a report current at this time that there was a break between Clemens and Warner over the rights in the Sellers play. There was, in fact, no such rupture. Warner, realizing that he had no hand in the character of Sellers, and no share in the work of dramatization, generously yielded all claim to any part of the returns.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:



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Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Sept. 20, 1876. My dear Howells,—All right, my boy, send proof sheets here. I amend dialect stuff by talking and talking and talking it till it sounds right—and I had difficulty with this negro talk because a negro sometimes (rarely) says “goin” and sometimes “gwyne,” and they make just such discrepancies in other words—and when you come to reproduce them on paper they look as if the variation resulted from the writer’s carelessness. But I want to work at the proofs and get the dialect as nearly right as possible.

We are in part of the new house. Goodness knows when we’ll get in the rest of it—full of workmen yet.

I worked a month at my play, and launched it in New York last Wednesday. I believe it will go. The newspapers have been complimentary. It is simply a setting for the one character, Col. Sellers—as a play I guess it will not bear a critical assault in force.

The Warners are as charming as ever. They go shortly to the devil for a year—(which is but a poetical way of saying they are going to afflict themselves with the unsurpassable—(bad word) of travel for a spell.) I believe they mean to go and see you, first—so they mean to start from heaven to the other place; not from earth. How is that?

I think that is no slouch of a compliment—kind of a dim religious light about it. I enjoy that sort of thing.

Yrs ever

Mark.

Raymond, in a letter to the Sun, stated that not “one line” of the California dramatization had been used by Mark Twain, “except that which was taken bodily from *The Gilded Age*.” Clemens himself, in a statement that he wrote for the Hartford Post, but suppressed, probably at the request of his wife, gave a full history of the play’s origin, a matter of slight interest to-day. Sellers on the stage proved a great success. The play had no special merit as a literary composition, but the character of Sellers delighted the public, and both author and actor were richly repaid for their entertainment.

XIV.

Letters 1874. Mississippi chapters. Visits to Boston. A joke on Aldrich

“Couldn’t you send me some such story as that colored one for our January number—that is, within a month?” wrote Howells, at the end of September, and during the week following Mark Twain struggled hard to comply, but without result. When the month was nearly up he wrote:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:



Hartford, Oct. 23, 1874.

My dear Howells,—I have delayed thus long, hoping I might do something for the January number and Mrs. Clemens has diligently persecuted me day by day with urgings to go to work and do that something, but it's no use —I find I can't. We are in such a state of weary and endless confusion that my head won't go. So I give it up.....

Yrs ever,

Mark.



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But two hours later, when he had returned from one of the long walks which he and Twichell so frequently took together, he told a different story.

Later, P.M. *Home*, 24th '74.

My dear Howells,—I take back the remark that I can't write for the Jan. number. For Twichell and I have had a long walk in the woods and I got to telling him about old Mississippi days of steam-boating glory and grandeur as I saw them (during 5 years) from the pilothouse. He said "What a virgin subject to hurl into a magazine!" I hadn't thought of that before. Would you like a series of papers to run through 3 months or 6 or 9?—or about 4 months, say?

Yrs ever,
Mark.

Howells himself had come from a family of pilots, and rejoiced in the idea. A few days later Mark Twain forwarded the first instalment of the new series—those wonderful chapters that begin, now, with chapter four in the Mississippi book. Apparently he was not without doubt concerning the manuscript, and accompanied it with a brief line.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Dear Howells,—Cut it, scarify it, reject it handle it with entire freedom.

Yrs ever,
Mark.

But Howells had no doubts as to the quality of the new find. He declared that the "piece" about the Mississippi was capital, that it almost made the water in their ice-pitcher turn muddy as he read it. "The sketch of the low-lived little town was so good that I could have wished that there was more of it. I want the sketches, if you can make them, every month."

The "low-lived little town" was Hannibal, and the reader can turn to the vivid description of it in the chapter already mentioned.

In the same letter Howells refers to a "letter from Limerick," which he declares he shall keep until he has shown it around—especially to Aldrich and Osgood.

The "letter from Limerick" has to do with a special episode. Mention has just been made of Mark Twain's walk with Twichell. Frequently their walks were extended tramps, and once in a daring moment one or the other of them proposed to walk to Boston. The time was November, and the bracing air made the proposition seem attractive. They



were off one morning early, Twichell carrying a little bag, and Clemens a basket of luncheon. A few days before, Clemens had written Redpath that the Rev. J. H. Twichell and he expected to start at eight o'clock Thursday morning "to walk to Boston in twenty-four hours—or more. We shall telegraph Young's Hotel for rooms Saturday night, in order to allow for a low average of pedestrianism." They did not get quite to Boston. In fact, they got only a little farther than

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the twenty-eight miles they made the first day. Clemens could hardly walk next morning, but they managed to get to North Ashford, where they took a carriage for the nearest railway station. There they telegraphed to Redpath and Howells that they would be in Boston that evening. Howells, of course, had a good supper and good company awaiting them at his home, and the pedestrians spent two happy days visiting and recounting their adventures. It was one morning, at his hotel, that Mark Twain wrote the Limerick letter. It was addressed to Mrs. Clemens, but was really intended for Howells and Twichell and the others whom it mentions. It was an amusing fancy, rather than a letter, but it deserves place here.

To Mrs. Clemens—intended for Howells, Aldrich, *etc.*

Boston, Nov. 16, 1935. [1874] *Dear livy*, You observe I still call this beloved old place by the name it had when I was young. Limerick! It is enough to make a body sick.

The gentlemen-in-waiting stare to see me sit here telegraphing this letter to you, and no doubt they are smiling in their sleeves. But let them! The slow old fashions are good enough for me, thank God, and I will none other. When I see one of these modern fools sit absorbed, holding the end of a telegraph wire in his hand, and reflect that a thousand miles away there is another fool hitched to the other end of it, it makes me frantic with rage; and then am I more implacably fixed and resolved than ever, to continue taking twenty minutes to telegraph you what I communicate in ten sends by the new way if I would so debase myself. And when I see a whole silent, solemn drawing-room full of idiots sitting with their hands on each other's foreheads "communing," I tug the white hairs from my head and curse till my asthma brings me the blessed relief of suffocation. In our old day such a gathering talked pure drivel and "rot," mostly, but better that, a thousand times, than these dreary conversational funerals that oppress our spirits in this mad generation.

It is sixty years since I was here before. I walked hither, then, with my precious old friend. It seems incredible, now, that we did it in two days, but such is my recollection. I no longer mention that we walked back in a single day, it makes me so furious to see doubt in the face of the hearer. Men were men in those old times. Think of one of the puerile organisms in this effeminate age attempting such a feat.

My air-ship was delayed by a collision with a fellow from China loaded with the usual cargo of jabbering, copper-colored missionaries, and so I was nearly an hour on my journey. But by the goodness of God thirteen of the missionaries were crippled and several killed, so I was content to lose the time. I love to lose time, anyway, because it brings soothing reminiscences of the creeping railroad days of old, now lost to us forever.



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Our game was neatly played, and successfully.—None expected us, of course. You should have seen the guards at the ducal palace stare when I said, “Announce his grace the Archbishop of Dublin and the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hartford.” Arrived within, we were all eyes to see the Duke of Cambridge and his Duchess, wondering if we might remember their faces, and they ours. In a moment, they came tottering in; he, bent and withered and bald; she blooming with wholesome old age. He peered through his glasses a moment, then screeched in a reedy voice: “Come to my arms! Away with titles—I’ll know ye by no names but Twain and Twichell! Then fell he on our necks and jammed his trumpet in his ear, the which we filled with shoutings to this effect: God bless you, old Howells what is left of you!”

