

# **Mark Twain's Letters — Volume 3 (1876-1885) eBook**

## **Mark Twain's Letters — Volume 3 (1876-1885) by Mark Twain**

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## XVI.

*Letters, 1876, chiefly to W. D. Howells. Literature and politics. Planning A play with Bret Harte*

The Monday Evening Club of Hartford was an association of most of the literary talent of that city, and it included a number of very distinguished members. The writers, the editors, the lawyers, and the ministers of the gospel who composed it were more often than not men of national or international distinction. There was but one paper at each meeting, and it was likely to be a paper that would later find its way into some magazine. Naturally Mark Twain was one of its favorite members, and his contributions never failed to arouse interest and discussion. A "Mark Twain night" brought out every member. In the next letter we find the first mention of one of his most memorable contributions—a story of one of life's moral aspects. The tale, now included in his collected works, is, for some reason, little read to-day; yet the curious allegory, so vivid in its seeming reality, is well worth consideration.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Jan. 11, '76. My dear Howells,*—Indeed we haven't forgotten the Howellses, nor scored up a grudge of any kind against them; but the fact is I was under the doctor's hands for four weeks on a stretch and have been disabled from working for a week or so beside. I thought I was well, about ten days ago, so I sent for a short-hand writer and dictated answers to a bushel or so of letters that had been accumulating during my illness. Getting everything shipshape and cleared up, I went to work next day upon an Atlantic article, which ought to be worth \$20 per page (which is the price they usually pay for my work, I believe) for although it is only 70 pages *Ms* (less than two days work, counting by bulk,) I have spent 3 more days trimming, altering and working at it. I shall put in one more day's polishing on it, and then read it before our Club, which is to meet at our house Monday evening, the 24th inst. I think it will bring out considerable discussion among the gentlemen of the Club—though the title of the article will not give them much notion of what is to follow,—this title being "The Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut"—which reminds me that today's Tribune says there will be a startling article in the current Atlantic, in which a being which is tangible but invisible will figure—exactly the case with the sketch of mine which I am talking about! However, mine can lie unpublished a year or two as well as not—though I wish that contributor of yours had not interfered with his coincidence of heroes.

But what I am coming at, is this: won't you and Mrs. Howells come down Saturday the 22nd and remain to the Club on Monday night? We always have a rattling good time at the Club and we do want you to come, ever so much. Will you? Now say you will. Mrs. Clemens and I are persuading ourselves that you twain will come.



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My volume of sketches is doing very well, considering the times; received my quarterly statement today from Bliss, by which I perceive that 20,000 copies have been sold—or rather, 20,000 had been sold 3 weeks ago; a lot more, by this time, no doubt.

I am on the sick list again—and was, day before yesterday—but on the whole I am getting along.

Yrs ever

Mark

Howells wrote that he could not come down to the club meeting, adding that sickness was “quite out of character” for Mark Twain, and hardly fair on a man who had made so many other people feel well. He closed by urging that Bliss “hurry out” ‘Tom Sawyer.’ “That boy is going to make a prodigious hit.” Clemens answered:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston.

*Hartford, Jan. 18, '76. My dear Howells,—*Thanks, and ever so many, for the good opinion of ‘Tom Sawyer.’ Williams has made about 300 rattling pictures for it—some of them very dainty. Poor devil, what a genius he has and how he does murder it with rum. He takes a book of mine, and without suggestion from anybody builds no end of pictures just from his reading of it.

There was never a man in the world so grateful to another as I was to you day before yesterday, when I sat down (in still rather wretched health) to set myself to the dreary and hateful task of making final revision of Tom Sawyer, and discovered, upon opening the package of *Ms*s that your pencil marks were scattered all along. This was splendid, and swept away all labor. Instead of reading the *Ms*s, I simply hunted out the pencil marks and made the emendations which they suggested. I reduced the boy battle to a curt paragraph; I finally concluded to cut the Sunday school speech down to the first two sentences, leaving no suggestion of satire, since the book is to be for boys and girls; I tamed the various obscenities until I judged that they no longer carried offense. So, at a single sitting I began and finished a revision which I had supposed would occupy 3 or 4. days and leave me mentally and physically fagged out at the end. I was careful not to inflict the *Ms*s upon you until I had thoroughly and painstakingly revised it. Therefore, the only faults left were those that would discover themselves to others, not me—and these you had pointed out.

There was one expression which perhaps you overlooked. When Huck is complaining to Tom of the rigorous system in vogue at the widow's, he says the servants harass him with all manner of compulsory decencies, and he winds up by saying: “and they comb me all to hell.” (No exclamation point.) Long ago, when I read that to Mrs. Clemens, she made no comment; another time I created occasion to read that chapter to her aunt and her mother (both sensitive and loyal subjects of the kingdom of heaven, so to

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speak) and they let it pass. I was glad, for it was the most natural remark in the world for that boy to make (and he had been allowed few privileges of speech in the book;) when I saw that you, too, had let it go without protest, I was glad, and afraid; too—afraid you hadn't observed it. Did you? And did you question the propriety of it? Since the book is now professedly and confessedly a boy's and girl's hook, that darn word bothers me some, nights, but it never did until I had ceased to regard the volume as being for adults.

Don't bother to answer now, (for you've writing enough to do without allowing me to add to the burden,) but tell me when you see me again!

Which we do hope will be next Saturday or Sunday or Monday. Couldn't you come now and mull over the alterations which you are going to make in your *Ms*, and make them after you go back? Wouldn't it assist the work if you dropped out of harness and routine for a day or two and have that sort of revivification which comes of a holiday-forgetfulness of the work-shop? I can always work after I've been to your house; and if you will come to mine, now, and hear the club toot their various horns over the exasperating metaphysical question which I mean to lay before them in the disguise of a literary extravaganza, it would just brace you up like a cordial.

(I feel sort of mean trying to persuade a man to put down a critical piece of work at a critical time, but yet I am honest in thinking it would not hurt the work nor impair your interest in it to come under the circumstances.) Mrs. Clemens says, "Maybe the Howellses could come Monday if they cannot come Saturday; ask them; it is worth trying." Well, how's that? Could you? It would be splendid if you could. Drop me a postal card—I should have a twinge of conscience if I forced you to write a letter, (I am honest about that,)—and if you find you can't make out to come, tell me that you bodies will come the next Saturday if the thing is possible, and stay over Sunday.

Yrs ever

*Mark.*

Howells, however, did not come to the club meeting, but promised to come soon when they could have a quiet time to themselves together. As to Huck's language, he declared:

"I'd have that swearing out in an instant. I suppose I didn't notice it because the locution was so familiar to my Western sense, and so exactly the thing that Huck would say." Clemens changed the phrase to, "They comb me all to thunder," and so it stands to-day. The "Carnival of Crime," having served its purpose at the club, found quick acceptance by Howells for the Atlantic. He was so pleased with it, in fact, that somewhat later he wrote, urging that its author allow it to be printed in a dainty book, by

Osgood, who made a specialty of fine publishing. Meantime Howells had written his Atlantic notice of Tom Sawyer, and now inclosed Clemens a proof of it. We may judge from the reply that it was satisfactory.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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Apl 3, '76. *My dear Howells*,—It is a splendid notice and will embolden weak-kneed journalistic admirers to speak out, and will modify or shut up the unfriendly. To “fear God and dread the Sunday school” exactly described that old feeling which I used to have, but I couldn’t have formulated it. I want to enclose one of the illustrations in this letter, if I do not forget it. Of course the book is to be elaborately illustrated, and I think that many of the pictures are considerably above the American average, in conception if not in execution.

I do not re-enclose your review to you, for you have evidently read and corrected it, and so I judge you do not need it. About two days after the Atlantic issues I mean to begin to send books to principal journals and magazines.

I read the “Carnival of Crime” proof in New York when worn and witless and so left some things unamended which I might possibly have altered had I been at home. For instance, “I shall always address you in your own S-n-i-v-e-l-i-n-g d-r-a-w-l, baby.” I saw that you objected to something there, but I did not understand what! Was it that it was too personal? Should the language be altered?—or the hyphens taken out? Won’t you please fix it the way it ought to be, altering the language as you choose, only making it bitter and contemptuous?

“Deuced” was not strong enough; so I met you halfway with “devilish.”

Mrs. Clemens has returned from New York with dreadful sore throat, and bones racked with rheumatism. She keeps her bed. “Aloha nui!” as the Kanakas say.

*Mark.*

Henry Irving once said to Mark Twain: “You made a mistake by not adopting the stage as a profession. You would have made even a greater actor than a writer.”

Mark Twain would have made an actor, certainly, but not a very tractable one. His appearance in Hartford in “The Loan of a Lover” was a distinguished event, and his success complete, though he made so many extemporaneous improvements on the lines of thick-headed Peter Spuyk, that he kept the other actors guessing as to their cues, and nearly broke up the performance. It was, of course, an amateur benefit, though Augustin Daly promptly wrote, offering to put it on for a long run. The “skeleton novelette” mentioned in the next letter refers to a plan concocted by Howells and Clemens, by which each of twelve authors was to write a story, using the same plot, “blindfolded” as to what the others had written. It was a regular “Mark Twain” notion, and it is hard to-day to imagine Howells’s continued enthusiasm in it. Neither he nor Clemens gave up the idea for a long time. It appears in their letters again and again, though perhaps it was just as well for literature that it was never carried out.



To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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Apl. 22, 1876. *My dear Howells*, You'll see per enclosed slip that I appear for the first time on the stage next Wednesday. You and Mrs. H. come down and you shall skip in free.

I wrote my skeleton novelette yesterday and today. It will make a little under 12 pages.

Please tell Aldrich I've got a photographer engaged, and tri-weekly issue is about to begin. Show him the canvassing specimens and beseech him to subscribe.

Ever yours,  
S. L. C.

In his next letter Mark Twain explains why Tom Sawyer is not to appear as soon as planned. The reference to "The Literary Nightmare" refers to the "Punch, Conductor, Punch with Care" sketch, which had recently appeared in the Atlantic. Many other versifiers had had their turn at horse-car poetry, and now a publisher was anxious to collect it in a book, provided he could use the Atlantic sketch. Clemens does not tell us here the nature of Carlton's insult, forgiveness of which he was not yet qualified to grant, but there are at least two stories about it, or two halves of the same incident, as related afterward by Clemens and Canton. Clemens said that when he took the *Jumping Frog* book to Carlton, in 1867, the latter, pointing to his stock, said, rather scornfully: "Books? I don't want your book; my shelves are full of books now," though the reader may remember that it was Carlton himself who had given the frog story to the Saturday Press and had seen it become famous. Carlton's half of the story was that he did not accept Mark Twain's book because the author looked so disreputable. Long afterward, when the two men met in Europe, the publisher said to the now rich and famous author: "Mr. Clemens, my one claim on immortality is that I declined your first book."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford*, Apl. 25, 1876

*My dear Howells*,—Thanks for giving me the place of honor.

Bliss made a failure in the matter of getting Tom Sawyer ready on time —the engravers assisting, as usual. I went down to see how much of a delay there was going to be, and found that the man had not even put a canvasser on, or issued an advertisement yet—in fact, that the electrotypes would not all be done for a month! But of course the main fact was that no canvassing had been done—because a subscription harvest is before publication, (not after, when people have discovered how bad one's book is.)

Well, yesterday I put in the *Courant* an editorial paragraph stating that Tam Sawyer is "ready to issue, but publication is put off in order to secure English copyright by simultaneous publication there and here. The English edition is unavoidably delayed."

You see, part of that is true. Very well. When I observed that my “Sketches” had dropped from a sale of 6 or 7000 a month down to 1200 a month, I said “this ain’t no time to be publishing books; therefore, let Tom lie still till Autumn, Mr. Bliss, and make a holiday book of him to beguile the young people withal.”

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I shall print items occasionally, still further delaying Tom, till I ease him down to Autumn without shock to the waiting world.

As to that “Literary Nightmare” proposition. I’m obliged to withhold consent, for what seems a good reason—to wit: A single page of horse-car poetry is all that the average reader can stand, without nausea; now, to stack together all of it that has been written, and then add it to my article would be to enrage and disgust each and every reader and win the deathless enmity of the lot.

Even if that reason were insufficient, there would still be a sufficient reason left, in the fact that Mr. Carlton seems to be the publisher of the magazine in which it is proposed to publish this horse-car matter. Carlton insulted me in Feb. 1867, and so when the day arrives that sees me doing him a civility I shall feel that I am ready for Paradise, since my list of possible and impossible forgivenesses will then be complete.

Mrs. Clemens says my version of the blindfold novelette “A Murder and A Marriage” is “good.” Pretty strong language—for her.

The Fieldses are coming down to the play tomorrow, and they promise to get you and Mrs. Howells to come too, but I hope you’ll do nothing of the kind if it will inconvenience you, for I’m not going to play either strikingly bad enough or well enough to make the journey pay you.

My wife and I think of going to Boston May 7th to see Anna Dickinson’s debut on the 8th. If I find we can go, I’ll try to get a stage box and then you and Mrs. Howells must come to Parker’s and go with us to the crucifixion.

(Is that spelt right?—somehow it doesn’t look right.)

With our very kindest regards to the whole family.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

The mention of Anna Dickinson, at the end of this letter, recalls a prominent reformer and lecturer of the Civil War period. She had begun her crusades against temperance and slavery in 1857, when she was but fifteen years old, when her success as a speaker had been immediate and extraordinary. Now, in this later period, at the age of thirty-four, she aspired to the stage—unfortunately for her, as her gifts lay elsewhere. Clemens and Howells knew Miss Dickinson, and were anxious for the success which they hardly dared hope for. Clemens arranged a box party.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:





May 4, '76. *My dear Howells*,—I shall reach Boston on Monday the 8th, either at 4:30 p.m. or 6 p.m. (Which is best?) and go straight to Parker's. If you and Mrs. Howells cannot be there by half past 4, I'll not plan to arrive till the later train-time (6,) because I don't want to be there alone—even a minute. Still, Joe Twichell will doubtless go with me (forgot that,) he is going to try hard to. Mrs. Clemens has given up going, because Susy is just recovering from about the savagest assault of diphtheria a child ever did recover from, and therefore will not be entirely her healthy self again by the 8th.