We talked late that night—none of your silent idiot “communings” for us —of the olden time. We rolled a stream of ancient anecdotes over our tongues and drank till the lord Archbishop grew so mellow in the mellow past that Dublin ceased to be Dublin to him and resumed its sweeter forgotten name of New York. In truth he almost got back into his ancient religion, too, good Jesuit, as he has always been since O’Mulligan the First established that faith in the Empire.

And we canvassed everybody. Bailey Aldrich, Marquis of Ponkapog, came in, got nobly drunk, and told us all about how poor Osgood lost his earldom and was hanged for conspiring against the second Emperor—but he didn’t mention how near he himself came to being hanged, too, for engaging in the same enterprise. He was as chaffy as he was sixty years ago, too, and swore the Archbishop and I never walked to Boston—but there was never a day that Ponkapog wouldn’t lie, so be it by the grace of God he got the opportunity.

The Lord High Admiral came in, a hale gentleman close upon seventy and bronzed by the suns and storms of many climes and scarred with the wounds got in many battles, and I told him how I had seen him sit in a high chair and eat fruit and cakes and answer to the name of Johnny. His granddaughter (the eldest) is but lately warned to the youngest of the Grand Dukes, and so who knows but a day may come when the blood of the Howells’s may reign in the land? I must not forget to say, while I think of it, that your new false teeth are done, my dear, and your wig. Keep your head well bundled with a shawl till the latter comes, and so cheat your persecuting neuralgias and rheumatisms. Would you believe it?—the Duchess of Cambridge is deafer than you—deafer than her husband. They call her to breakfast with a salvo of artillery; and usually when it thunders she looks up expectantly and says “come in.....”

The monument to the author of “Gloverson and His Silent partners” is finished. It is the stateliest and the costliest ever erected to the memory of any man. This noble classic has now been translated into all the languages of the earth and is adored by all nations and known to all creatures. Yet I have conversed as familiarly with the author of it as I do with my own great-grandchildren.



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I wish you could see old Cambridge and Ponkapog. I love them as dearly as ever, but privately, my dear, they are not much improvement on idiots. It is melancholy to hear them jabber over the same pointless anecdotes three and four times of an evening, forgetting that they had jabbered them over three or four times the evening before. Ponkapog still writes poetry, but the old-time fire has mostly gone out of it. Perhaps his best effort of late years is this:

“O soul, soul, soul of mine:
Soul, soul, soul of thine!
Thy soul, my soul, two souls entwined,
And sing thy lauds in crystal wine!”

This he goes about repeating to everybody, daily and nightly, insomuch that he is become a sore affliction to all that know him.

But I must desist. There are drafts here, everywhere and my gout is something frightful. My left foot hath resemblance to a snuff-bladder.
God be with you.

Hartford.

These to Lady Hartford, in the earldom of Hartford, in the upper portion of the city of Dublin.

One may imagine the joy of Howells and the others in this ludicrous extravaganza, which could have been written by no one but Mark Twain. It will hardly take rank as prophecy, though certainly true forecast in it is not wholly lacking.

Clemens was now pretty well satisfied with his piloting story, but he began to have doubts as to its title, “Old Times on the Mississippi.” It seemed to commit him to too large an undertaking.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Dec. 3, 1874. *My dear Howells*,—Let us change the heading to “Piloting on the Miss in the Old Times”—or to “Steamboating on the M. in Old Times”—or to “Personal Old Times on the Miss.”—We could change it for Feb. if now too late for Jan.—I suggest it because the present heading is too pretentious, too broad and general. It seems to command me to deliver a Second Book of Revelation to the world, and cover all the Old Times the Mississippi (dang that word, it is worse than “type” or “Egypt”) ever saw—whereas here I have finished Article No. III and am about to start on No. 4. and yet I have spoken of nothing but of Piloting as a science so far; and I doubt if I ever get beyond that portion of my subject. And I don’t care to. Any muggins can write about Old Times on the Miss. of 500 different kinds, but I am the only man alive that can



scribble about the piloting of that day—and no man ever has tried to scribble about it yet. Its newness pleases me all the time—and it is about the only new subject I know of. If I were to write fifty articles they would all be about pilots and piloting—therefore let's get the word Piloting into the heading. There's a sort of freshness about that, too.

Ys ever,

Mark.



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But Howells thought the title satisfactory, and indeed it was the best that could have been selected for the series. He wrote every few days of his delight in the papers, and cautioned the author not to make an attempt to please any “supposed Atlantic audience,” adding, “Yarn it off into my sympathetic ear.” Clemens replied:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

H't'f'd. Dec. 8, 1874. *My dear Howells*,—It isn't the Atlantic audience that distresses me; for it is the only audience that I sit down before in perfect serenity (for the simple reason that it doesn't require a “humorist” to paint himself striped and stand on his head every fifteen minutes.) The trouble was, that I was only bent on “working up an atmosphere” and that is to me a most fidgety and irksome thing, sometimes. I avoid it, usually, but in this case it was absolutely necessary, else every reader would be applying the atmosphere of his own or sea experiences, and that shirt wouldn't fit, you know.

I could have sent this Article II a week ago, or more, but I couldn't bring myself to the drudgery of revising and correcting it. I have been at that tedious work 3 hours, now, and by George but I am glad it is over.

Say—I am as prompt as a clock, if I only know the day a thing is wanted —otherwise I am a natural procrastinaturalist. Tell me what day and date you want Nos. 3 and 4, and I will tackle and revise them and they'll be there to the minute.

I could wind up with No. 4., but there are some things more which I am powerfully moved to write. Which is natural enough, since I am a person who would quit authorizing in a minute to go to piloting, if the madam would stand it. I would rather sink a steamboat than eat, any time.

My wife was afraid to write you—so I said with simplicity, “I will give you the language—and ideas.” Through the infinite grace of God there has not been such another insurrection in the family before as followed this. However, the letter was written, and promptly, too—whereas, heretofore she has remained afraid to do such things.

With kind regards to Mrs. Howells,
Yrs ever,
Mark.

The “Old Times” papers appeared each month in the Atlantic until July, 1875, and take rank to-day with Mark Twain's best work. When the first number appeared, John Hay wrote: “It is perfect; no more nor less. I don't see how you do it.” Which was reported to Howells, who said: “What business has Hay, I should like to know, praising a favorite of mine? It's interfering.” These were the days when the typewriter was new. Clemens and Twichell, during their stay in Boston, had seen the marvel in operation, and



Clemens had been unable to resist owning one. It was far from being the perfect machine of to-day; the letters were all capitals, and one was never quite certain, even of those. Mark Twain, however, began with enthusiasm and practised faithfully. On the day of its arrival he wrote two letters that have survived, the first to his brother, the other to Howells.

Typewritten letter to W. D. Howells, in Boston:



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Hartford, Dec. 9, 1874. My dear Howells,—I want to add a short paragraph to article No. 1, when the proof comes. Merely a line or two, however.

I don't know whether I am going to make this typewriting machine go or not: that last word was intended for n-not; but I guess I shall make some sort of a success of it before I run it very long. I am so thick-fingered that I miss the keys.

You needn't answer this; I am only practicing to get three; another slip-up there; only practicing to get the hang of the thing. I notice I miss fire & get in a good many unnecessary letters and punctuation marks. I am simply using you for a target to bang at. Blame my cats but this thing requires genius in order to work it just right.

Yours ever,

(M)Ark.

Knowing Mark Twain, Howells wrote: "When you get tired of the machine send it to me." Clemens naturally did get tired of the machine; it was ruining his morals, he said. He presently offered it to Howells, who by this time hesitated, but eventually yielded and accepted it. If he was blasted by its influence the fact has not been recorded. One of the famous Atlantic dinners came along in December. "Don't you dare to refuse that invitation," wrote Howells, "to meet Emerson, Aldrich, and all those boys at the Parker House, at six o'clock, Tuesday, December 15th. Come!"

Clemens had no desire to refuse; he sent word that he would come, and followed it with a characteristic line.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Hartford, Sunday. My dear Howells,—I want you to ask Mrs. Howells to let you stay all night at the Parker House and tell lies and have an improving time, and take breakfast with me in the morning. I will have a good room for you, and a fire. Can't you tell her it always makes you sick to go home late at night, or something like that? That sort of thing rouses Mrs. Clemens's sympathies, easily; the only trouble is to keep them up. Twichell and I talked till 2 or 3 in the morning, the night we supped at your house and it restored his health, on account of his being drooping for some time and made him much more robust than what he was before. Will Mrs. Howells let you?

Yrs ever,

S. L. C.

Aldrich had issued that year a volume of poems, and he presented Clemens with a copy of it during this Boston visit. The letter of appreciation which follows contains also reference to an amusing incident; but we shall come to that presently.

To T. B. Aldrich, in Ponkapog, Mass.



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Farmington Avenue, Hartford.

Dec. 18, 1874.

My dear Aldrich,—I read the “Cloth of Gold” through, coming down in the cars, and it is just lightning poetry—a thing which it gravels me to say because my own efforts in that line have remained so persistently unrecognized, in consequence of the envy and jealousy of this generation. “Baby Bell” always seemed perfection, before, but now that I have children it has got even beyond that. About the hour that I was reading it in the cars, Twichell was reading it at home and forthwith fell upon me with a burst of enthusiasm about it when I saw him. This was pleasant, because he has long been a lover of it.

“Thos. Bailey Aldrich responded” *etc.*, “in one of the brightest speeches of the evening.”

That is what the Tribune correspondent says. And that is what everybody that heard it said. Therefore, you keep still. Don’t ever be so unwise as to go on trying to unconvince those people.

I’ve been skating around the place all day with some girls, with Mrs. Clemens in the window to do the applause. There would be a power of fun in skating if you could do it with somebody else’s muscles.—There are about twenty boys booming by the house, now, and it is mighty good to look at.

I’m keeping you in mind, you see, in the matter of photographs. I have a couple to enclose in this letter and I want you to say you got them, and then I shall know I have been a good truthful child.

I am going to send more as I ferret them out, about the place.—And I won’t forget that you are a “subscriber.”

The wife and I unite in warm regards to you and Mrs. Aldrich.

Yrs ever,

S. L. Clemens.

A letter bearing the same date as the above went back to Howells, we find, in reference to still another incident, which perhaps should come first.

Mark Twain up to this time had worn the black “string” necktie of the West—a decoration which disturbed Mrs. Clemens, and invited remarks from his friends. He had persisted in it, however, up to the date of the Atlantic dinner, when Howells and Aldrich decided that something must be done about it.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:



Hartford, Dec. 18, 1874. *My dear Howells*,—I left No. 3, (Miss. chapter) in my eldest's reach, and it may have gone to the postman and it likewise may have gone into the fire. I confess to a dread that the latter is the case and that that stack of *Ms* will have to be written over again. If so, O for the return of the lamented Herod!

You and Aldrich have made one woman deeply and sincerely grateful—Mrs. Clemens. For months—I may even say years—she had shown unaccountable animosity toward my neck-tie, even getting up in the night to take it with the tongs and blackguard it—sometimes also going so far as to threaten it.



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When I said you and Aldrich had given me two new neck-ties, and that they were in a paper in my overcoat pocket, she was in a fever of happiness until she found I was going to frame them; then all the venom in her nature gathered itself together,—insomuch that I, being near to a door, went without, perceiving danger.

Now I wear one of the new neck-ties, nothing being sacred in Mrs. Clemens's eyes that can be perverted to a gaud that shall make the person of her husband more alluring than it was aforesaid.

Jo Twichell was the delightedest old boy I ever saw, when he read the words you had written in that book. He and I went to the Concert of the Yale students last night and had a good time.

Mrs. Clemens dreads our going to New Orleans, but I tell her she'll have to give her consent this time.

With kindest regards unto ye both.

Yrs ever,

S. L. Clemens.

The reference to New Orleans at the end of this letter grew naturally out of the enthusiasm aroused by the Mississippi papers. The more Clemens wrote about the river the more he wished to revisit it and take Howells with him. Howells was willing enough to go and they eventually arranged to take their wives on the excursion. This seemed all very well and possible, so long as the time was set for some date in the future still unfixed. But Howells was a busy editor, and it was much more easy for him to promise good-naturedly than to agree on a definite time of departure. He explained at length why he could not make the journey, and added: "Forgive me having led you on to fix a time; I never thought it would come to that; I supposed you would die, or something. I am really more sorry and ashamed than I can make it appear." So the beautiful plan was put aside, though it was not entirely abandoned for a long time. We now come to the incident mentioned in Mark Twain's letter to Aldrich, of December the 18th. It had its beginning at the Atlantic dinner, where Aldrich had abused Clemens for never sending him any photographs of himself. It was suggested by one or the other that his name be put down as a "regular subscriber" for all Mark Twain photographs as they "came out." Clemens returned home and hunted up fifty-two different specimens, put each into an envelope, and began mailing them to him, one each morning. When a few of them had arrived Aldrich wrote, protesting.

"The police," he said, "have a way of swooping down on that kind of publication. The other day they gobbled up an entire edition of 'The Life in New York.'"

Whereupon Clemens bundled up the remaining collection—forty-five envelopes of photographs and prints-and mailed them together.



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Aldrich wrote, now, violently declaring the perpetrator of the outrage to be known to the police; that a sprawling yellow figure against a green background had been recognized as an admirable likeness of Mark Twain, alias the jumping Frog, a well-known Californian desperado, formerly the chief of Henry Plummer's band of road agents in Montana. The letter was signed, "T. Bayleigh, Chief of Police." On the back of the envelope "T. Bayleigh" had also written that it was "no use for the person to send any more letters, as the post-office at that point was to be blown up. Forty-eight hogs-head of nitroglycerine had been syrupticiously introduced into the cellar of the building, and more was expected. R.W.E. H.W.L. O.W.H., and other conspirators in masks have been seen flitting about the town for some days past. The greatest excitement combined with the most intense quietness reigns at Ponkapog."

XV.

LETTERS FROM HARTFORD, 1875. MUCH CORRESPONDENCE WITH HOWELLS

Orion Clemens had kept his job with Bliss only a short time. His mental make-up was such that it was difficult for him to hold any position long. He meant to do well, but he was unfortunate in his efforts. His ideas were seldom practical, his nature was yielding and fickle. He had returned to Keokuk presently, and being convinced there was a fortune in chickens, had prevailed upon his brother to purchase for him a little farm not far from the town. But the chicken business was not lively and Orion kept the mail hot with manuscripts and propositions of every sort, which he wanted his brother to take under advisement.