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Would you and Mrs. Howells like to invite Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich? I have a large proscenium box—plenty of room. Use your own pleasure about it—I mainly (that is honest,) suggest it because I am seeking to make matters pleasant for you and Mrs. Howells. I invited Twichell because I thought I knew you'd like that. I want you to fix it so that you and the Madam can remain in Boston all night; for I leave next day and we can't have a talk, otherwise. I am going to get two rooms and a parlor; and would like to know what you decide about the Aldriches, so as to know whether to apply for an additional bedroom or not.

Don't dine that evening, for I shall arrive dinnerless and need your help.

I'll bring my Blindfold Novelette, but shan't exhibit it unless you exhibit yours. You would simply go to work and write a novelette that would make mine sick. Because you would know all about where my weak points lay. No, Sir, I'm one of these old wary birds!

Don't bother to write a letter—3 lines on a postal card is all that I can permit from a busy man.

Yrs ever

Mark.

P. S. Good! You'll not have to feel any call to mention that debut in the Atlantic—they've made me pay the grand cash for my box!—a thing which most managers would be too worldly-wise to do, with journalistic folks. But I'm most honestly glad, for I'd rather pay three prices, any time, than to have my tongue half paralyzed with a dead-head ticket.

Hang that Anna Dickinson, a body can never depend upon her debuts! She has made five or six false starts already. If she fails to debut this time, I will never bet on her again.

In his book, *My Mark Twain*, Howells refers to the “tragedy” of Miss Dickinson's appearance. She was the author of numerous plays, some of which were successful, but her career as an actress was never brilliant.

At Elmira that summer the Clemenses heard from their good friend Doctor Brown, of Edinburgh, and sent eager replies.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

*Elmira, new York, U. S. June 22, 1876. Dear friend the doctor,—*It was a perfect delight to see the well-known handwriting again! But we so grieve to know that you are feeling miserable. It must not last—it cannot last. The regal summer is come and it will smile you into high good cheer; it will charm away your pains, it will banish your distresses. I wish you were here, to spend the summer with us. We are perched on a hill-top that overlooks a little world of green valleys, shining rivers, sumptuous forests and billowy

uplands veiled in the haze of distance. We have no neighbors. It is the quietest of all quiet places, and we are hermits that eschew caves and live in the sun. Doctor, if you'd only come!

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I will carry your letter to Mrs. C. now, and there will be a glad woman, I tell you! And she shall find one of those pictures to put in this for Mrs. Barclays and if there isn't one here we'll send right away to Hartford and get one. Come over, Doctor John, and bring the Barclays, the Nicolsons and the Browns, one and all!

Affectionately,

SAML. L. Clemens.

From May until August no letters appear to have passed between Clemens and Howells; the latter finally wrote, complaining of the lack of news. He was in the midst of campaign activities, he said, writing a life of Hayes, and gaily added: "You know I wrote the life of Lincoln, which elected him." He further reported a comedy he had completed, and gave Clemens a general stirring up as to his own work. Mark Twain, in his hillside study, was busy enough. Summer was his time for work, and he had tried his hand in various directions. His mention of Huck Finn in his reply to Howells is interesting, in that it shows the measure of his enthusiasm, or lack of it, as a gauge of his ultimate achievement

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Aug. 9, 1876. *My dear Howells*,—I was just about to write you when your letter came—and not one of those obscene postal cards, either, but reverently, upon paper.

I shall read that biography, though the letter of acceptance was amply sufficient to corral my vote without any further knowledge of the man. Which reminds me that a campaign club in Jersey City wrote a few days ago and invited me to be present at the raising of a Tilden and Hendricks flag there, and to take the stand and give them some "counsel." Well, I could not go, but gave them counsel and advice by letter, and in the kindest terms as to the raising of the flag—advised them "not to raise it."

Get your book out quick, for this is a momentous time. If Tilden is elected I think the entire country will go pretty straight to—Mrs. Howells's bad place.

I am infringing on your patent—I started a record of our children's sayings, last night. Which reminds me that last week I sent down and got Susie a vast pair of shoes of a most villainous pattern, for I discovered that her feet were being twisted and cramped out of shape by a smaller and prettier article. She did not complain, but looked degraded and injured. At night her mamma gave her the usual admonition when she was about to say her prayers—to wit:

"Now, Susie—think about God."

"Mamma, I can't, with those shoes."

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The farm is perfectly delightful this season. It is as quiet and peaceful as a South Sea Island. Some of the sunsets which we have witnessed from this commanding eminence were marvelous. One evening a rainbow spanned an entire range of hills with its mighty arch, and from a black hub resting upon the hill-top in the exact centre, black rays diverged upward in perfect regularity to the rainbow's arch and created a very strongly defined and altogether the most majestic, magnificent and startling half-sunk wagon wheel you can imagine. After that, a world of tumbling and prodigious clouds came drifting up out of the West and took to themselves a wonderfully rich and brilliant green color—the decided green of new spring foliage. Close by them we saw the intense blue of the skies, through rents in the cloud-rack, and away off in another quarter were drifting clouds of a delicate pink color. In one place hung a pall of dense black clouds, like compacted pitch-smoke. And the stupendous wagon wheel was still in the supremacy of its unspeakable grandeur. So you see, the colors present in the sky at once and the same time were blue, green, pink, black, and the vari-colored splendors of the rainbow. All strong and decided colors, too. I don't know whether this weird and astounding spectacle most suggested heaven, or hell. The wonder, with its constant, stately, and always surprising changes, lasted upwards of two hours, and we all stood on the top of the hill by my study till the final miracle was complete and the greatest day ended that we ever saw.

Our farmer, who is a grave man, watched that spectacle to the end, and then observed that it was “dam funny.”

The double-barreled novel lies torpid. I found I could not go on with it. The chapters I had written were still too new and familiar to me. I may take it up next winter, but cannot tell yet; I waited and waited to see if my interest in it would not revive, but gave it up a month ago and began another boys' book—more to be at work than anything else. I have written 400 pages on it—therefore it is very nearly half done. It is Huck Finn's Autobiography. I like it only tolerably well, as far as I have got, and may possibly pigeonhole or burn the *Ms* when it is done.

So the comedy is done, and with a “fair degree of satisfaction.” That rejoices me, and makes me mad, too—for I can't plan a comedy, and what have you done that God should be so good to you? I have racked myself baldheaded trying to plan a comedy harness for some promising characters of mine to work in, and had to give it up. It is a noble lot of blooded stock and worth no end of money, but they must stand in the stable and be profitless. I want to be present when the comedy is produced and help enjoy the success.

Warner's book is mighty readable, I think.

Love to yez.

Yrs ever

*Mark*

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Howells promptly wrote again, urging him to enter the campaign for Hayes. "There is not another man in this country," he said, "who could help him so much as you." The "farce" which Clemens refers to in his reply, was "The Parlor Car," which seems to have been about the first venture of Howells in that field.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira, August 23, 1876. My dear Howells,*—I am glad you think I could do Hayes any good, for I have been wanting to write a letter or make a speech to that end. I'll be careful not to do either, however, until the opportunity comes in a natural, justifiable and unlogged way; and shall not then do anything unless I've got it all digested and worded just right. In which case I might do some good—in any other I should do harm. When a humorist ventures upon the grave concerns of life he must do his job better than another man or he works harm to his cause.

The farce is wonderfully bright and delicious, and must make a hit. You read it to me, and it was mighty good; I read it last night and it was better; I read it aloud to the household this morning and it was better than ever. So it would be worth going a long way to see it well played; for without any question an actor of genius always adds a subtle something to any man's work that none but the writer knew was there before. Even if he knew it. I have heard of readers convulsing audiences with my "Aurelia's Unfortunate Young Man." If there is anything really funny in the piece, the author is not aware of it.

All right—advertise me for the new volume. I send you herewith a sketch which will make 3 pages of the Atlantic. If you like it and accept it, you should get it into the December No. because I shall read it in public in Boston the 13th and 14th of Nov. If it went in a month earlier it would be too old for me to read except as old matter; and if it went in a month later it would be too old for the Atlantic—do you see? And if you wish to use it, will you set it up now, and send me three proofs?—one to correct for Atlantic, one to send to Temple Bar (shall I tell them to use it not earlier than their November No.) and one to use in practising for my Boston readings.

We must get up a less elaborate and a much better skeleton-plan for the Blindfold Novels and make a success of that idea. David Gray spent Sunday here and said we could but little comprehend what a rattling stir that thing would make in the country. He thought it would make a mighty strike. So do I. But with only 8 pages to tell the tale in, the plot must be less elaborate, doubtless. What do you think?

When we exchange visits I'll show you an unfinished sketch of Elizabeth's time which shook David Gray's system up pretty exhaustively.

Yrs ever,

Mark.

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The *Ms.* sketch mentioned in the foregoing letter was “The Canvasser’s Tale,” later included in the volume, *Tom Sawyer Abroad, and Other Stories*. It is far from being Mark Twain’s best work, but was accepted and printed in the *Atlantic*. David Gray was an able journalist and editor whom Mark Twain had known in Buffalo. The “sketch of Elizabeth’s time” is a brilliant piece of writing—an imaginary record of conversation and court manners in the good old days of free speech and performance, phrased in the language of the period. Gray, John Hay, Twichell, and others who had a chance to see it thought highly of it, and Hay had it set in type and a few proofs taken for private circulation. Some years afterward a West Point officer had a special font of antique type made for it, and printed a hundred copies. But the present-day reader would hardly be willing to include “Fireside Conversation in the Time of Queen Elizabeth” in Mark Twain’s collected works.

Clemens was a strong Republican in those days, as his letters of this period show. His mention of the “caves” in the next is another reference to “The Canvasser’s Tale.”

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Sept. 14, 1876. *My dear Howells*,—Yes, the collection of caves was the origin of it. I changed it to echoes because these being invisible and intangible, constituted a still more absurd species of property, and yet a man could really own an echo, and sell it, too, for a high figure—such an echo as that at the Villa Siminetti, two miles from Milan, for instance. My first purpose was to have the man make a collection of caves and afterwards of echoes; but perceived that the element of absurdity and impracticability was so nearly identical as to amount to a repetition of an idea.....

I will not, and do not, believe that there is a possibility of Hayes’s defeat, but I want the victory to be sweeping.....

It seems odd to find myself interested in an election. I never was before. And I can’t seem to get over my repugnance to reading or thinking about politics, yet. But in truth I care little about any party’s politics—the man behind it is the important thing.

You may well know that Mrs. Clemens liked the Parlor Car—enjoyed it ever so much, and was indignant at you all through, and kept exploding into rages at you for pretending that such a woman ever existed—closing each and every explosion with “But it is just what such a woman would do.” —“It is just what such a woman would say.” They all voted the Parlor Car perfection—except me. I said they wouldn’t have been allowed to court and quarrel there so long, uninterrupted; but at each critical moment the odious train-boy would come in and pile foul literature all over them four or five inches deep, and the lover would turn his head aside and curse—and presently that

train-boy would be back again (as on all those Western roads) to take up the literature and leave prize candy.



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Of course the thing is perfect, in the magazine, without the train-boy; but I was thinking of the stage and the groundlings. If the dainty touches went over their heads, the train-boy and other possible interruptions would fetch them every time. Would it mar the flow of the thing too much to insert that devil? I thought it over a couple of hours and concluded it wouldn't, and that he ought to be in for the sake of the groundlings (and to get new copyright on the piece.)

And it seemed to me that now that the fourth act is so successfully written, why not go ahead and write the 3 preceding acts? And then after it is finished, let me put into it a low-comedy character (the girl's or the lover's father or uncle) and gobble a big pecuniary interest in your work for myself. Do not let this generous proposition disturb your rest—but do write the other 3 acts, and then it will be valuable to managers. And don't go and sell it to anybody, like Harte, but keep it for yourself.

Harte's play can be doctored till it will be entirely acceptable and then it will clear a great sum every year. I am out of all patience with Harte for selling it. The play entertained me hugely, even in its present crude state.

Love to you all.  
Yrs ever,

*Mark*

Following the Sellers success, Clemens had made many attempts at dramatic writing. Such undertakings had uniformly failed, but he had always been willing to try again. In the next letter we get the beginning of what proved his first and last direct literary association, that is to say, collaboration, with Bret Harte. Clemens had great admiration for Harte's ability and believed that between them they could turn out a successful play. Whether or not this belief was justified will appear later. Howells's biography of Hayes, meanwhile, had not gone well. He reported that only two thousand copies had been sold in what was now the height of the campaign. "There's success for you," he said; "it makes me despair of the Republic." Clemens, on his part, had made a speech for Hayes that Howells declared had put civil-service reform in a nutshell; he added: "You are the only Republican orator, quoted without distinction of party by all the newspapers."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford*, Oct. 11, 1876. *My dear Howells*, This is a secret, to be known to nobody but you (of course I comprehend that Mrs. Howells is part of you) that Bret Harte came up here the other day and asked me to help him write a play and divide the swag, and I agreed. I am to put in Scotty Briggs (See Buck Fanshaw's Funeral, in "Roughing It.") and he is to put in a Chinaman (a, wonderfully funny creature, as Bret presents him—for 5 minutes—in his Sandy Bar play.) This Chinaman is to be the character of the play, and both of us will work on him and develop him. Bret is to draw a plot, and I am to do the

same; we shall use the best of the two, or gouge from both and build a third. My plot is built—finished it yesterday—six days' work, 8 or 9 hours a day, and has nearly killed me.

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Now the favor I ask of you is that you will have the words “Ah Sin, a Drama,” printed in the middle of a note-paper page and send the same to me, with Bill. We don’t want anybody to know that we are building this play. I can’t get this title page printed here without having to lie so much that the thought of it is disagreeable to one reared as I have been. And yet the title of the play must be printed—the rest of the application for copyright is allowable in penmanship.

We have got the very best gang of servants in America, now. When George first came he was one of the most religious of men. He had but one fault—young George Washington’s. But I have trained him; and now it fairly breaks Mrs. Clemens’s heart to hear George stand at that front door and lie to the unwelcome visitor. But your time is valuable; I must not dwell upon these things.....I’ll ask Warner and Harte if they’ll do Blindfold Novelettes. Some time I’ll simplify that plot. All it needs is that the hanging and the marriage shall not be appointed for the same day. I got over that difficulty, but it required too much *Ms* to reconcile the thing—so the movement of the story was clogged.

I came near agreeing to make political speeches with our candidate for Governor the 16th and 23 inst., but I had to give up the idea, for Harte and I will be here at work then.

Yrs ever,  
Mark

Mark Twain was writing few letters these days to any one but Howells, yet in November he sent one to an old friend of his youth, Burrough, the literary chair-maker who had roomed with him in the days when he had been setting type for the St. Louis Evening News.

To Mr. Burrough, of St. Louis:

*Hartford*, Nov. 1, 1876. *My dear Burroughs*,—As you describe me I can picture myself as I was 20 years ago. The portrait is correct. You think I have grown some; upon my word there was room for it. You have described a callow fool, a self-sufficient ass, a mere human tumble-bug.... imagining that he is remodeling the world and is entirely capable of doing it right. Ignorance, intolerance, egotism, self-assertion, opaque perception, dense and pitiful chuckle-headedness—and an almost pathetic unconsciousness of it all. That is what I was at 19 and 20; and that is what the average Southerner is at 60 today. Northerners, too, of a certain grade. It is of children like this that voters are made. And such is the primal source of our government! A man hardly knows whether to swear or cry over it.

I think I comprehend the position there—perfect freedom to vote just as you choose, provided you choose to vote as other people think—social ostracism, otherwise. The

same thing exists here, among the Irish. An Irish Republican is a pariah among his people. Yet that race find fault with the same spirit in Know-Nothingism.

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Fortunately a good deal of experience of men enabled me to choose my residence wisely. I live in the freest corner of the country. There are no social disabilities between me and my Democratic personal friends. We break the bread and eat the salt of hospitality freely together and never dream of such a thing as offering impertinent interference in each other's political opinions.

Don't you ever come to New York again and not run up here to see me. I Suppose we were away for the summer when you were East; but no matter, you could have telegraphed and found out. We were at Elmira N. Y. and right on your road, and could have given you a good time if you had allowed us the chance.

Yes, Will Bowen and I have exchanged letters now and then for several years, but I suspect that I made him mad with my last—shortly after you saw him in St. Louis, I judge. There is one thing which I can't stand and won't stand, from many people. That is sham sentimentality—the kind a school-girl puts into her graduating composition; the sort that makes up the Original Poetry column of a country newspaper; the rot that deals in the “happy days of yore,” the “sweet yet melancholy past,” with its “blighted hopes” and its “vanished dreams” and all that sort of drivel. Will's were always of this stamp. I stood it years. When I get a letter like that from a grown man and he a widower with a family, it gives me the stomach ache. And I just told Will Bowen so, last summer. I told him to stop being 16 at 40; told him to stop drooling about the sweet yet melancholy past, and take a pill. I said there was but one solitary thing about the past worth remembering, and that was the fact that it is the past—can't be restored. Well, I exaggerated some of these truths a little—but only a little—but my idea was to kill his sham sentimentality once and forever, and so make a good fellow of him again. I went to the unheard-of trouble of re-writing the letter and saying the same harsh things softly, so as to sugarcoat the anguish and make it a little more endurable and I asked him to write and thank me honestly for doing him the best and kindest favor that any friend ever had done him—but he hasn't done it yet. Maybe he will, sometime. I am grateful to God that I got that letter off before he was married (I get that news from you) else he would just have slobbered all over me and drowned me when that event happened.

I enclose photograph for the young ladies. I will remark that I do not wear seal-skin for grandeur, but because I found, when I used to lecture in the winter, that nothing else was able to keep a man warm sometimes, in these high latitudes. I wish you had sent pictures of yourself and family—I'll trade picture for picture with you, straight through, if you are commercially inclined.

Your old friend,  
SAML L. Clemens.

XVII.

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*Letters, 1877. To Bermuda with Twichell. Proposition to th. Nast. The Whittier dinner*

Mark Twain must have been too busy to write letters that winter. Those that have survived are few and unimportant. As a matter of fact, he was writing the play, "Ah Sin," with Bret Harte, and getting it ready for production. Harte was a guest in the Clemens home while the play was being written, and not always a pleasant one. He was full of requirements, critical as to the 'menage,' to the point of sarcasm. The long friendship between Clemens and Harte weakened under the strain of collaboration and intimate daily intercourse, never to renew its old fiber. It was an unhappy outcome of an enterprise which in itself was to prove of little profit. The play, "Ah Sin," had many good features, and with Charles T. Parsloe in an amusing Chinese part might have been made a success, if the two authors could have harmoniously undertaken the needed repairs. It opened in Washington in May, and a letter from Parsloe, written at the moment, gives a hint of the situation.

From Charles T. Parsloe to S. L. Clemens:

*Washington, D. C. May 11th, 1877. Mr. Clemens,—*I forgot whether I acknowledged receipt of check by telegram. Harte has been here since Monday last and done little or nothing yet, but promises to have something fixed by tomorrow morning. We have been making some improvements among ourselves. The last act is weak at the end, and I do hope Mr. Harte will have something for a good finish to the piece. The other acts I think are all right, now.

Hope you have entirely recovered. I am not very well myself, the excitement of a first night is bad enough, but to have the annoyance with Harte that I have is too much for a beginner. I ain't used to it. The houses have been picking up since Tuesday Mr. Ford has worked well and hard for us.

Yours in, haste,  
*Chas. THOS. Parsloe.*

The play drew some good houses in Washington, but it could not hold them for a run. Never mind what was the matter with it; perhaps a very small change at the right point would have turned it into a fine success. We have seen in a former letter the obligation which Mark Twain confessed to Harte—a debt he had tried in many ways to repay—obtaining for him a liberal book contract with Bliss; advancing him frequent and large sums of money which Harte could not, or did not, repay; seeking to advance his fortunes in many directions. The mistake came when he introduced another genius into the intricacies of his daily life. Clemens went down to Washington during the early rehearsals of "Ah Sin." Meantime, Rutherford B. Hayes had been elected President, and Clemens one day called with a letter of introduction from Howells, thinking

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to meet the Chief Executive. His own letter to Howells, later, probably does not give the real reason of his failure, but it will be amusing to those who recall the erratic personality of George Francis Train. Train and Twain were sometimes confused by the very unlettered; or pretendedly, by Mark Twain's friends.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Baltimore, May 1, '77. My dear Howells,—*Found I was not absolutely needed in Washington so I only staid 24 hours, and am on my way home, now. I called at the White House, and got admission to Col. Rodgers, because I wanted to inquire what was the right hour to go and infest the, President. It was my luck to strike the place in the dead waste and middle of the day, the very busiest time. I perceived that Mr. Rodgers took me for George Francis Train and had made up his mind not to let me get at the President; so at the end of half an hour I took my letter of introduction from the table and went away. It was a great pity all round, and a great loss to the nation, for I was brim full of the Eastern question. I didn't get to see the President or the Chief Magistrate either, though I had sort of a glimpse of a lady at a window who resembled her portraits.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

Howells condoled with him on his failure to see the President, "but," he added, "if you and I had both been there, our combined skill would have no doubt procured us to be expelled from the White House by Fred Douglass. But the thing seems to be a complete failure as it was." Douglass at this time being the Marshal of Columbia, gives special point to Howells's suggestion. Later, in May, Clemens took Twichell for an excursion to Bermuda. He had begged Howells to go with them, but Howells, as usual, was full of literary affairs. Twichell and Clemens spent four glorious days tramping the length and breadth of the beautiful island, and remembered it always as one of their happiest adventures. "Put it down as an Oasis!" wrote Twichell on his return, "I'm afraid I shall not see as green a spot again soon. And it was your invention and your gift. And your company was the best of it. Indeed, I never took more comfort in being with you than on this journey, which, my boy, is saying a great deal."

To Howells, Clemens triumphantly reported the success of the excursion.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Farmington Avenue, Hartford, May 29, 1877.* Confound you, Joe Twichell and I roamed about Bermuda day and night and never ceased to gabble and enjoy. About half the talk was—"It is a burning shame that Howells isn't here." "Nobody could get at the very

meat and marrow of this pervading charm and deliciousness like Howells;" "How Howells would revel in the quaintness, and the simplicity



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of this people and the Sabbath repose of this land." "What an imperishable sketch Howells would make of Capt. West the whaler, and Capt. Hope with the patient, pathetic face, wanderer in all the oceans for 42 years, lucky in none; coming home defeated once more, now, minus his ship—resigned, uncomplaining, being used to this." "What a rattling chapter Howells would make out of the small boy Alfred, with his alert eye and military brevity and exactness of speech; and out of the old landlady; and her sacred onions; and her daughter; and the visiting clergyman; and the ancient pianos of Hamilton and the venerable music in vogue there—and forty other things which we shall leave untouched or touched but lightly upon, we not being worthy." "Dam Howells for not being here!" (this usually from me, not Twichell.)

O, your insufferable pride, which will have a fall some day! If you had gone with us and let me pay the \$50 which the trip and the board and the various nicknacks and mementoes would cost, I would have picked up enough droppings from your conversation to pay me 500 per cent profit in the way of the several magazine articles which I could have written, whereas I can now write only one or two and am therefore largely out of pocket by your proud ways. Ponder these things. Lord, what a perfectly bewitching excursion it was! I traveled under an assumed name and was never molested with a polite attention from anybody.

Love to you all.

Yrs ever

*Mark*

Aldrich, meantime, had invited the Clemenses to Ponkapog during the Bermuda absence, and Clemens hastened to send him a line expressing regrets. At the close he said:

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

*Farmington Avenue, Hartford, June 3, 1877.* Day after tomorrow we leave for the hills beyond Elmira, N. Y. for the summer, when I shall hope to write a book of some sort or other to beat the people with. A work similar to your new one in the Atlantic is what I mean, though I have not heard what the nature of that one is. Immoral, I suppose. Well, you are right. Such books sell best, Howells says. Howells says he is going to make his next book indelicate. He says he thinks there is money in it. He says there is a large class of the young, in schools and seminaries who—But you let him tell you. He has ciphered it all down to a demonstration.

With the warmest remembrances to the pair of you

Ever Yours

*Samuel L. Clemens.*

Clemens would naturally write something about Bermuda, and began at once, "Random Notes of an Idle Excursion," and presently completed four papers, which Howells eagerly accepted for the Atlantic. Then we find him plunging into another play, this time alone.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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*Elmira*, June 27, 1877. *My dear Howells*,—If you should not like the first 2 chapters, send them to me and begin with Chapter 3—or Part 3, I believe you call these things in the magazine. I have finished No. 4., which closes the series, and will mail it tomorrow if I think of it. I like this one, I liked the preceding one (already mailed to you some time ago) but I had my doubts about 1 and 2. Do not hesitate to squelch them, even with derision and insult.

Today I am deep in a comedy which I began this morning—principal character, that old detective—I skeletoned the first act and wrote the second, today; and am dog-tired, now. Fifty-four close pages of *Ms* in 7 hours. Once I wrote 55 pages at a sitting—that was on the opening chapters of the “Gilded Age” novel. When I cool down, an hour from now, I shall go to zero, I judge.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

Clemens had doubts as to the quality of the Bermuda papers, and with some reason. They did not represent him at his best. Nevertheless, they were pleasantly entertaining, and Howells expressed full approval of them for Atlantic use. The author remained troubled.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, July 4, 1877. *My dear Howells*,—It is splendid of you to say those pleasant things. But I am still plagued with doubts about Parts 1 and 2. If you have any, don't print. If otherwise, please make some cold villain like Lathrop read and pass sentence on them. Mind, I thought they were good, at first—it was the second reading that accomplished its hellish purpose on me. Put them up for a new verdict. Part 4 has lain in my pigeon-hole a good while, and when I put it there I had a Christian's confidence in 4 aces in it; and you can be sure it will skip toward Connecticut tomorrow before any fatal fresh reading makes me draw my bet.

I've piled up 151 *Ms* pages on my comedy. The first, second and fourth acts are done, and done to my satisfaction, too. Tomorrow and next day will finish the 3rd act and the play. I have not written less than 30 pages any day since I began. Never had so much fun over anything in my life—never such consuming interest and delight. (But Lord bless you the second reading will fetch it!) And just think!—I had Sol Smith Russell in my mind's eye for the old detective's part, and hang it he has gone off pottering with Oliver Optic, or else the papers lie.

I read everything about the President's doings there with exultation.

I wish that old ass of a private secretary hadn't taken me for George Francis Train. If ignorance were a means of grace I wouldn't trade that gorilla's chances for the Archbishop of Canterbury's.

I shall call on the President again, by and by. I shall go in my war paint; and if I am obstructed the nation will have the unusual spectacle of a private secretary with a pen over one ear a tomahawk over the other.

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I read the entire Atlantic this time. Wonderful number. Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke's story was a ten-strike. I wish she would write 12 old-time New England tales a year.

Good times to you all! Mind if you don't run here for a few days you will go to hence without having had a fore-glimpse of heaven.

*Mark.*

The play, "Ah Sin," that had done little enough in Washington, was that summer given another trial by Augustin Daly, at the Fifth Avenue Theater, New York, with a fine company. Clemens had undertaken to doctor the play, and it would seem to have had an enthusiastic reception on the opening night. But it was a summer audience, unspoiled by many attractions. "Ah Sin" was never a success in the New York season—never a money-maker on the road.

The reference in the first paragraph of the letter that follows is to the Bermuda chapters which Mark Twain was publishing simultaneously in England and America.

*Elmira, Aug 3, 1877. My dear Howells,—I have mailed one set of the slips to London, and told Bentley you would print Sept. 15, in October Atlantic, and he must not print earlier in Temple Bar. Have I got the dates and things right?*

I am powerful glad to see that No. 1 reads a nation sight better in print than it did in *Ms.* I told Bentley we'd send him the slips, each time, 6 weeks before day of publication. We can do that can't we? Two months ahead would be still better I suppose, but I don't know.