Certainly, to Mark Twain Orion Clemens was a trial. The letters of the latter show that scarcely one of them but contains the outline of some rainbow-chasing scheme, full of wild optimism, and the certainty that somewhere just ahead lies the pot of gold. Only, now and then, there is a letter of abject humiliation and complete surrender, when some golden vision, some iridescent soap-bubble, had vanished at his touch. Such depression did not last; by sunrise he was ready with a new dream, new enthusiasm, and with a new letter inviting his "brother Sam's" interest and investment. Yet, his fear of incurring his brother's displeasure was pitiful, regardless of the fact that he constantly employed the very means to insure that result. At one time Clemens made him sign a sworn agreement that he would not suggest any plan or scheme of investment for the period of twelve months. Orion must have kept this agreement. He would have gone to the stake before he would have violated an oath, but the stake would have probably been no greater punishment than his sufferings that year.

On the whole, Samuel Clemens was surprisingly patient and considerate with Orion, and there was never a time that he was not willing to help. Yet there were bound to be moments of exasperation; and once, when his mother, or sister, had written, suggesting that he encourage his brother's efforts, he felt moved to write at considerable freedom.



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To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y.:

*Hartford, Sunday, 1875. My dear mother and sister,—*I Saw Gov. Newell today and he said he was still moving in the matter of Sammy's appointment—[As a West Point cadet.]—and would stick to it till he got a result of a positive nature one way or the other, but thus far he did not know whether to expect success or defeat.

Ma, whenever you need money I hope you won't be backward about saying so—you can always have it. We stint ourselves in some ways, but we have no desire to stint you. And we don't intend to, either.

I can't "encourage" Orion. Nobody can do that, conscientiously, for the reason that before one's letter has time to reach him he is off on some new wild-goose chase. Would you encourage in literature a man who, the older he grows the worse he writes? Would you encourage Orion in the glaring insanity of studying law? If he were packed and crammed full of law, it would be worthless lumber to him, for his is such a capricious and ill-regulated mind that he would apply the principles of the law with no more judgment than a child of ten years. I know what I am saying. I laid one of the plainest and simplest of legal questions before Orion once, and the helpless and hopeless mess he made of it was absolutely astonishing. Nothing aggravates me so much as to have Orion mention law or literature to me.

Well, I cannot encourage him to try the ministry, because he would change his religion so fast that he would have to keep a traveling agent under wages to go ahead of him to engage pulpits and board for him.

I cannot conscientiously encourage him to do anything but potter around his little farm and put in his odd hours contriving new and impossible projects at the rate of 365 a year—which is his customary average. He says he did well in Hannibal! Now there is a man who ought to be entirely satisfied with the grandeurs, emoluments and activities of a hen farm—

If you ask me to pity Orion, I can do that. I can do it every day and all day long. But one can't "encourage" quick-silver, because the instant you put your finger on it it isn't there. No, I am saying too much—he does stick to his literary and legal aspirations; and he naturally would select the very two things which he is wholly and preposterously unfitted for. If I ever become able, I mean to put Orion on a regular pension without revealing the fact that it is a pension. That is best for him. Let him consider it a periodical loan, and pay interest out of the principal. Within a year's time he would be looking upon himself as a benefactor of mine, in the way of furnishing me a good permanent investment for money, and that would make him happy and satisfied with himself. If he had money he would share with me in a moment and I have no disposition to be stingy with him.

Affly

Livy sends love.

Sam.



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The New Orleans plan was not wholly dead at this time. Howells wrote near the end of January that the matter was still being debated, now and then, but was far from being decided upon. He hoped to go somewhere with Mrs. Howells for a brief time in March, he said. Clemens, in haste, replied:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Hartford, Jan. 26, 1875. My dear Howells,—When Mrs. Clemens read your letter she said: “Well, then, wherever they go, in March, the direction will be southward and so they must give us a visit on the way.” I do not know what sort of control you may be under, but when my wife speaks as positively as that, I am not in the habit of talking back and getting into trouble. Situated as I am, I would not be able to understand, now, how you could pass by this town without feeling that you were running a wanton risk and doing a daredevil thing. I consider it settled that you are to come in March, and I would be sincerely sorry to learn that you and Mrs. Howells feel differently about it.

The piloting material has been uncovering itself by degrees, until it has exposed such a huge hoard to my view that a whole book will be required to contain it if I use it. So I have agreed to write the book for Bliss. —[The book idea was later given up for the time being.]—I won’t be able to run the articles in the Atlantic later than the September number, for the reason that a subscription book issued in the fall has a much larger sale than if issued at any other season of the year. It is funny when I reflect that when I originally wrote you and proposed to do from 6 to 9 articles for the magazine, the vague thought in my mind was that 6 might exhaust the material and 9 would be pretty sure to do it. Or rather it seems to me that that was my thought—can’t tell at this distance. But in truth 9 chapters don’t now seem to more than open up the subject fairly and start the yarn to wagging.

I have been sick a-bed several days, for the first time in 21 years. How little confirmed invalids appreciate their advantages. I was able to read the English edition of the Greville Memoirs through without interruption, take my meals in bed, neglect all business without a pang, and smoke 18 cigars a day. I try not to look back upon these 21 years with a feeling of resentment, and yet the partialities of Providence do seem to me to be slathered around (as one may say) without that gravity and attention to detail which the real importance of the matter would seem to suggest.

Yrs ever

Mark.



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The New Orleans idea continued to haunt the letters. The thought of drifting down the Mississippi so attracted both Clemens and Howells, that they talked of it when they met, and wrote of it when they were separated. Howells, beset by uncertainties, playfully tried to put the responsibility upon his wife. Once he wrote: "She says in the noblest way, 'Well, go to New Orleans, if you want to so much' (you know the tone). I suppose it will do if I let you know about the middle of February?" But they had to give it up in the end. Howells wrote that he had been under the weather, and on half work the whole winter. He did not feel that he had earned his salary, he said, or that he was warranted in taking a three weeks' pleasure trip. Clemens offered to pay all the expenses of the trip, but only indefinite postponement followed. It would be seven years more before Mark Twain would return to the river, and then not with Howells. In a former chapter mention has been made of Charles Warren Stoddard, whom Mark Twain had known in his California days. He was fond of Stoddard, who was a facile and pleasing writer of poems and descriptive articles. During the period that he had been acting as Mark Twain's secretary in London, he had taken pleasure in collecting for him the news reports of the celebrated Tichborn Claimant case, then in the English courts. Clemens thought of founding a story on it, and did, in fact, use the idea, though 'The American Claimant,' which he wrote years later, had little or no connection with the Tichborn episode.

To C. W. Stoddard:

Hartford, Feb. 1, 1875. Dear Charley,—All right about the Tichborn scrapbooks; send them along when convenient. I mean to have the Beecher-Tilton trial scrap-book as a companion.....

I am writing a series of 7-page articles for the Atlantic at \$20 a page; but as they do not pay anybody else as much as that, I do not complain (though at the same time I do swear that I am not content.) However the awful respectability of the magazine makes up.

I have cut your articles about San Marco out of a New York paper (Joe Twichell saw it and brought it home to me with loud admiration,) and sent it to Howells. It is too bad to fool away such good literature in a perishable daily journal.

Do remember us kindly to Lady Hardy and all that rare family—my wife and I so often have pleasant talks about them.

Ever your friend,
SAML. L. Clemens.

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The price received by Mark Twain for the Mississippi papers, as quoted in this letter, furnishes us with a realizing sense of the improvement in the literary market, with the advent of a flood of cheap magazines and the Sunday newspaper. The Atlantic page probably contained about a thousand words, which would make his price average, say, two cents per word. Thirty years later, when his fame was not much more extended, his pay for the same matter would have been fifteen times as great, that is to say, at the rate of thirty cents per word. But in that early time there were no Sunday magazines—no literary magazines at all except the Atlantic, and Harpers, and a few fashion periodicals. Probably there were news-stands, but it is hard to imagine what they must have looked like without the gay pictorial cover-femininity that to-day pleases and elevates the public and makes author and artist affluent. Clemens worked steadily on the river chapters, and Howells was always praising him and urging him to go on. At the end of January he wrote: “You’re doing the science of piloting splendidly. Every word’s interesting. And don’t you drop the series ’til you’ve got every bit of anecdote and reminiscence into it.”