"Ah Sin" went a-booming at the Fifth Avenue. The reception of Col. Sellers was calm compared to it.

*The criticisms were just; the criticisms of the great New York dailies are always just, intelligent, and square and honest—notwithstanding, by a blunder which nobody was seriously to blame for, I was made to say exactly the opposite of this in a newspaper some time ago. Never said it at all, and moreover I never thought it. I could not publicly correct it before the play appeared in New York, because that would look as if I had really said that thing and then was moved by fears for my pocket and my reputation to take it back. But I can correct it now, and shall do it; for now my motives cannot be impugned. When I began this letter, it had not occurred to me to use you in this connection, but it occurs to me now. Your opinion and mine, uttered a year ago, and repeated more than once since, that the candor and ability of the New York critics were beyond question, is a matter which makes it proper enough that I should speak through you at this time. Therefore if you will print this paragraph somewhere, it may remove*



*the impression that I say unjust things which I do not think, merely for the pleasure of talking.*

There, now, Can't you say—

“In a letter to Mr. Howells of the Atlantic Monthly, Mark Twain describes the reception of the new comedy ‘Ali Sin,’ and then goes on to say:” etc.

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Beginning at the star with the words, "The criticisms were just." Mrs. Clemens says, "Don't ask that of Mr. Howells—it will be disagreeable to him." I hadn't thought of it, but I will bet two to one on the correctness of her instinct. We shall see.

Will you cut that paragraph out of this letter and precede it with the remarks suggested (or with better ones,) and send it to the Globe or some other paper? You can't do me a bigger favor; and yet if it is in the least disagreeable, you mustn't think of it. But let me know, right away, for I want to correct this thing before it grows stale again. I explained myself to only one critic (the World)—the consequence was a noble notice of the play. This one called on me, else I shouldn't have explained myself to him.

I have been putting in a deal of hard work on that play in New York, but it is full of incurable defects.

My old Plunkett family seemed wonderfully coarse and vulgar on the stage, but it was because they were played in such an outrageously and inexcusably coarse way. The Chinaman is killingly funny. I don't know when I have enjoyed anything as much as I did him. The people say there isn't enough of him in the piece. That's a triumph—there'll never be any more of him in it.

John Brougham said, "Read the list of things which the critics have condemned in the piece, and you have unassailable proofs that the play contains all the requirements of success and a long life."

That is true. Nearly every time the audience roared I knew it was over something that would be condemned in the morning (justly, too) but must be left in—for low comedies are written for the drawing-room, the kitchen and the stable, and if you cut out the kitchen and the stable the drawing-room can't support the play by itself.

There was as much money in the house the first two nights as in the first ten of Sellers. Haven't heard from the third—I came away.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

In a former letter we have seen how Mark Twain, working on a story that was to stand as an example of his best work, and become one of his surest claims to immortality (The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), displayed little enthusiasm in his undertaking. In the following letter, which relates the conclusion of his detective comedy, we find him at the other extreme, on very tiptoe with enthusiasm over something wholly without literary value or dramatic possibility. One of the hall-marks of genius is the inability to discriminate as to the value of its output. "Simon Wheeler, Amateur Detective" was a dreary, absurd, impossible performance, as wild and unconvincing in incident and dialogue as anything out of an asylum could well be. The title which he first chose for it,

“Balaam’s Ass,” was properly in keeping with the general scheme. Yet Mark Twain, still warm with the creative



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fever, had the fullest faith in it as a work of art and a winner of fortune. It would never see the light of production, of course. We shall see presently that the distinguished playwright, Dion Boucicault, good-naturedly complimented it as being better than “Ahi Sin.” One must wonder what that skilled artist really thought, and how he could do even this violence to his conscience.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Wednesday P.M. (1877) *My dear Howells*,—It’s finished. I was misled by hurried mis-paging. There were ten pages of notes, and over 300 pages of *Ms* when the play was done. Did it in 42 hours, by the clock; 40 pages of the Atlantic—but then of course it’s very “fat.” Those are the figures, but I don’t believe them myself, because the thing’s impossible.

But let that pass. All day long, and every day, since I finished (in the rough) I have been diligently altering, amending, re-writing, cutting down. I finished finally today. Can’t think of anything else in the way of an improvement. I thought I would stick to it while the interest was hot—and I am mighty glad I did. A week from now it will be frozen—then revising would be drudgery. (You see I learned something from the fatal blunder of putting “Ah Sin” aside before it was finished.)

She’s all right, now. She reads in two hours and 20 minutes and will play not longer than 2 3/4 hours. Nineteen characters; 3 acts; (I bunched 2 into 1.)

Tomorrow I will draw up an exhaustive synopsis to insert in the printed title-page for copyrighting, and then on Friday or Saturday I go to New York to remain a week or ten days and lay for an actor. Wish you could run down there and have a holiday. ’Twould be fun.

My wife won’t have “Balaam’s Ass”; therefore I call the piece “Cap’n Simon Wheeler, The Amateur Detective.”

Yrs

*Mark.*

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Aug. 29, 1877. *My dear Howells*,—Just got your letter last night. No, dern that article,—[One of the Bermuda chapters.]—it made me cry when I read it in proof, it was so oppressively and ostentatiously poor. Skim your eye over it again and you will think as I do. If Isaac and the prophets of Baal can be doctored gently and made permissible, it will redeem the thing: but if it can’t, let’s burn all of the articles except the tail-end of it

and use that as an introduction to the next article—as I suggested in my letter to you of day before yesterday. (I had this proof from Cambridge before yours came.)

Boucicault says my new play is ever so much better than “Ah Sin;” says the Amateur detective is a bully character, too. An actor is chawing over the play in New York, to see if the old Detective is suited to his abilities. Haven’t heard from him yet.

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If you've got that paragraph by you yet, and if in your judgment it would be good to publish it, and if you absolutely would not mind doing it, then I think I'd like to have you do it—or else put some other words in my mouth that will be properer, and publish them. But mind, don't think of it for a moment if it is distasteful—and doubtless it is. I value your judgment more than my own, as to the wisdom of saying anything at all in this matter. To say nothing leaves me in an injurious position—and yet maybe I might do better to speak to the men themselves when I go to New York. This was my latest idea, and it looked wise.

We expect to leave here for home Sept. 4, reaching there the 8th—but we may be delayed a week.

Curious thing. I read passages from my play, and a full synopsis, to Boucicault, who was re-writing a play, which he wrote and laid aside 3 or 4 years ago. (My detective is about that age, you know.) Then he read a passage from his play, where a real detective does some things that are as idiotic as some of my old Wheeler's performances. Showed me the passages, and behold, his man's name is Wheeler! However, his Wheeler is not a prominent character, so we'll not alter the names. My Wheeler's name is taken from the old jumping Frog sketch.

I am re-reading Ticknor's diary, and am charmed with it, though I still say he refers to too many good things when he could just as well have told them. Think of the man traveling 8 days in convoy and familiar intercourse with a band of outlaws through the mountain fastnesses of Spain—he the fourth stranger they had encountered in thirty years—and compressing this priceless experience into a single colorless paragraph of his diary! They spun yarns to this unworthy devil, too.

I wrote you a very long letter a day or two ago, but Susy Crane wanted to make a copy of it to keep, so it has not gone yet. It may go today, possibly.

We unite in warm regards to you and yours.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

The Ticknor referred to in a former letter was Professor George Ticknor, of Harvard College, a history-writer of distinction. On the margin of the "Diary" Mark Twain once wrote, "Ticknor is a Millet, who makes all men fall in love with him." And adds: "Millet was the cause of lovable qualities in people, and then he admired and loved those persons for the very qualities which he (without knowing it) had created in them. Perhaps it would be strictly truer of these two men to say that they bore within them the divine something in whose presence the evil in people fled away and hid itself, while all that was good in them came spontaneously forward out of the forgotten walls and

comers in their systems where it was accustomed to hide."It is Frank Millet, the artist, he is speaking of—a knightly soul whom

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all the Clemens household loved, and who would one day meet his knightly end with those other brave men that found death together when the Titanic went down. The Clemens family was still at Quarry Farm at the end of August, and one afternoon there occurred a startling incident which Mark Twain thought worth setting down in practically duplicate letters to Howells and to Dr. John Brown. It may be of interest to the reader to know that John T. Lewis, the colored man mentioned, lived to a good old age—a pensioner of the Clemens family and, in the course of time, of H. H. Rogers. Howells's letter follows. It is the "very long letter" referred to in the foregoing.

To W. D. Howells and wife, in Boston:

*Elmira, Aug. 25 '77. My dear Howellses,*—I thought I ought to make a sort of record of it for further reference; the pleasantest way to do that would be to write it to somebody; but that somebody would let it leak into print and that we wish to avoid. The Howellses would be safe—so let us tell the Howellses about it.

Day before yesterday was a fine summer day away up here on the summit. Aunt Marsh and Cousin May Marsh were here visiting Susie Crane and Livy at our farmhouse. By and by mother Langdon came up the hill in the "high carriage" with Nora the nurse and little Jervis (Charley Langdon's little boy)—Timothy the coachman driving. Behind these came Charley's wife and little girl in the buggy, with the new, young, spry, gray horse—a high-stepper. Theodore Crane arrived a little later.

The Bay and Susy were on hand with their nurse, Rosa. I was on hand, too. Susy Crane's trio of colored servants ditto—these being Josie, house-maid; Aunty Cord, cook, aged 62, turbaned, very tall, very broad, very fine every way (see her portrait in "A True Story just as I Heard It" in my Sketches;) Chocklate (the laundress) (as the Bay calls her—she can't say Charlotte,) still taller, still more majestic of proportions, turbaned, very black, straight as an Indian—age 24. Then there was the farmer's wife (colored) and her little girl, Susy.

Wasn't it a good audience to get up an excitement before? Good excitable, inflammable material?

Lewis was still down town, three miles away, with his two-horse wagon, to get a load of manure. Lewis is the farmer (colored). He is of mighty frame and muscle, stocky, stooping, ungainly, has a good manly face and a clear eye. Age about 45—and the most picturesque of men, when he sits in his fluttering work-day rags, humped forward into a bunch, with his aged slouch hat mashed down over his ears and neck. It is a spectacle to make the broken-hearted smile. Lewis has worked mighty hard and remained mighty poor. At the end of each whole year's toil he can't show a gain of fifty dollars. He had borrowed money of the Cranes till he owed them \$700 and he being

conscientious and honest, imagine what it was to him to have to carry this stubborn, helpless load year in and year out.

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Well, sunset came, and Ida the young and comely (Charley Langdon's wife) and her little Julia and the nurse Nora, drove out at the gate behind the new gray horse and started down the long hill—the high carriage receiving its load under the porte cochere. Ida was seen to turn her face toward us across the fence and intervening lawn—Theodore waved good-bye to her, for he did not know that her sign was a speechless appeal for help.

The next moment Livy said, "Ida's driving too fast down hill!" She followed it with a sort of scream, "Her horse is running away!"

We could see two hundred yards down that descent. The buggy seemed to fly. It would strike obstructions and apparently spring the height of a man from the ground.

Theodore and I left the shrieking crowd behind and ran down the hill bare-headed and shouting. A neighbor appeared at his gate—a tenth of a second too late! the buggy vanished past him like a thought. My last glimpse showed it for one instant, far down the descent, springing high in the air out of a cloud of dust, and then it disappeared. As I flew down the road my impulse was to shut my eyes as I turned them to the right or left, and so delay for a moment the ghastly spectacle of mutilation and death I was expecting.

I ran on and on, still spared this spectacle, but saying to myself: "I shall see it at the turn of the road; they never can pass that turn alive." When I came in sight of that turn I saw two wagons there bunched together—one of them full of people. I said, "Just so—they are staring petrified at the remains."

But when I got amongst that bunch, there sat Ida in her buggy and nobody hurt, not even the horse or the vehicle. Ida was pale but serene. As I came tearing down, she smiled back over her shoulder at me and said, "Well, we're alive yet, aren't we?" A miracle had been performed—nothing else.

You see Lewis, the prodigious, humped upon his front seat, had been toiling up, on his load of manure; he saw the frantic horse plunging down the hill toward him, on a full gallop, throwing his heels as high as a man's head at every jump. So Lewis turned his team diagonally across the road just at the "turn," thus making a V with the fence—the running horse could not escape that, but must enter it. Then Lewis sprang to the ground and stood in this V. He gathered his vast strength, and with a perfect Creedmoor aim he seized the gray horse's bit as he plunged by and fetched him up standing!

It was down hill, mind you. Ten feet further down hill neither Lewis nor any other man could have saved them, for they would have been on the abrupt "turn," then. But how this miracle was ever accomplished at all, by human strength, generalship and accuracy, is clean beyond my comprehension—and grows more so the more I go and examine the ground and try to believe it was actually done. I know one thing, well; if

Lewis had missed his aim he would have been killed on the spot in the trap he had made for himself, and we should have found the rest of the remains away down at the bottom of the steep ravine.



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Ten minutes later Theodore and I arrived opposite the house, with the servants straggling after us, and shouted to the distracted group on the porch, "Everybody safe!"

Believe it? Why how could they? They knew the road perfectly. We might as well have said it to people who had seen their friends go over Niagara.

However, we convinced them; and then, instead of saying something, or going on crying, they grew very still—words could not express it, I suppose.

Nobody could do anything that night, or sleep, either; but there was a deal of moving talk, with long pauses between pictures of that flying carriage, these pauses represented—this picture intruded itself all the time and disjointed the talk.

But yesterday evening late, when Lewis arrived from down town he found his supper spread, and some presents of books there, with very complimentary writings on the fly-leaves, and certain very complimentary letters, and more or less greenbacks of dignified denomination pinned to these letters and fly-leaves,—and one said, among other things, (signed by the Cranes) "We cancel \$400 of your indebtedness to us," &c. &c.

(The end thereof is not yet, of course, for Charley Langdon is West and will arrive ignorant of all these things, today.)

The supper-room had been kept locked and imposingly secret and mysterious until Lewis should arrive; but around that part of the house were gathered Lewis's wife and child, Chocklate, Josie, Aunty Cord and our Rosa, canvassing things and waiting impatiently. They were all on hand when the curtain rose.

Now, Aunty Cord is a violent Methodist and Lewis an implacable Dunker —Baptist. Those two are inveterate religious disputants. The revealments having been made Aunty Cord said with effusion—

"Now, let folks go on saying there ain't no God! Lewis, the Lord sent you there to stop that horse."

Says Lewis:

"Then who sent the horse there in sich a shape?"

But I want to call your attention to one thing. When Lewis arrived the other evening, after saving those lives by a feat which I think is the most marvelous of any I can call to mind—when he arrived, hunched up on his manure wagon and as grotesquely picturesque as usual, everybody wanted to go and see how he looked. They came back and said he was beautiful. It was so, too—and yet he would have photographed exactly as he would have done any day these past 7 years that he has occupied this farm.

Aug. 27. P. S. Our little romance in real life is happily and satisfactorily completed. Charley has come, listened, acted—and now John T. Lewis has ceased to consider himself as belonging to that class called “the poor.”

It has been known, during some years, that it was Lewis’s purpose to buy a thirty dollar silver watch some day, if he ever got where he could afford it. Today Ida has given him a new, sumptuous gold Swiss stem-winding stop-watch; and if any scoffer shall say, “Behold this thing is out of character,” there is an inscription within, which will silence him; for it will teach him that this wearer aggrandizes the watch, not the watch the wearer.

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I was asked beforehand, if this would be a wise gift, and I said “Yes, the very wisest of all;” I know the colored race, and I know that in Lewis’s eyes this fine toy will throw the other more valuable testimonials far away into the shade. If he lived in England the Humane Society would give him a gold medal as costly as this watch, and nobody would say: “It is out of character.” If Lewis chose to wear a town clock, who would become it better?

Lewis has sound common sense, and is not going to be spoiled. The instant he found himself possessed of money, he forgot himself in a plan to make his old father comfortable, who is wretchedly poor and lives down in Maryland. His next act, on the spot, was the proffer to the Cranes of the \$300 of his remaining indebtedness to them. This was put off by them to the indefinite future, for he is not going to be allowed to pay that at all, though he doesn’t know it.

A letter of acknowledgment from Lewis contains a sentence which raises it to the dignity of literature:

“But I beg to say, humbly, that inasmuch as divine providence saw fit to use me as a instrument for the saving of those presshious lives, the honner conferd upon me was greater than the feat performed.”

That is well said.

Yrs ever

*Mark.*

Howells was moved to use the story in the. “Contributors’ Club,” and warned Clemens against letting it get into the newspapers. He declared he thought it one of the most impressive things he had ever read. But Clemens seems never to have allowed it to be used in any form. In its entirety, therefore, it is quite new matter.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Sept. 19, 1877. My dear Howells,*—I don’t really see how the story of the runaway horse could read well with the little details of names and places and things left out. They are the true life of all narrative. It wouldn’t quite do to print them at this time. We’ll talk about it when you come. Delicacy—a sad, sad false delicacy—robs literature of the best two things among its belongings. Family-circle narrative and obscene stories. But no matter; in that better world which I trust we are all going to I have the hope and belief that they will not be denied us.

Say—Twichell and I had an adventure at sea, 4 months ago, which I did not put in my Bermuda articles, because there was not enough to it. But the press dispatches bring the sequel today, and now there’s plenty to it. A sailless, wasteless, chartless, compassless, grubless old condemned tub that has been drifting helpless about the

ocean for 4 months and a half, begging bread and water like any other tramp, flying a signal of distress permanently, and with 13 innocent, marveling chuckleheaded Bermuda niggers on board, taking a Pleasure Excursion! Our ship fed the poor devils on the 25th of last

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May, far out at sea and left them to bullyrag their way to New York—and now they ain't as near New York as they were then by 250 miles! They have drifted 750 miles and are still drifting in the relentless Gulf Stream! What a delicious magazine chapter it would make—but I had to deny myself. I had to come right out in the papers at once, with my details, so as to try to raise the government's sympathy sufficiently to have better succor sent them than the cutter Colfax, which went a little way in search of them the other day and then struck a fog and gave it up.

If the President were in Washington I would telegraph him.

When I hear that the “Jonas Smith” has been found again, I mean to send for one of those darkies, to come to Hartford and give me his adventures for an Atlantic article.

Likely you will see my today's article in the newspapers.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

The revenue cutter Colfax went after the Jonas Smith, thinking there was mutiny or other crime on board. It occurs to me now that, since there is only mere suffering and misery and nobody to punish, it ceases to be a matter which (a republican form of) government will feel authorized to interfere in further. Dam a republican form of government.

Clemens thought he had given up lecturing for good; he was prosperous and he had no love for the platform. But one day an idea popped into his head: Thomas Nast, the “father of the American cartoon,” had delivered a successful series of illustrated lectures—talks for which he made the drawings as he went along. Mark Twain's idea was to make a combination with Nast. His letter gives us the plan in full.

To Thomas Nast, Morristown, N. J.:

*Hartford, Conn. 1877. My dear Nast,*—I did not think I should ever stand on a platform again until the time was come for me to say “I die innocent.” But the same old offers keep arriving. I have declined them all, just as usual, though sorely tempted, as usual.

Now, I do not decline because I mind talking to an audience, but because (1) traveling alone is so heartbreakingly dreary, and (2) shouldering the whole show is such a cheer-killing responsibility.

Therefore, I now propose to you what you proposed to me in 1867, ten years ago (when I was unknown) *viz.*, that you stand on the platform and make pictures, and I stand by



you and blackguard the audience. I should enormously enjoy meandering around (to big towns—don't want to go to the little ones) with you for company.

My idea is not to fatten the lecture agents and lyceums on the spoils, but put all the ducats religiously into two equal piles, and say to the artist and lecturer, "Absorb these."

For instance—[Here follows a plan and a possible list of cities to be visited. The letter continues]

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Call the gross receipts \$100,000 for four months and a half, and the profit from \$60,000 to \$75,000 (I try to make the figures large enough, and leave it to the public to reduce them.)

I did not put in Philadelphia because Pugh owns that town, and last winter when I made a little reading-trip he only paid me \$300 and pretended his concert (I read fifteen minutes in the midst of a concert) cost him a vast sum, and so he couldn't afford any more. I could get up a better concert with a barrel of cats.

I have imagined two or three pictures and concocted the accompanying remarks to see how the thing would go. I was charmed.

Well, you think it over, Nast, and drop me a line. We should have some fun.

Yours truly,  
*Samuel L. Clemens.*

The plan came to nothing. Nast, like Clemens, had no special taste for platforming, and while undoubtedly there would have been large profits in the combination, the promise of the venture did not compel his acceptance. In spite of his distaste for the platform Mark Twain was always giving readings and lectures, without charge, for some worthy Hartford cause. He was ready to do what he could to help an entertainment along, if he could do it in his own way—an original way, sometimes, and not always gratifying to the committee, whose plans were likely to be prearranged. For one thing, Clemens, supersensitive in the matter of putting himself forward in his own town, often objected to any special exploitation of his name. This always distressed the committee, who saw a large profit to their venture in the prestige of his fame. The following characteristic letter was written in self-defense when, on one such occasion, a committee had become sufficiently peevish to abandon a worthy enterprise.

To an Entertainment Committee, in Hartford:

Nov. 9.  
E. S. Sykes, Esq:

Dr. *Sir*,—Mr. Burton's note puts upon me all the blame of the destruction of an enterprise which had for its object the succor of the Hartford poor. That is to say, this enterprise has been dropped because of the "dissatisfaction with Mr. Clemens's stipulations." Therefore I must be allowed to say a word in my defense.

There were two "stipulations"—exactly two. I made one of them; if the other was made at all, it was a joint one, from the choir and me.

My individual stipulation was, that my name should be kept out of the newspapers. The joint one was that sufficient tickets to insure a good sum should be sold before the date of the performance should be set. (Understand, we wanted a good sum—I do not think any of us bothered about a good house; it was money we were after)

Now you perceive that my concern is simply with my individual stipulation. Did that break up the enterprise?



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Eugene Burton said he would sell \$300 worth of the tickets himself.—Mr. Smith said he would sell \$200 or \$300 worth himself. My plan for Asylum Hill Church would have ensured \$150 from that quarter.—All this in the face of my “Stipulation.” It was proposed to raise \$1000; did my stipulation render the raising of \$400 or \$500 in a dozen churches impossible?

My stipulation is easily defensible. When a mere reader or lecturer has appeared 3 or 4 times in a town of Hartford’s size, he is a good deal more than likely to get a very unpleasant snub if he shoves himself forward about once or twice more. Therefore I long ago made up my mind that whenever I again appeared here, it should be only in a minor capacity and not as a chief attraction.

Now, I placed that harmless and very justifiable stipulation before the committee the other day; they carried it to headquarters and it was accepted there. I am not informed that any objection was made to it, or that it was regarded as an offense. It seems late in the day, now, after a good deal of trouble has been taken and a good deal of thankless work done by the committees, to, suddenly tear up the contract and then turn and bowl me down from long range as being the destroyer of it.

If the enterprise has failed because of my individual stipulation, here you have my proper and reasonable reasons for making that stipulation.

If it has failed because of the joint stipulation, put the blame there, and let us share it collectively.

I think our plan was a good one. I do not doubt that Mr. Burton still approves of it, too. I believe the objections come from other quarters, and not from him. Mr. Twichell used the following words in last Sunday’s sermon, (if I remember correctly):

“My hearers, the prophet Deuteronomy says this wise thing: ‘Though ye plan a goodly house for the poor, and plan it with wisdom, and do take off your coats and set to to build it, with high courage, yet shall the croaker presently come, and lift up his voice, (having his coat on,) and say, Verily this plan is not well planned—and he will go his way; and the obstructionist will come, and lift up his voice, (having his coat on,) and say, Behold, this is but a sick plan—and he will go his way; and the man that knows it all will come, and lift up his voice, (having his coat on,) and say, Lo, call they this a plan? then will he go his way; and the places which knew him once shall know him no more forever, because he was not, for God took him. Now therefore I say unto you, Verily that house will not be budded. And I say this also: He that waiteth for all men to be satisfied with his plan, let him seek eternal life, for he shall need it.’”

This portion of Mr. Twichell’s sermon made a great impression upon me, and I was grieved that some one had not wakened me earlier so that I might have heard what went before.

S. L. *Clemens*.

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Mr. Sykes (of the firm of Sykes & Newton, the Allen House Pharmacy) replied that he had read the letter to the committee and that it had set those gentlemen right who had not before understood the situation. "If others were as ready to do their part as yourself our poor would not want assistance," he said, in closing. We come now to an incident which assumes the proportions of an episode—even of a catastrophe—in Mark Twain's career. The disaster was due to a condition noted a few pages earlier—the inability of genius to judge its own efforts. The story has now become history—printed history—it having been sympathetically told by Howells in *My Mark Twain*, and more exhaustively, with a report of the speech that invited the lightning, in a former work by the present writer. The speech was made at John Greenleaf Whittier's seventieth birthday dinner, given by the Atlantic staff on the evening of December 17, 1877. It was intended as a huge joke—a joke that would shake the sides of these venerable Boston deities, Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, and the rest of that venerated group. Clemens had been a favorite at the Atlantic lunches and dinners—a speech by him always an event. This time he decided to outdo himself.

He did that, but not in the way he had intended. To use one of his own metaphors, he stepped out to meet the rainbow and got struck by lightning. His joke was not of the Boston kind or size. When its full nature burst upon the company—when the ears of the assembled diners heard the sacred names of Longfellow, Emerson, and Holmes lightly associated with human aspects removed—oh, very far removed—from Cambridge and Concord, a chill fell upon the diners that presently became amazement, and then creeping paralysis. Nobody knew afterward whether the great speech that he had so gaily planned ever came to a natural end or not. Somebody—the next on the program—attempted to follow him, but presently the company melted out of the doors and crept away into the night.

It seemed to Mark Twain that his career had come to an end. Back in Hartford, sweating and suffering through sleepless nights, he wrote Howells his anguish.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Sunday Night. 1877. *My dear Howells*,—My sense of disgrace does not abate. It grows. I see that it is going to add itself to my list of permanencies—a list of humiliations that extends back to when I was seven years old, and which keep on persecuting me regardless of my repentancies.

I feel that my misfortune has injured me all over the country; therefore it will be best that I retire from before the public at present. It will hurt the Atlantic for me to appear in its pages, now. So it is my opinion and my wife's that the telephone story had better be

suppressed. Will you return those proofs or revises to me, so that I can use the same on some future occasion?

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It seems as if I must have been insane when I wrote that speech and saw no harm in it, no disrespect toward those men whom I revered so much. And what shame I brought upon you, after what you said in introducing me! It burns me like fire to think of it.

The whole matter is a dreadful subject—let me drop it here—at least on paper.

Penitently yrs,

*Mark.*

Howells sent back a comforting letter. “I have no idea of dropping you out of the Atlantic,” he wrote; “and Mr. Houghton has still less, if possible. You are going to help and not hurt us many a year yet, if you will.... You are not going to be floored by it; there is more justice than that, even in this world.” Howells added that Charles Elliot Norton had expressed just the right feeling concerning the whole affair, and that many who had not heard the speech, but read the newspaper reports of it, had found it without offense. Clemens wrote contrite letters to Holmes, Emerson, and Longfellow, and received most gracious acknowledgments. Emerson, indeed, had not heard the speech: His faculties were already blurred by the mental mists that would eventually shut him in. Clemens wrote again to Howells, this time with less anguish.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Friday, 1877. My dear Howells,*—Your letter was a godsend; and perhaps the welcomest part of it was your consent that I write to those gentlemen; for you discouraged my hints in that direction that morning in Boston—rightly, too, for my offense was yet too new, then. Warner has tried to hold up our hands like the good fellow he is, but poor Twichell could not say a word, and confessed that he would rather take nearly any punishment than face Livy and me. He hasn’t been here since.