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Feb. 10, 1875. My dear Howells,—*Your praises of my literature gave me the solidest gratification; but I never did have the fullest confidence in my critical penetration, and now your verdict on S----has knocked what little I did have gully-west! I didn’t enjoy his gush, but I thought a lot of his similes were ever so vivid and good. But it’s just my luck; every time I go into convulsions of admiration over a picture and want to buy it right away before I’ve lost the chance, some wretch who really understands art comes along and damns it. But I don’t mind. I would rather have my ignorance than another man’s knowledge, because I have got so much more of it.

I send you No. 5 today. I have written and re-written the first half of it three different times, yesterday and today, and at last Mrs. Clemens says it will do. I never saw a woman so hard to please about things she doesn’t know anything about.

Yours ever,

Mark.

Of course, the reference to his wife’s criticism in this is tenderly playful, as always—of a pattern with the severity which he pretends for her in the next.

To Mrs. W. D. Howells, in Boston:

1875 *Dear Mrs. Howells,—*Mrs. Clemens is delighted to get the pictures, and so am I. I can perceive in the group, that Mr. Howells is feeling as I so often feel, viz: “Well, no doubt I am in the wrong, though I do not know how or where or why—but anyway it will be safest to look meek, and walk circumspectly for a while, and not discuss the thing.”



And you look exactly as Mrs. Clemens does after she has said, "Indeed I do not wonder that you can frame no reply: for you know only too well, that your conduct admits of no excuse, palliation or argument—none!"



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I shall just delight in that group on account of the good old human domestic spirit that pervades it—both these family groups that put on a state aspect to get their pictures taken in.

We want a heliotype made of our eldest daughter. How soft and rich and lovely the picture is. Mr. Howells must tell me how to proceed in the matter.

Truly Yours
Sam. L. Clemens.

In the next letter we have a picture of Susy—[This spelling of the name was adopted somewhat later and much preferred. It appears as “Susie” in most of the earlier letters.]—Clemens’s third birthday, certainly a pretty picture, and as sweet and luminous and tender today as it was forty years ago—as it will be a hundred years hence, if these lines should survive that long. The letter is to her uncle Charles Langdon, the “Charlie” of the Quaker City. “Atwater” was associated with the Langdon coal interests in Elmira. “The play” is, of course, “The Gilded Age.”

To Charles Langdon, in Elmira:

Mch. 19, 1875. *Dear Charlie*,—Livy, after reading your letter, used her severest form of expression about Mr. Atwater—to wit: She did not “approve” of his conduct. This made me shudder; for it was equivalent to Allie Spaulding’s saying “Mr. Atwater is a mean thing;” or Rev. Thomas Beecher’s saying “Damn that Atwater,” or my saying “I wish Atwater was three hundred million miles in——!”

However, Livy does not often get into one of these furies, God be thanked.

In Brooklyn, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Chicago, the play paid me an average of nine hundred dollars a week. In smaller towns the average is \$400 to \$500.

This is Susie’s birth-day. Lizzie brought her in at 8.30 this morning (before we were up) hooded with a blanket, red curl-papers in her hair, a great red japonica, in one hand (for Livy) and a yellow rose-bud nestled in violets (for my buttonhole) in the other—and she looked wonderfully pretty. She delivered her memorials and received her birth-day kisses. Livy laid her japonica, down to get a better “holt” for kissing—which Susie presently perceived, and became thoughtful: then said sorrowfully, turning the great deeps of her eyes upon her mother: “Don’t you care for you wow?”

Right after breakfast we got up a rousing wood fire in the main hall (it is a cold morning) illuminated the place with a rich glow from all the globes of the newell chandelier, spread a bright rug before the fire, set a circling row of chairs (pink ones and dove-colored) and in the midst a low invalid-table covered with a fanciful cloth and laden with

the presents—a pink azalia in lavish bloom from Rosa; a gold inscribed Russia-leather bible from Patrick and Mary; a gold ring (inscribed) from “Maggy Cook;” a silver thimble (inscribed with motto and initials) from Lizzie; a rattling mob of Sunday clad dolls from



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Livy and Annie, and a Noah's Ark from me, containing 200 wooden animals such as only a human being could create and only God call by name without referring to the passenger list. Then the family and the seven servants assembled there, and Susie and the "Bay" arrived in state from above, the Bay's head being fearfully and wonderfully decorated with a profusion of blazing red flowers and overflowing cataracts of lycopodium. Wee congratulatory notes accompanied the presents of the servants. I tell you it was a great occasion and a striking and cheery group, taking all the surroundings into account and the wintry aspect outside.

(Remainder missing.)

There was to be a centennial celebration that year of the battles of Lexington and Concord, and Howells wrote, urging Clemens and his wife to visit them and attend it. Mrs. Clemens did not go, and Clemens and Howells did not go, either—to the celebration. They had their own ideas about getting there, but found themselves unable to board the thronged train at Concord, and went tramping about in the cold and mud, hunting a conveyance, only to return at length to the cheer of the home, defeated and rather low in spirits.

Twichell, who went on his own hook, had no such difficulties. To Howells, Mark Twain wrote the adventures of this athletic and strenuous exponent of the gospel.

The "Winnie" mentioned in this letter was Howells's daughter Winifred. She had unusual gifts, but did not live to develop them.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Farmington Avenue, Hartford. Apl. 23, 1875. My dear Howells,—I've got Mrs. Clemens's picture before me, and hope I shall not forget to send it with this.

Joe Twichell preached morning and evening here last Sunday; took midnight train for Boston; got an early breakfast and started by rail at 7.30 A. M. for Concord; swelled around there until 1 P. M., seeing everything; then traveled on top of a train to Lexington; saw everything there; traveled on top of a train to Boston, (with hundreds in company) deluged with dust, smoke and cinders; yelled and hurraed all the way like a schoolboy; lay flat down to dodge numerous bridges, and sailed into the depot, howling with excitement and as black as a chimney-sweep; got to Young's Hotel at 7 P. M.; sat down in reading-room and immediately fell asleep; was promptly awakened by a porter who supposed he was drunk; wandered around an hour and a half; then took 9 P. M. train, sat down in smoking car and remembered nothing more until awakened by conductor as the train came into Hartford at 1.30 A. M. Thinks he had simply a glorious



time—and wouldn't have missed the Centennial for the world. He would have run out to see us a moment at Cambridge, but was too dirty. I wouldn't have wanted him there—his appalling energy would have been an insufferable reproach to mild adventurers like you and me.



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Well, he is welcome to the good time he had—I had a deal better one. My narrative has made Mrs. Clemens wish she could have been there.—When I think over what a splendid good sociable time I had in your house I feel ever so thankful to the wise providence that thwarted our several ably-planned and ingenious attempts to get to Lexington. I am coming again before long, and then she shall be of the party.

Now you said that you and Mrs. Howells could run down here nearly any Saturday. Very well then, let us call it next Saturday, for a “starter.” Can you do that? By that time it will really be spring and you won’t freeze. The birds are already out; a small one paid us a visit yesterday. We entertained it and let it go again, Susie protesting.

The spring laziness is already upon me—insomuch that the spirit begins to move me to cease from Mississippi articles and everything else and give myself over to idleness until we go to New Orleans. I have one article already finished, but somehow it doesn’t seem as proper a chapter to close with as the one already in your hands. I hope to get in a mood and rattle off a good one to finish with—but just now all my moods are lazy ones.