It is curious, but I pitched early upon Mr. Norton as the very man who would think some generous thing about that matter, whether he said it or not. It is splendid to be a man like that—but it is given to few to be.

I wrote a letter yesterday, and sent a copy to each of the three. I wanted to send a copy to Mr. Whittier also, since the offense was done also against him, being committed in his presence and he the guest of the occasion, besides holding the well-nigh sacred place he does in his people’s estimation; but I didn’t know whether to venture or not, and so ended by doing nothing. It seemed an intrusion to approach him, and even Livy seemed to have her doubts as to the best and properest way to do in the case. I do not reverence Mr. Emerson less, but somehow I could approach him easier.



Send me those proofs, if you have got them handy; I want to submit them to Wylie; he won't show them to anybody.

Had a very pleasant and considerate letter from Mr. Houghton, today, and was very glad to receive it.

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You can't imagine how brilliant and beautiful that new brass fender is, and how perfectly naturally it takes its place under the carved oak. How they did scour it up before they sent it! I lied a good deal about it when I came home—so for once I kept a secret and surprised Livy on a Christmas morning!

I haven't done a stroke of work since the Atlantic dinner; have only moped around. But I'm going to try tomorrow. How could I ever have.

Ah, well, I am a great and sublime fool. But then I am God's fool, and all His works must be contemplated with respect.

Livy and I join in the warmest regards to you and yours,  
Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

Longfellow, in his reply, said: "I do not believe anybody was much hurt. Certainly I was not, and Holmes tells me he was not. So I think you may dismiss the matter from your mind without further remorse."

Holmes wrote: "It never occurred to me for a moment to take offense, or feel wounded by your playful use of my name."

Miss Ellen Emerson replied for her father (in a letter to Mrs. Clemens) that the speech had made no impression upon him, giving at considerable length the impression it had made on herself and other members of the family.

Clearly, it was not the principals who were hurt, but only those who held them in awe, though one can realize that this would not make it much easier for Mark Twain.

## XVIII.

*Letters from Europe, 1878-79. Tramping with Twichell. Writing A new travel book. Life in Munich*

Whether the unhappy occurrence at the Whittier dinner had anything to do with Mark Twain's resolve to spend a year or two in Europe cannot be known now. There were other good reasons for going, one in particular being a demand for another book of travel. It was also true, as he explains in a letter to his mother, that his days were full of annoyances, making it difficult for him to work. He had a tendency to invest money in almost any glittering enterprise that came along, and at this time he was involved in the promotion of a variety of patent rights that brought him no return other than assessment and vexation.

Clemens's mother was by this time living with her son Orion and his wife, in Iowa.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

*Hartford, Feb. 17, 1878 My dear mother,*—I suppose I am the worst correspondent in the whole world; and yet I grow worse and worse all the time. My conscience blisters me for not writing you, but it has ceased to abuse me for not writing other folks.



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Life has come to be a very serious matter with me. I have a badgered, harassed feeling, a good part of my time. It comes mainly of business responsibilities and annoyances, and the persecution of kindly letters from well meaning strangers—to whom I must be rudely silent or else put in the biggest half of my time bothering over answers. There are other things also that help to consume my time and defeat my projects. Well, the consequence is, I cannot write a book at home. This cuts my income down. Therefore, I have about made up my mind to take my tribe and fly to some little corner of Europe and budge no more until I shall have completed one of the half dozen books that lie begun, up stairs. Please say nothing about this at present.

We propose to sail the 11th of April. I shall go to Fredonia to meet you, but it will not be well for Livy to make that trip I am afraid. However, we shall see. I will hope she can go.

Mr. Twichell has just come in, so I must go to him. We are all well, and send love to you all.

Affly,

Sam.

He was writing few letters at this time, and doing but little work. There were always many social events during the winter, and what with his European plans and a diligent study of the German language, which the entire family undertook, his days and evenings were full enough. Howells wrote protesting against the European travel and berating him for his silence: "I never was in Berlin and don't know any family hotel there. I should be glad I didn't, if it would keep you from going. You deserve to put up at the Sign of the Savage in Vienna. Really, it's a great blow to me to hear of that prospected sojourn. It's a shame. I must see you, somehow, before you go. I'm in dreadfully low spirits about it.

"I was afraid your silence meant something wicked."

Clemens replied promptly, urging a visit to Hartford, adding a postscript for Mrs. Howells, characteristic enough to warrant preservation.

P. S. to Mrs. Howells, in Boston:

Feb. '78. *Dear Mrs. Howells.* Mrs. Clemens wrote you a letter, and handed it to me half an hour ago, while I was folding mine to Mr. Howells. I laid that letter on this table before me while I added the paragraph about R,'s application. Since then I have been hunting and swearing, and swearing and hunting, but I can't find a sign of that letter. It is the most astonishing disappearance I ever heard of. Mrs. Clemens has gone off driving—so I will have to try and give you an idea of her communication from memory. Mainly it consisted of an urgent desire that you come to see us next week, if you can

possibly manage it, for that will be a reposeful time, the turmoil of breaking up beginning the week after. She wants you to tell her about Italy, and advise

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her in that connection, if you will. Then she spoke of her plans—hers, mind you, for I never have anything quite so definite as a plan. She proposes to stop a fortnight in (confound the place, I've forgotten what it was,) then go and live in Dresden till sometime in the summer; then retire to Switzerland for the hottest season, then stay a while in Venice and put in the winter in Munich. This program subject to modifications according to circumstances. She said something about some little by-trips here and there, but they didn't stick in my memory because the idea didn't charm me.

(They have just telephoned me from the Courant office that Bayard Taylor and family have taken rooms in our ship, the Holsatia, for the 11th April.)

Do come, if you possibly can!—and remember and don't forget to avoid letting Mrs. Clemens find out I lost her letter. Just answer her the same as if you had got it.

Sincerely yours  
S. L. Clemens.

The Howellses came, as invited, for a final reunion before the breaking up. This was in the early half of March; the Clemenses were to sail on the 11th of the following month.

Orion Clemens, meantime, had conceived a new literary idea and was piling in his *Ms.* as fast as possible to get his brother's judgment on it before the sailing-date. It was not a very good time to send *Ms.*, but Mark Twain seems to have read it and given it some consideration. "The Journey in Heaven," of his own, which he mentions, was the story published so many years later under the title of "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven." He had begun it in 1868, on his voyage to San Francisco, it having been suggested by conversations with Capt. Ned Wakeman, of one of the Pacific steamers. Wakeman also appears in 'Roughing It,' Chap. L, as Capt. Ned Blakely, and again in one of the "Rambling Notes of an Idle Excursion," as "Captain Hurricane Jones."

To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk:

*Hartford, Mch. 23, 1878. My dear Bro.,*—Every man must learn his trade—not pick it up. God requires that he learn it by slow and painful processes. The apprentice-hand, in black-smithing, in medicine, in literature, in everything, is a thing that can't be hidden. It always shows.

But happily there is a market for apprentice work, else the "Innocents Abroad" would have had no sale. Happily, too, there's a wider market for some sorts of apprentice literature than there is for the very best of journey-work. This work of yours is exceedingly crude, but I am free to say it is less crude than I expected it to be, and



considerably better work than I believed you could do, it is too crude to offer to any prominent periodical, so I shall speak to the N. Y. Weekly people. To publish it there will be to bury it. Why could not same good genius have sent me to the N. Y. Weekly with my apprentice sketches?

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You should not publish it in book form at all—for this reason: it is only an imitation of Verne—it is not a burlesque. But I think it may be regarded as proof that Verne cannot be burlesqued.

In accompanying notes I have suggested that you vastly modify the first visit to hell, and leave out the second visit altogether. Nobody would, or ought to print those things. You are not advanced enough in literature to venture upon a matter requiring so much practice. Let me show you what a man has got to go through:

Nine years ago I mapped out my “Journey in Heaven.” I discussed it with literary friends whom I could trust to keep it to themselves.

I gave it a deal of thought, from time to time. After a year or more I wrote it up. It was not a success. Five years ago I wrote it again, altering the plan. That *Ms* is at my elbow now. It was a considerable improvement on the first attempt, but still it wouldn't do—last year and year before I talked frequently with Howells about the subject, and he kept urging me to do it again.

So I thought and thought, at odd moments and at last I struck what I considered to be the right plan! Mind I have never altered the ideas, from the first—the plan was the difficulty. When Howells was here last, I laid before him the whole story without referring to my *Ms* and he said: “You have got it sure this time. But drop the idea of making mere magazine stuff of it. Don't waste it. Print it by itself—publish it first in England—ask Dean Stanley to endorse it, which will draw some of the teeth of the religious press, and then reprint in America.” I doubt my ability to get Dean Stanley to do anything of the sort, but I shall do the rest—and this is all a secret which you must not divulge.

Now look here—I have tried, all these years, to think of some way of “doing” hell too—and have always had to give it up. Hell, in my book, will not occupy five pages of *Ms* I judge—it will be only covert hints, I suppose, and quickly dropped, I may end by not even referring to it.

And mind you, in my opinion you will find that you can't write up hell so it will stand printing. Neither Howells nor I believe in hell or the divinity of the Savior, but no matter, the Savior is none the less a sacred Personage, and a man should have no desire or disposition to refer to him lightly, profanely, or otherwise than with the profoundest reverence.

The only safe thing is not to introduce him, or refer to him at all, I suspect. I have entirely rewritten one book 3 (perhaps 4.) times, changing the plan every time—1200 pages of *Ms*. wasted and burned—and shall tackle it again, one of these years and maybe succeed at last. Therefore you need not expect to get your book right the first time. Go to work and revamp or rewrite it. God only exhibits his thunder and lightning

at intervals, and so they always command attention. These are God's adjectives. You thunder and lightning too much; the reader ceases to get under the bed, by and by.

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Mr. Perkins will send you and Ma your checks when we are gone. But don't write him, ever, except a single line in case he forgets the checks—for the man is driven to death with work.

I see you are half promising yourself a monthly return for your book. In my experience, previously counted chickens never do hatch. How many of mine I have counted! and never a one of them but failed! It is much better to hedge disappointment by not counting.—Unexpected money is a delight. The same sum is a bitterness when you expected more.

My time in America is growing mighty short. Perhaps we can manage in this way: Imprimis, if the N. Y. Weekly people know that you are my brother, they will turn that fact into an advertisement—a thing of value to them, but not to you and me. This must be prevented. I will write them a note to say you have a friend near Keokuk, Charles S. Miller, who has a *Ms* for sale which you think is a pretty clever travesty on Verne; and if they want it they might write to him in your care. Then if any correspondence ensues between you and them, let Mollie write for you and sign your name—your own hand writing representing Miller's. Keep yourself out of sight till you make a strike on your own merits there is no other way to get a fair verdict upon your merits.

Later-I've written the note to Smith, and with nothing in it which he can use as an advertisement. I'm called—Good bye-love to you both.

We leave here next Wednesday for Elmira: we leave there Apl. 9 or 10—and sail 11th

Yr Bro.

Sam.

In the letter that follows the mention of Annie and Sam refers, of course, to the children of Mrs. Moffett, who had been, Pamela Clemens. They were grown now, and Annie Moffett was married to Charles L. Webster, who later was to become Mark Twain's business partner. The Moffetts and Websters were living in Fredonia at this time, and Clemens had been to pay them a good-by visit. The Taylor dinner mentioned was a farewell banquet given to Bayard Taylor, who had been appointed Minister to Germany, and was to sail on the ship with Mark Twain. Mark Twain's mother was visiting in Fredonia when this letter was written.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, in Fredonia:

Apr. 7, '78. *My dear mother*,—I have told Livy all about Annie's beautiful house, and about Sam and Charley, and about Charley's ingenious manufactures and his strong manhood and good promise, and how glad I am that he and Annie married. And I have told her about Annie's excellent house-keeping, also about the great Bacon conflict; (I

told you it was a hundred to one that neither Livy nor the European powers had heard of that desolating struggle.)

And I have told her how beautiful you are in your age and how bright your mind is with its old-time brightness, and how she and the children would enjoy you. And I have told her how singularly young Pamela is looking, and what a fine large fellow Sam is, and how ill the lingering syllable “my” to his name fits his port and figure.



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Well, Pamela, after thinking it over for a day or so, I came near inquiring about a state-room in our ship for Sam, to please you, but my wiser former resolution came back to me. It is not for his good that he have friends in the ship. His conduct in the Bacon business shows that he will develop rapidly into a manly man as soon as he is cast loose from your apron strings.

You don't teach him to push ahead and do and dare things for himself, but you do just the reverse. You are assisted in your damaging work by the tyrannous ways of a village—villagers watch each other and so make cowards of each other. After Sam shall have voyaged to Europe by himself, and rubbed against the world and taken and returned its cuffs, do you think he will hesitate to escort a guest into any whisky-mill in Fredonia when he himself has no sinful business to transact there? No, he will smile at the idea. If he avoids this courtesy now from principle, of course I find no fault with it at all—only if he thinks it is principle he may be mistaken; a close examination may show it is only a bowing to the tyranny of public opinion.

I only say it may—I cannot venture to say it will. Hartford is not a large place, but it is broader than to have ways of that sort. Three or four weeks ago, at a Moody and Sankey meeting, the preacher read a letter from somebody “exposing” the fact that a prominent clergyman had gone from one of those meetings, bought a bottle of lager beer and drank it on the premises (a drug store.)

A tempest of indignation swept the town. Our clergymen and everybody else said the “culprit” had not only done an innocent thing, but had done it in an open, manly way, and it was nobody's right or business to find fault with it. Perhaps this dangerous latitude comes of the fact that we never have any temperance “rot” going on in Hartford.

I find here a letter from Orion, submitting some new matter in his story for criticism. When you write him, please tell him to do the best he can and bang away. I can do nothing further in this matter, for I have but 3 days left in which to settle a deal of important business and answer a bushel and a half of letters. I am very nearly tired to death.

I was so jaded and worn, at the Taylor dinner, that I found I could not remember 3 sentences of the speech I had memorized, and therefore got up and said so and excused myself from speaking. I arrived here at 3 o'clock this morning. I think the next 3 days will finish me. The idea of sitting down to a job of literary criticism is simply ludicrous.

A young lady passenger in our ship has been placed under Livy's charge. Livy couldn't easily get out of it, and did not want to, on her own account, but fully expected I would make trouble when I heard of it. But I didn't. A girl can't well travel alone, so I offered no objection. She leaves us at Hamburg. So I've got 6 people in my care, now—which

is just 6 too many for a man of my unexecutive capacity. I expect nothing else but to lose some of them overboard.

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We send our loving good-byes to all the household and hope to see you again after a spell.

Affly Yrs.

Sam.

There are no other American letters of this period. The Clemens party, which included Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira, sailed as planned, on the Holsatia, April 11, 1878. As before stated, Bayard Taylor was on the ship; also Murat Halstead and family. On the eve of departure, Clemens sent to Howells this farewell word: "And that reminds me, ungrateful dog that I am, that I owe as much to your training as the rude country job-printer owes to the city boss who takes him in hand and teaches him the right way to handle his art. I was talking to Mrs. Clemens about this the other day, and grieving because I never mentioned it to you, thereby seeming to ignore it, or to be unaware of it. Nothing that has passed under your eye needs any revision before going into a volume, while all my other stuff does need so much."

A characteristic tribute, and from the heart.

The first European letter came from Frankfort, a rest on their way to Heidelberg.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Frankforton the main*, May 4, 1878. *My dear Howells*,—I only propose to write a single line to say we are still around. Ah, I have such a deep, grateful, unutterable sense of being "out of it all." I think I foretaste some of the advantages of being dead. Some of the joy of it. I don't read any newspapers or care for them. When people tell me England has declared war, I drop the subject, feeling that it is none of my business; when they tell me Mrs. Tilton has confessed and Mr. B. denied, I say both of them have done that before, therefore let the worn stub of the Plymouth white-wash brush be brought out once more, and let the faithful spit on their hands and get to work again regardless of me—for I am out of it all.

We had 2 almost devilish weeks at sea (and I tell you Bayard Taylor is a really lovable man—which you already knew) then we staid a week in the beautiful, the very beautiful city of Hamburg; and since then we have been fooling along, 4 hours per day by rail, with a courier, spending the other 20 in hotels whose enormous bedchambers and private parlors are an overpowering marvel to me: Day before yesterday, in Cassel, we had a love of a bedroom, 31 feet long, and a parlor with 2 sofas, 12 chairs, a writing desk and 4 tables scattered around, here and there in it. Made of red silk, too, by George.

The times and times I wish you were along! You could throw some fun into the journey; whereas I go on, day by day, in a smileless state of solemn admiration.

What a paradise this is! What clean clothes, what good faces, what tranquil contentment, what prosperity, what genuine freedom, what superb government. And I am so happy, for I am responsible for none of it. I am only here to enjoy. How charmed I am when I overhear a German word which I understand. With love from us 2 to you 2.

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*Mark.*

P. S. We are not taking six days to go from Hamburg to Heidelberg because we prefer it. Quite on the contrary. Mrs. Clemens picked up a dreadful cold and sore throat on board ship and still keeps them in stock—so she could only travel 4 hours a day. She wanted to dive straight through, but I had different notions about the wisdom of it. I found that 4 hours a day was the best she could do. Before I forget it, our permanent address is Care Messrs. Koester & Co., Backers, Heidelberg. We go there tomorrow.

Poor Susy! From the day we reached German soil, we have required Rosa to speak German to the children—which they hate with all their souls. The other morning in Hanover, Susy came to us (from Rosa, in the nursery) and said, in halting syllables, “Papa, vie viel uhr ist es?”—then turned with pathos in her big eyes, and said, “Mamma, I wish Rosa was made in English.”

(Unfinished)

Frankfort was a brief halting-place, their destination being Heidelberg. They were presently located there in the beautiful Schloss hotel, which overlooks the old castle with its forest setting, the flowing Neckar, and the distant valley of the Rhine. Clemens, who had discovered the location, and loved it, toward the end of May reported to Howells his felicities.

### Part of letter to W. D. Howells, in Boston:

&nb  
sp;                      *Schloss-hotel Heidelberg,*  
                             Sunday, a. m., May 26, 1878.

My dear Howells,—....divinely located. From this airy porch among the shining groves we look down upon Heidelberg Castle, and upon the swift Neckar, and the town, and out over the wide green level of the Rhine valley—a marvelous prospect. We are in a Cul-de-sac formed of hill-ranges and river; we are on the side of a steep mountain; the river at our feet is walled, on its other side, (yes, on both sides,) by a steep and wooded mountain-range which rises abruptly aloft from the water's edge; portions of these mountains are densely wooded; the plain of the Rhine, seen through the mouth of this pocket, has many and peculiar charms for the eye.

Our bedroom has two great glass bird-cages (enclosed balconies) one looking toward the Rhine valley and sunset, the other looking up the Neckar cul-de-sac, and naturally we spend nearly all our time in these —when one is sunny the other is shady. We have tables and chairs in them; we do our reading, writing, studying, smoking and suppering in them.

The view from these bird-cages is my despair. The pictures change from one enchanting aspect to another in ceaseless procession, never keeping one form half an hour, and never taking on an unlovely one.

And then Heidelberg on a dark night! It is massed, away down there, almost right under us, you know, and stretches off toward the valley. Its curved and interlacing streets are a cobweb, beaded thick with lights—a wonderful thing to see; then the rows of lights on the arched bridges, and their glinting reflections in the water; and away at the far end, the Eisenbahnhof, with its twenty solid acres of glittering gas-jets, a huge garden, as one may say, whose every plant is a flame.

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These balconies are the darlindest things. I have spent all the morning in this north one. Counting big and little, it has 256 panes of glass in it; so one is in effect right out in the free sunshine, and yet sheltered from wind and rain—and likewise doored and curtained from whatever may be going on in the bedroom. It must have been a noble genius who devised this hotel. Lord, how blessed is the repose, the tranquillity of this place! Only two sounds; the happy clamor of the birds in the groves, and the muffled music of the Neckar, tumbling over the opposing dykes. It is no hardship to lie awake awhile, nights, for this subdued roar has exactly the sound of a steady rain beating upon a roof. It is so healing to the spirit; and it bears up the thread of one's imaginings as the accompaniment bears up a song.

While Livy and Miss Spaulding have been writing at this table, I have sat tilted back, near by, with a pipe and the last Atlantic, and read Charley Warner's article with prodigious enjoyment. I think it is exquisite. I think it must be the roundest and broadest and completest short essay he has ever written. It is clear, and compact, and charmingly done.

The hotel grounds join and communicate with the Castle grounds; so we and the children loaf in the winding paths of those leafy vastnesses a great deal, and drink beer and listen to excellent music.

When we first came to this hotel, a couple of weeks ago, I pointed to a house across the river, and said I meant to rent the centre room on the 3d floor for a work-room. Jokingly we got to speaking of it as my office; and amused ourselves with watching "my people" daily in their small grounds and trying to make out what we could of their dress, &c., without a glass. Well, I loafed along there one day and found on that house the only sign of the kind on that side of the river: "Moblrte Wohnung zu Vermiethen!" I went in and rented that very room which I had long ago selected. There was only one other room in the whole double-house unrented.

(It occurs to me that I made a great mistake in not thinking to deliver a very bad German speech, every other sentence pieced out with English, at the Bayard Taylor banquet in New York. I think I could have made it one of the features of the occasion.)—[He used this plan at a gathering of the American students in Heidelberg, on July 4th, with great effect; so his idea was not wasted.]

We left Hartford before the end of March, and I have been idle ever since. I have waited for a call to go to work—I knew it would come. Well, it began to come a week ago; my note-book comes out more and more frequently every day since; 3 days ago I concluded to move my manuscript over to my den. Now the call is loud and decided at last. So tomorrow I shall begin regular, steady work, and stick to it till middle of July or 1st August, when I look for Twichell; we will then walk about Germany 2 or 3 weeks, and then I'll go to work again—(perhaps in Munich.)

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We both send a power of love to the Howellses, and we do wish you were here. Are you in the new house? Tell us about it.

Yrs Ever

*Mark.*

There has been no former mention in the letters of the coming of Twichell; yet this had been a part of the European plan. Mark Twain had invited his walking companion to make a tramp with him through Europe, as his guest. Material for the new book would grow faster with Twichell as a companion; and these two in spite of their widely opposed views concerning Providence and the general scheme of creation, were wholly congenial comrades. Twichell, in Hartford, expecting to receive the final summons to start, wrote: "Oh, my! do you realize, Mark, what a symposium it is to be? I do. To begin with, I am thoroughly tired, and the rest will be worth everything. To walk with you and talk with you for weeks together—why, it's my dream of luxury." August 1st brought Twichell, and the friends set out without delay on a tramp through the Black Forest, making short excursions at first, but presently extending them in the direction of Switzerland. Mrs. Clemens and the others remained in Heidelberg, to follow at their leisure. To Mrs. Clemens her husband sent frequent reports of their wanderings. It will be seen that their tramp did not confine itself to pedestrianism, though they did, in fact, walk a great deal, and Mark Twain in a note to his mother declared, "I loathe all travel, except on foot." The reports to Mrs. Clemens follow:

Letters to Mrs. Clemens, in Heidelberg:

ALLERHEILIGEN Aug. 5, 1878 8:30 p.m. Livy darling, we had a rattling good time to-day, but we came very near being left at Baden-Baden, for instead of waiting in the waiting-room, we sat down on the platform to wait where the trains come in from the other direction. We sat there full ten minutes—and then all of a sudden it occurred to me that that was not the right place.

On the train the principal of the big English school at Nauheim (of which Mr. Scheiding was a teacher), introduced himself to me, and then he mapped out our day for us (for today and tomorrow) and also drew a map and gave us directions how to proceed through Switzerland. He had his entire school with him, taking them on a prodigious trip through Switzerland—tickets for the round trip ten dollars apiece. He has done this annually for 10 years. We took a post carriage from Aachen to Otterhofen for 7 marks—stopped at the "Pflug" to drink beer, and saw that pretty girl again at a distance. Her father, mother, and two brothers received me like an ancient customer and sat down and talked as long as I had any German left. The big room was full of red-vested farmers (the Gemeindrath of the district, with the Burgermeister at the head,) drinking beer and talking public business. They had held an election and chosen a new member and had been drinking beer at his expense for several hours. (It was intensely Black-forestry.)



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There was an Australian there (a student from Stuttgart or somewhere,) and Joe told him who I was and he laid himself out to make our course plain, for us—so I am certain we can't get lost between here and Heidelberg.

We walked the carriage road till we came to that place where one sees the foot path on the other side of the ravine, then we crossed over and took that. For a good while we were in a dense forest and judged we were lost, but met a native women who said we were all right. We fooled along and got there at 6 p.m.—ate supper, then followed down the ravine to the foot of the falls, then struck into a blind path to see where it would go, and just about dark we fetched up at the Devil's Pulpit on top of the hills. Then home. And now to bed, pretty sleepy. Joe sends love and I send a thousand times as much, my darling.

S. L. C.

*Hote/GENNIN.* Livy darling, we had a lovely day jogged right along, with a good horse and sensible driver—the last two hours right behind an open carriage filled with a pleasant German family—old gentleman and 3 pretty daughters. At table d'hote tonight, 3 dishes were enough for me, and then I bored along tediously through the bill of fare, with a back-ache, not daring to get up and bow to the German family and leave. I meant to sit it through and make them get up and do the bowing; but at last Joe took pity on me and said he would get up and drop them a curtsy and put me out of my misery. I was grateful. He got up and delivered a succession of frank and hearty bows, accompanying them with an atmosphere of good-fellowship which would have made even an English family surrender. Of course the Germans responded—then I got right up and they had to respond to my salaams, too. So “that was done.”

We walked up a gorge and saw a tumbling waterfall which was nothing to Giessbach, but it made me resolve to drop you a line and urge you to go and see Giessbach illuminated. Don't fail—but take a long day's rest, first. I love you, sweetheart.

SAML.

*Overthe Gemmi pass.*

4.30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 24, 1878.

Livy darling, Joe and I have had a most noble day. Started to climb (on foot) at 8.30 this morning among the grandest peaks! Every half hour carried us back a month in the season. We left them harvesting 2d crop of hay. At 9 we were in July and found ripe strawberries; at 9.30 we were in June and gathered flowers belonging to that month; at 10 we were in May and gathered a flower which appeared in Heidelberg the 17th of that month; also forget-me-nots, which disappeared from Heidelberg about mid-May; at 11.30 we were in April (by the flowers;) at noon we had rain and hail mixed, and wind and enveloping fogs, and considered it March; at 12.30 we had snowbanks above us and snowbanks below us, and considered it February. Not good February, though, because in the midst of the wild desolation the forget-me-not still bloomed, lovely as ever.

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What a flower garden the Gemmi Pass is! After I had got my hands full Joe made me a paper bag, which I pinned to my lapel and filled with choice specimens. I gathered no flowers which I had ever gathered before except 4 or 5 kinds. We took it leisurely and I picked all I wanted to. I mailed my harvest to you a while ago. Don't send it to Mrs. Brooks until you have looked it over, flower by flower. It will pay.

Among the clouds and everlasting snows I found a brave and bright little forget-me-not growing in the very midst of a smashed and tumbled stone-debris, just as cheerful as if the barren and awful domes and ramparts that towered around were the blessed walls of heaven. I thought how Lilly Warner would be touched by such a gracious surprise, if she, instead of I, had seen it. So I plucked it, and have mailed it to her with a note.

Our walk was 7 hours—the last 2 down a path as steep as a ladder, almost, cut in the face of a mighty precipice. People are not allowed to ride down it. This part of the day's work taxed our knees, I tell you. We have been loafing about this village (Leukerbad) for an hour, now we stay here over Sunday. Not tired at all. (Joe's hat fell over the precipice—so he came here bareheaded.) I love you, my darling.

SAML.