Winnie’s literature sings through me yet! Surely that child has one of these “futures” before her.

Now try to come—will you?

With the warmest regards of the two of us—

Yrs ever,
S. L. Clemens.

Mrs. Clemens sent a note to Mrs. Howells, which will serve as a pendant to the foregoing.

From Mrs. Clemens to Mrs. Howells, in Boston:

My dear Mrs. Howells,—Don’t dream for one instant that my not getting a letter from you kept me from Boston. I am too anxious to go to let such a thing as that keep me.

Mr. Clemens did have such a good time with you and Mr. Howells. He evidently has no regret that he did not get to the Centennial. I was driven nearly distracted by his long account of Mr. Howells and his wanderings. I would keep asking if they ever got there, he would never answer but made me listen to a very minute account of everything that they did. At last I found them back where they started from.

If you find misspelled words in this note, you will remember my infirmity and not hold me responsible.

Affectionately yours,
Ivy L. Clemens.



In spite of his success with the Sellers play and his itch to follow it up, Mark Twain realized what he believed to be his literary limitations. All his life he was inclined to consider himself wanting in the finer gifts of character-shading and delicate portrayal. Remembering Huck Finn, and the rare presentation of Joan of Arc, we may not altogether agree with him. Certainly, he was never qualified to delineate those fine artificialities of life which we are likely to associate with culture, and perhaps it was something of this sort that caused the hesitation confessed in the letter that follows. Whether the plan suggested interested Howells or not we do not know. In later years Howells wrote a novel called *The Story of a Play*; this may have been its beginning.



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To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Apl. 26, 1875. My dear Howells,—*An actor named D. H. Harkins has been here to ask me to put upon paper a 5-act play which he has been mapping out in his mind for 3 or 4 years. He sat down and told me his plot all through, in a clear, bright way, and I was a deal taken with it; but it is a line of characters whose fine shading and artistic development requires an abler hand than mine; so I easily perceived that I must not make the attempt. But I liked the man, and thought there was a good deal of stuff in him; and therefore I wanted his play to be written, and by a capable hand, too. So I suggested you, and said I would write and see if you would be willing to undertake it. If you like the idea, he will call upon you in the course of two or three weeks and describe his plot and his characters. Then if it doesn't strike you favorably, of course you can simply decline; but it seems to me well worth while that you should hear what he has to say. You could also "average" him while he talks, and judge whether he could play your priest—though I doubt if any man can do that justice.

Shan't I write him and say he may call? If you wish to communicate directly with him instead, his address is "Larchmont Manor, Westchester Co., N. Y."

Do you know, the chill of that 19th of April seems to be in my bones yet? I am inert and drowsy all the time. That was villainous weather for a couple of wandering children to be out in.

Ys ever

Mark.

The sinister typewriter did not find its way to Howells for nearly a year. Meantime, Mark Twain had refused to allow the manufacturers to advertise his ownership. He wrote to them:

Hartford, March 19, 1875. Please do not use my name in any way. Please do not even divulge the fact that I own a machine. I have entirely stopped using the typewriter, for the reason that I never could write a letter with it to anybody without receiving a request by return mail that I would not only describe the machine, but state what progress I had made in the use of it, *etc., etc.* I don't like to write letters, and so I don't want people to know I own this curiosity-breeding little joker.

Three months later the machine was still in his possession. Bliss had traded a twelve-dollar saddle for it, but apparently showed little enthusiasm in his new possession.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:



June 25, 1875. *My dear Howells*,—I told Patrick to get some carpenters and box the machine and send it to you—and found that Bliss had sent for the machine and earned it off.

I have been talking to you and writing to you as if you were present when I traded the machine to Bliss for a twelve-dollar saddle worth \$25 (cheating him outrageously, of course—but conscience got the upper hand again and I told him before I left the premises that I'd pay for the saddle if he didn't like the machine—on condition that he donate said machine to a charity)



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This was a little over five weeks ago—so I had long ago concluded that Bliss didn't want the machine and did want the saddle—wherefore I jumped at the chance of shoving the machine off onto you, saddle or no saddle so I got the blamed thing out of my sight.

The saddle hangs on Tara's walls down below in the stable, and the machine is at Bliss's grimly pursuing its appointed mission, slowly and implacably rotting away another man's chances for salvation.

I have sent Bliss word not to donate it to a charity (though it is a pity to fool away a chance to do a charity an ill turn,) but to let me know when he has got his dose, because I've got another candidate for damnation. You just wait a couple of weeks and if you don't see the Type-Writer come tilting along toward Cambridge with an unsatisfied appetite in its eye, I lose my guess.

Don't you be mad about this blunder, Howells—it only comes of a bad memory, and the stupidity which is inseparable from true genius. Nothing intentionally criminal in it.

Yrs ever

Mark.

It was November when Howells finally fell under the baleful influence of the machine. He wrote:

“The typewriter came Wednesday night, and is already beginning to have its effect on me. Of course, it doesn't work: if I can persuade some of the letters to get up against the ribbon they won't get down again without digital assistance. The treadle refuses to have any part or parcel in the performance; and I don't know how to get the roller to turn with the paper. Nevertheless I have begun several letters to My d-a-r lemans, as it prefers to spell your respected name, and I don't despair yet of sending you something in its beautiful handwriting—after I've had a man out from the agent's to put it in order. It's fascinating in the meantime, and it wastes my time like an old friend.”The Clemens family remained in Hartford that summer, with the exception of a brief season at Bateman's Point, R. I., near Newport. By this time Mark Twain had taken up and finished the Tom Sawyer story begun two years before. Naturally he wished Howells to consider the *Ms*.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Hartford, July 5th, 1875. My dear Howells,—I have finished the story and didn't take the chap beyond boyhood. I believe it would be fatal to do it in any shape but autobiographically—like Gil Blas. I perhaps made a mistake in not writing it in the first person. If I went on, now, and took him into manhood, he would just like like all the one-

horse men in literature and the reader would conceive a hearty contempt for him. It is not a boy's book, at all. It will only be read by adults. It is only written for adults.

Moreover the book is plenty long enough as it stands. It is about 900 pages of *Ms*, and may be 1000 when I shall have finished "working up" vague places; so it would make from 130 to 150 pages of the Atlantic —about what the Foregone Conclusion made, isn't it?



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I would dearly like to see it in the Atlantic, but I doubt if it would pay the publishers to buy the privilege, or me to sell it. Bret Harte has sold his novel (same size as mine, I should say) to Scribner's Monthly for \$6,500 (publication to begin in September, I think,) and he gets a royalty of 7 1/2 per cent from Bliss in book form afterwards. He gets a royalty of ten per cent on it in England (issued in serial numbers) and the same royalty on it in book form afterwards, and is to receive an advance payment of five hundred pounds the day the first No. of the serial appears. If I could do as well, here, and there, with mine, it might possibly pay me, but I seriously doubt it though it is likely I could do better in England than Bret, who is not widely known there.

You see I take a vile, mercenary view of things—but then my household expenses are something almost ghastly.

By and by I shall take a boy of twelve and run him on through life (in the first person) but not Tom Sawyer—he would not be a good character for it.

I wish you would promise to read the *Ms* of Tom Sawyer some time, and see if you don't really decide that I am right in closing with him as a boy—and point out the most glaring defects for me. It is a tremendous favor to ask, and I expect you to refuse and would be ashamed to expect you to do otherwise. But the thing has been so many months in my mind that it seems a relief to snake it out. I don't know any other person whose judgment I could venture to take fully and entirely. Don't hesitate about saying no, for I know how your time is taxed, and I would have honest need to blush if you said yes.

Osgood and I are "going for" the puppy G—— on infringement of trademark. To win one or two suits of this kind will set literary folks on a firmer bottom. I wish Osgood would sue for stealing Holmes's poem. Wouldn't it be gorgeous to sue R—— for petty larceny? I will promise to go into court and swear I think him capable of stealing peanuts from a blind pedlar.

Yrs ever,

Clemens.

Of course Howells promptly replied that he would read the story, adding: "You've no idea what I may ask you to do for me, some day. I'm sorry that you can't do it for the Atlantic, but I succumb. Perhaps you will do Boy No. 2 for us." Clemens, conscience-stricken, meantime, hastily put the *Ms*. out of reach of temptation.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

July 13, 1875 *my dear Howells*,—Just as soon as you consented I realized all the atrocity of my request, and straightway blushed and weakened. I telegraphed my theatrical agent to come here and carry off the *Ms* and copy it.



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But I will gladly send it to you if you will do as follows: dramatize it, if you perceive that you can, and take, for your remuneration, half of the first \$6000 which I receive for its representation on the stage. You could alter the plot entirely, if you chose. I could help in the work, most cheerfully, after you had arranged the plot. I have my eye upon two young girls who can play "Tom" and "Huck." I believe a good deal of a drama can be made of it. Come—can't you tackle this in the odd hours of your vacation? or later, if you prefer?

I do wish you could come down once more before your holiday. I'd give anything!

Yrs ever,
Mark.

Howells wrote that he had no time for the dramatization and urged Clemens to undertake it himself. He was ready to read the story, whenever it should arrive. Clemens did not hurry, however, The publication of Tom Sawyer could wait. He already had a book in press—the volume of Sketches New and Old, which he had prepared for Bliss several years before.

Sketches was issued that autumn, and Howells gave it a good notice —possibly better than it deserved.

Considered among Mark Twain's books to-day, the collection of sketches does not seem especially important. With the exception of the frog story and the "True Story" most of those included—might be spared. Clemens himself confessed to Howells that He wished, when it was too late, that he had destroyed a number of them. The book, however, was distinguished in a special way: it contains Mark Twain's first utterance in print on the subject of copyright, a matter in which he never again lost interest. The absurdity and injustice of the copyright laws both amused and irritated him, and in the course of time he would be largely instrumental in their improvement. In the book his open petition to Congress that all property rights, as well as literary ownership, should be put on the copyright basis and limited to a "beneficent term of forty-two years," was more or less of a joke, but, like so many of Mark Twain's jokes, it was founded on reason and justice.

He had another idea, that was not a joke: an early plan in the direction of international copyright. It was to be a petition signed by the leading American authors, asking the United States to declare itself to be the first to stand for right and justice by enacting laws against the piracy of foreign books. It was a rather utopian scheme, as most schemes for moral progress are, in their beginning. It would not be likely ever to reach Congress, but it would appeal to Howells and his Cambridge friends. Clemens wrote, outlining his plan of action.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:



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Hartford, Sept. 18, 1875. *My dear Howells*,—My plan is this—you are to get Mr. Lowell and Mr. Longfellow to be the first signers of my copyright petition; you must sign it yourself and get Mr. Whittier to do likewise. Then Holmes will sign—he said he would if he didn't have to stand at the head. Then I'm fixed. I will then put a gentlemanly chap under wages and send him personally to every author of distinction in the country, and corral the rest of the signatures. Then I'll have the whole thing lithographed (about a thousand copies) and move upon the President and Congress in person, but in the subordinate capacity of a party who is merely the agent of better and wiser men—men whom the country cannot venture to laugh at.

I will ask the President to recommend the thing in his message (and if he should ask me to sit down and frame the paragraph for him I should blush—but still I would frame it.)

Next I would get a prime leader in Congress: I would also see that votes enough to carry the measure were privately secured before the bill was offered. This I would try through my leader and my friends there.

And then if Europe chose to go on stealing from us, we would say with noble enthusiasm, "American lawmakers do steal but not from foreign authors—Not from foreign authors!"

You see, what I want to drive into the Congressional mind is the simple fact that the moral law is "Thou shalt not steal"—no matter what Europe may do.

I swear I can't see any use in robbing European authors for the benefit of American booksellers, anyway.

If we can ever get this thing through Congress, we can try making copyright perpetual, some day. There would be no sort of use in it, since only one book in a hundred millions outlives the present copyright term—no sort of use except that the writer of that one book have his rights—which is something.

If we only had some God in the country's laws, instead of being in such a sweat to get Him into the Constitution, it would be better all around.

The only man who ever signed my petition with alacrity, and said that the fact that a thing was right was all-sufficient, was Rev. Dr. Bushnell.

I have lost my old petition, (which was brief) but will draft and enclose another—not in the words it ought to be, but in the substance. I want Mr. Lowell to furnish the words (and the ideas too,) if he will do it.

Say—Redpath beseeches me to lecture in Boston in November—telegraphs that Beecher's and Nast's withdrawal has put him in the tightest kind of a place. So I guess



I'll do that old "Roughing It" lecture over again in November and repeat it 2 or 3 times in New York while I am at it.

Can I take a carriage after the lecture and go out and stay with you that night, provided you find at that distant time that it will not inconvenience you? Is Aldrich home yet?

With love to you all

Yrs ever,

S. L. C.



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Of course the petition never reached Congress. Holmes's comment that governments were not in the habit of setting themselves up as high moral examples, except for revenue, was shared by too many others. The petition was tabled, but Clemens never abandoned his purpose and lived to see most of his dream fulfilled. Meantime, Howells's notice of the Sketches appeared in the Atlantic, and brought grateful acknowledgment from the author.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Hartford, Oct. 19, 1875. My dear Howells,—That is a perfectly superb notice. You can easily believe that nothing ever gratified me so much before. The newspaper praises bestowed upon the “Innocents Abroad” were large and generous, but somehow I hadn't confidence in the critical judgement of the parties who furnished them. You know how that is, yourself, from reading the newspaper notices of your own books. They gratify a body, but they always leave a small pang behind in the shape of a fear that the critic's good words could not safely be depended upon as authority. Yours is the recognized critical Court of Last Resort in this country; from its decision there is no appeal; and so, to have gained this decree of yours before I am forty years old, I regard as a thing to be right down proud of. Mrs. Clemens says, “Tell him I am just as grateful to him as I can be.” (It sounds as if she were grateful to you for heroically trampling the truth under foot in order to praise me but in reality it means that she is grateful to you for being bold enough to utter a truth which she fully believes all competent people know, but which none has heretofore been brave enough to utter.) You see, the thing that gravels her is that I am so persistently glorified as a mere buffoon, as if that entirely covered my case—which she denies with venom.

The other day Mrs. Clemens was planning a visit to you, and so I am waiting with a pleasurable hope for the result of her deliberations. We are expecting visitors every day, now, from New York; and afterward some are to come from Elmira. I judge that we shall then be free to go Bostonward. I should be just delighted; because we could visit in comfort, since we shouldn't have to do any shopping—did it all in New York last week, and a tremendous pull it was too.

Mrs. C. said the other day, “We will go to Cambridge if we have to walk; for I don't believe we can ever get the Howellses to come here again until we have been there.” I was gratified to see that there was one string, anyway, that could take her to Cambridge. But I will do her the justice to say that she is always wanting to go to Cambridge, independent of the selfish desire to get a visit out of you by it. I want her to get started, now, before children's diseases are fashionable again, because they always play such hob with visiting arrangements.

With love to you all
Yrs Ever
S. L. Clemens.



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Mark Twain's trips to Boston were usually made alone. Women require more preparation to go visiting, and Mrs. Clemens and Mrs. Howells seem to have exchanged visits infrequently. For Mark Twain, perhaps, it was just as well that his wife did not always go with him; his absent-mindedness and boyish ingenuousness often led him into difficulties which Mrs. Clemens sometimes found embarrassing. In the foregoing letter they were planning a visit to Cambridge. In the one that follows they seem to have made it—with certain results, perhaps not altogether amusing at the moment.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Oct. 4, '75. *My dear Howells*,—We had a royal good time at your house, and have had a royal good time ever since, talking about it, both privately and with the neighbors.

Mrs. Clemens's bodily strength came up handsomely under that cheery respite from household and nursery cares. I do hope that Mrs. Howells's didn't go correspondingly down, under the added burden to her cares and responsibilities. Of course I didn't expect to get through without committing some crimes and hearing of them afterwards, so I have taken the inevitable lashings and been able to hum a tune while the punishment went on. I "caught it" for letting Mrs. Howells bother and bother about her coffee when it was "a good deal better than we get at home." I "caught it" for interrupting Mrs. C. at the last moment and losing her the opportunity to urge you not to forget to send her that *Ms* when the printers are done with it. I "caught it" once more for personating that drunken Col. James. I "caught it" for mentioning that Mr. Longfellow's picture was slightly damaged; and when, after a lull in the storm, I confessed, shamefacedly, that I had privately suggested to you that we hadn't any frames, and that if you wouldn't mind hinting to Mr. Houghton, &c., &c., &c., the Madam was simply speechless for the space of a minute. Then she said:

"How could you, Youth! The idea of sending Mr. Howells, with his sensitive nature, upon such a repulsive er—"

"Oh, Howells won't mind it! You don't know Howells. Howells is a man who—" She was gone. But George was the first person she stumbled on in the hall, so she took it out of George. I was glad of that, because it saved the babies.

I've got another rattling good character for my novel! That great work is mulling itself into shape gradually.

Mrs. Clemens sends love to Mrs. Howells—meantime she is diligently laying up material for a letter to her.

Yrs ever

Mark.



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The “George” of this letter was Mark Twain’s colored butler, a valued and even beloved member of the household—a most picturesque character, who “one day came to wash windows,” as Clemens used to say, “and remained eighteen years.” The fiction of Mrs. Clemens’s severity he always found amusing, because of its entire contrast with the reality of her gentle heart. Clemens carried the *Tom Sawyer Ms.* to Boston himself and placed it in Howells’s hands. Howells had begged to be allowed to see the story, and Mrs. Clemens was especially anxious that he should do so. She had doubts as to certain portions of it, and had the fullest faith in Howells’s opinion. It was a gratifying one when it came. Howells wrote: “I finished reading *Tom Sawyer* a week ago, sitting up till one A.M. to get to the end, simply because it was impossible to leave off. It’s altogether the best boy’s story I ever read. It will be an immense success. But I think you ought to treat it explicitly as a boy’s story. Grown-ups will enjoy it just as much if you do; and if you should put it forth as a study of boy character from the grown-up point of view, you give the wrong key to it.... The adventures are enchanting. I wish I had been on that island. The treasure-hunting, the loss in the cave—it’s all exciting and splendid. I shouldn’t think of publishing this story serially. Give me a hint when it’s to be out, and I’ll start the sheep to jumping in the right places”—meaning that he would have an advance review ready for publication in the *Atlantic*, which was a leader of criticism in America. Mark Twain was writing a great deal at this time. Howells was always urging him to send something to the *Atlantic*, declaring a willingness to have his name appear every month in their pages, and Clemens was generally contributing some story or sketch. The “proof” referred to in the next letter was of one of these articles.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Hartford, Nov. 23, '75. *My dear Howells*,—Herewith is the proof. In spite of myself, how awkwardly I do jumble words together; and how often I do use three words where one would answer—a thing I am always trying to guard against. I shall become as slovenly a writer as Charles Francis Adams, if I don’t look out. (That is said in jest; because of course I do not seriously fear getting so bad as that. I never shall drop so far toward his and Bret Harte’s level as to catch myself saying “It must have been wiser to have believed that he might have accomplished it if he could have felt that he would have been supported by those who should have &c. &c. &c.”) The reference to Bret Harte reminds me that I often accuse him of being a deliberate imitator of Dickens; and this in turn reminds me that I have charged unconscious plagiarism upon Charley Warner; and this in turn reminds me that



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I have been delighting my soul for two weeks over a brand new and ingenious way of beginning a novel—and behold, all at once it flashes upon me that Charley Warner originated the idea 3 years ago and told me about it! Aha! So much for self-righteousness! I am well repaid. Here are 108 pages of *Ms*, new and clean, lying disgraced in the waste paper basket, and I am beginning the novel over again in an unstolen way. I would not wonder if I am the worst literary thief in the world, without knowing it.

It is glorious news that you like *Tom Sawyer* so well. I mean to see to it that your review of it shall have plenty of time to appear before the other notices. Mrs. Clemens decides with you that the book should issue as a book for boys, pure and simple—and so do I. It is surely the correct idea. As to that last chapter, I think of just leaving it off and adding nothing in its place. Something told me that the book was done when I got to that point—and so the strong temptation to put Huck's life at the Widow's into detail, instead of generalizing it in a paragraph was resisted. Just send *Sawyer* to me by express—I enclose money for it. If it should get lost it will be no great matter.

Company interfered last night, and so "Private Theatricals" goes over till this evening, to be read aloud. Mrs. Clemens is mad, but the story will take that all out. This is going to be a splendid winter night for fireside reading, anyway.

I am almost at a dead stand-still with my new story, on account of the misery of having to do it all over again. We—all send love to you—all.

Yrs ever

Mark.

The "story" referred to may have been any one of several begun by him at this time. His head was full of ideas for literature of every sort. Many of his beginnings came to nothing, for the reason that he started wrong, or with no definitely formed plan. Others of his literary enterprises were condemned by his wife for their grotesqueness or for the offense they might give in one way or another, however worthy the intention behind them. Once he wrote a burlesque on family history "The Autobiography of a Damned Fool." "Livy wouldn't have it," he said later, "so I gave it up." The world is indebted to Mark Twain's wife for the check she put upon his fantastic or violent impulses. She was his public, his best public—clearheaded and wise. That he realized this, and was willing to yield, was by no means the least of his good fortunes. We may believe that he did not always yield easily, and perhaps sometimes only out of love for her. In the letter which he wrote her on her thirtieth birthday we realize something of what she had come to mean in his life.

To Mrs. Clemens on her Thirtieth Birthday:



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Hartford, November 27, 1875. Livy darling, six years have gone by since I made my first great success in life and won you, and thirty years have passed since Providence made preparation for that happy success by sending you into the world. Every day we live together adds to the security of my confidence, that we can never any more wish to be separated than that we can ever imagine a regret that we were ever joined. You are dearer to me to-day, my child, than you were upon the last anniversary of this birth-day; you were dearer then than you were a year before—you have grown more and more dear from the first of those anniversaries, and I do not doubt that this precious progression will continue on to the end.

Let us look forward to the coming anniversaries, with their age and their gray hairs without fear and without depression, trusting and believing that the love we bear each other will be sufficient to make them blessed.

So, with abounding affection for you and our babies, I hail this day that brings you the matronly grace and dignity of three decades!

Always Yours
S. L. C.