*St. Nicholas*, Aug. 26th, '78. Livy darling, we came through a-whooping today, 6 hours tramp up steep hills and down steep hills, in mud and water shoe-deep, and in a steady pouring rain which never moderated a moment. I was as chipper and fresh as a lark all the way and arrived without the slightest sense of fatigue. But we were soaked and my shoes full of water, so we ate at once, stripped and went to bed for 2 1/2 hours while our traps were thoroughly dried, and our boots greased in addition. Then we put our clothes on hot and went to table d'hôte.

Made some nice English friends and shall see them at Zermatt tomorrow.

Gathered a small bouquet of new flowers, but they got spoiled. I sent you a safety-match box full of flowers last night from Leukerbad.

I have just telegraphed you to wire the family news to me at Riffel tomorrow. I do hope you are all well and having as jolly a time as we are, for I love you, sweetheart, and also, in a measure, the Bays. —[Little Susy's word for "babies."]—Give my love to Clara Spaulding and also to the cubs.

SAML.

This, as far as it goes, is a truer and better account of the excursion than Mark Twain gave in the book that he wrote later. A Tramp Abroad has a quality of burlesque in it, which did not belong to the journey at all, but was invented to satisfy the craving for what the public conceived to be Mark Twain's humor. The serious portions of the book

are much more pleasing—more like himself. The entire journey, as will be seen, lasted one week more than a month.

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Twichell also made his reports home, some of which give us interesting pictures of his walking partner. In one place he wrote: "Mark is a queer fellow. There is nothing he so delights in as a swift, strong stream. You can hardly get him to leave one when once he is within the influence of its fascinations." Twichell tells how at Kandersteg they were out together one evening where a brook comes plunging down from Gasterthal and how he pushed in a drift to see it go racing along the current. "When I got back to the path Mark was running down stream after it as hard as he could go, throwing up his hands and shouting in the wildest ecstasy, and when a piece went over a fall and emerged to view in the foam below he would jump up and down and yell. He said afterward that he had not been so excited in three months." In other places Twichell refers to his companion's consideration for the feeling of others, and for animals. "When we are driving, his concern is all about the horse. He can't bear to see the whip used, or to see a horse pull hard."

After the walk over Gemmi Pass he wrote: "Mark to-day was immensely absorbed in flowers. He scrambled around and gathered a great variety, and manifested the intensest pleasure in them. He crowded a pocket of his note-book with his specimens, and wanted more room."

Whereupon Twichell got out his needle and thread and some stiff paper he had and contrived the little paper bag to hang to the front of his vest.

The tramp really ended at Lausanne, where Clemens joined his party, but a short excursion to Chillon and Chamonix followed, the travelers finally separating at Geneva, Twichell to set out for home by way of England, Clemens to remain and try to write the story of their travels. He hurried a good-by letter after his comrade:

To Rev. J. H. Twichell:

(No date) *dear old Joe*,—It is actually all over! I was so low-spirited at the station yesterday, and this morning, when I woke, I couldn't seem to accept the dismal truth that you were really gone, and the pleasant tramping and talking at an end. Ah, my boy! it has been such a rich holiday to me, and I feel under such deep and honest obligations to you for coming. I am putting out of my mind all memory of the times when I misbehaved toward you and hurt you: I am resolved to consider it forgiven, and to store up and remember only the charming hours of the journeys and the times when I was not unworthy to be with you and share a companionship which to me stands first after Livy's. It is justifiable to do this; for why should I let my small infirmities of disposition live and grovel among my mental pictures of the eternal sublimities of the Alps?

Livy can't accept or endure the fact that you are gone. But you are, and we cannot get around it. So take our love with you, and bear it also over the sea to Harmony, and God bless you both.

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*Mark.*

From Switzerland the Clemens party worked down into Italy, sight-seeing, a diversion in which Mark Twain found little enough of interest. He had seen most of the sights ten years before, when his mind was fresh. He unburdened himself to Twichell and to Howells, after a period of suffering.

To J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

*Rome*, Nov. 3, '78.

*Dear Joe*,--.....I have received your several letters, and we have prodigiously enjoyed them. How I do admire a man who can sit down and whale away with a pen just the same as if it was fishing—or something else as full of pleasure and as void of labor. I can't do it; else, in common decency, I would when I write to you. Joe, if I can make a book out of the matter gathered in your company over here, the book is safe; but I don't think I have gathered any matter before or since your visit worth writing up. I do wish you were in Rome to do my sightseeing for me. Rome interests me as much as East Hartford could, and no more.

That

is, the Rome which the average tourist feels an interest in; but there are other things here which stir me enough to make life worth living. Livy and Clara Spaulding are having a royal time worshiping the old Masters, and I as good a time gritting my ineffectual teeth over them.

A friend waits for me. A power of love to you all.

Amen.

*Mark.*

In his letter to Howells he said: "I wish I could give those sharp satires on European life which you mention, but of course a man can't write successful satire except he be in a calm, judicial good-humor; whereas I hate travel, and I hate hotels, and I hate the opera, and I hate the old masters. In truth, I don't ever seem to be in a good-enough humor with anything to satirize it. No, I want to stand up before it and curse it and foam at the mouth, or take a club and pound it to rags and pulp. I have got in two or three chapters about Wagner's operas, and managed to do it without showing temper, but the strain of another such effort would burst me!" From Italy the Clemens party went to Munich, where they had arranged in advance for winter quarters. Clemens claims, in his report of the matter to Howells, that he took the party through without the aid of a courier, though thirty years later, in some comment which he set down on being shown the letter, he wrote concerning this paragraph: "Probably a lie." He wrote, also, that they

acquired a great affection for Fraulein Dahlweiner: "Acquired it at once and it outlasted the winter we spent in her house."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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No 1a, Karlstrasse, 2e Stock.

Care Fraulein Dahlweiner.

*Munich*, Nov. 17, 1878.

*My dear Howells*,—We arrived here night before last, pretty well fagged: an 8-hour pull from Rome to Florence; a rest there of a day and two nights; then 5 1/2 hours to Bologna; one night's rest; then from noon to 10:30 p.m. carried us to Trent, in the Austrian Tyrol, where the confounded hotel had not received our message, and so at that miserable hour, in that snowy region, the tribe had to shiver together in fireless rooms while beds were prepared and warmed, then up at 6 in the morning and a noble view of snow-peaks glittering in the rich light of a full moon while the hotel-devils lazily deranged a breakfast for us in the dreary gloom of blinking candles; then a solid 12 hours pull through the loveliest snow ranges and snow-draped forest—and at 7 p.m. we hauled up, in drizzle and fog, at the domicile which had been engaged for us ten months before. Munich did seem the horriblest place, the most desolate place, the most unendurable place!—and the rooms were so small, the conveniences so meagre, and the porcelain stoves so grim, ghastly, dismal, intolerable! So Livy and Clara (Spaulding) sat down forlorn, and cried, and I retired to a private, place to pray. By and by we all retired to our narrow German beds; and when Livy and I finished talking across the room, it was all decided that we would rest 24 hours then pay whatever damages were required, and straightway fly to the south of France.

But you see, that was simply fatigue. Next morning the tribe fell in love with the rooms, with the weather, with Munich, and head over heels in love with Fraulein Dahlweiner. We got a larger parlor—an ample one—threw two communicating bedrooms into one, for the children, and now we are entirely comfortable. The only apprehension, at present, is that the climate may not be just right for the children, in which case we shall have to go to France, but it will be with the sincerest regret.

Now I brought the tribe through from Rome, myself. We never had so little trouble before. The next time anybody has a courier to put out to nurse, I shall not be in the market.

Last night the forlornities had all disappeared; so we gathered around the lamp, after supper, with our beer and my pipe, and in a condition of grateful snugness tackled the new magazines. I read your new story aloud, amid thunders of applause, and we all agreed that Captain Jenness and the old man with the accordion-hat are lovely people and most skillfully drawn—and that cabin-boy, too, we like. Of course we are all glad the girl is gone to Venice—for there is no place like Venice. Now I easily understand that the old man couldn't go, because you have a purpose in sending Lyddy by herself: but you could send the old man over in another ship, and we particularly want him along. Suppose you don't need him there? What of that?

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Can't you let him feed the doves? Can't you let him fall in the canal occasionally? Can't you let his good-natured purse be a daily prey to guides and beggar-boys? Can't you let him find peace and rest and fellowship under Pere Jacopo's kindly wing? (However, you are writing the book, not I—still, I am one of the people you are writing it for, you understand.) I only want to insist, in a friendly way, that the old man shall shed his sweet influence frequently upon the page—that is all.

The first time we called at the convent, Pere Jacopo was absent; the next (Just at this moment Miss Spaulding spoke up and said something about Pere Jacopo—there is more in this acting of one mind upon another than people think) time, he was there, and gave us preserved rose-leaves to eat, and talked about you, and Mrs. Howells, and Winnie, and brought out his photographs, and showed us a picture of “the library of your new house,” but not so—it was the study in your Cambridge house. He was very sweet and good. He called on us next day; the day after that we left Venice, after a pleasant sojourn Of 3 or 4 weeks. He expects to spend this winter in Munich and will see us often, he said.

Pretty soon, I am going to write something, and when I finish it I shall know whether to put it to itself or in the “Contributors’ Club.” That “Contributors’ Club” was a most happy idea. By the way, I think that the man who wrote the paragraph beginning at the bottom of page 643 has said a mighty sound and sensible thing. I wish his suggestion could be adopted.

It is lovely of you to keep that old pipe in such a place of honor.

While it occurs to me, I must tell you Susie's last. She is sorely badgered with dreams; and her stock dream is that she is being eaten up by bears. She is a grave and thoughtful child, as you will remember. Last night she had the usual dream. This morning she stood apart (after telling it,) for some time, looking vacantly at the floor, and absorbed in meditation. At last she looked up, and with the pathos of one who feels he has not been dealt by with even-handed fairness, said “But Mamma, the trouble is, that I am never the bear, but always the person.”

It would not have occurred to me that there might be an advantage, even in a dream, in occasionally being the eater, instead of always the party eaten, but I easily perceived that her point was well taken.

I'm sending to Heidelberg for your letter and Winnie's, and I do hope they haven't been lost.

My wife and I send love to you all.

Yrs ever,



*Mark.*

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The Howells story, running at this time in the Atlantic, and so much enjoyed by the Clemens party, was "The Lady of the Aroostook." The suggestions made for enlarging the part of the "old man" are eminently characteristic. Mark Twain's forty-third birthday came in Munich, and in his letter conveying this fact to his mother we get a brief added outline of the daily life in that old Bavarian city. Certainly, it would seem to have been a quieter and more profitable existence than he had known amid the confusion of things left behind in, America.

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

No. 1a Karlstrasse,  
Dec. 1, *Munich*. 1878.

*My dear mother and sister*,—I broke the back of life yesterday and started down-hill toward old age. This fact has not produced any effect upon me that I can detect.

I suppose we are located here for the winter. I have a pleasant work-room a mile from here where I do my writing. The walk to and from that place gives me what exercise I need, and all I take. We staid three weeks in Venice, a week in Florence, a fortnight in Rome, and arrived here a couple of weeks ago. Livy and Miss Spaulding are studying drawing and German, and the children have a German day-governess. I cannot see but that the children speak German as well as they do English.

Susie often translates Livy's orders to the servants. I cannot work and study German at the same time: so I have dropped the latter, and do not even read the language, except in the morning paper to get the news.

We have all pretty good health, latterly, and have seldom had to call the doctor. The children have been in the open air pretty constantly for months now. In Venice they were on the water in the gondola most of the time, and were great friends with our gondolier; and in Rome and Florence they had long daily tramps, for Rosa is a famous hand to smell out the sights of a strange place. Here they wander less extensively.

The family all join in love to you all and to Orion and Mollie.

Affly  
Your son

*Sam.*

## XIX.

### LETTERS 1879. RETURN TO AMERICA. THE GREAT GRANT REUNION

Life went on very well in Munich. Each day the family fell more in love with Fraulein Dahlweiner and her house.

Mark Twain, however, did not settle down to his work readily. His “pleasant work-room” provided exercise, but no inspiration. When he discovered he could not find his Swiss note-book he was ready to give up his travel-writing altogether. In the letter that follows we find him much less enthusiastic concerning his own performances than over the story by Howells, which he was following in the Atlantic.

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The “detective” chapter mentioned in this letter was not included in ‘A Tramp Abroad.’ It was published separately, as ‘The Stolen White Elephant’ in a volume bearing that title. The play, which he had now found “dreadfully witless and flat,” was no other than “Simon Wheeler, Detective,” which he had once regarded so highly. The “Stewart” referred to was the millionaire merchant, A. T. Stewart, whose body was stolen in the expectation of reward.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Munich, Jan. 21, (1879) My dear Howells,*—It’s no use, your letter miscarried in some way and is lost. The consul has made a thorough search and says he has not been able to trace it. It is unaccountable, for all the letters I did not want arrived without a single grateful failure. Well, I have read-up, now, as far as you have got, that is, to where there’s a storm at sea approaching,—and we three think you are clear, out-Howellsing Howells. If your literature has not struck perfection now we are not able to see what is lacking. It is all such truth—truth to the life; every where your pen falls it leaves a photograph. I did imagine that everything had been said about life at sea that could be said, but no matter, it was all a failure and lies, nothing but lies with a thin varnish of fact,—only you have stated it as it absolutely is. And only you see people and their ways, and their insides and outsides as they are, and make them talk as they do talk. I think you are the very greatest artist in these tremendous mysteries that ever lived. There doesn’t seem to be anything that can be concealed from your awful all-seeing eye. It must be a cheerful thing for one to live with you and be aware that you are going up and down in him like another conscience all the time. Possibly you will not be a fully accepted classic until you have been dead a hundred years,—it is the fate of the Shakespeares and of all genuine prophets, —but then your books will be as common as Bibles, I believe. You’re not a weed, but an oak; not a summer-house, but a cathedral. In that day I shall still be in the Cyclopedias, too, thus: “Mark Twain; history and occupation unknown—but he was personally acquainted with Howells.” There—I could sing your praises all day, and feel and believe every bit of it.

My book is half finished; I wish to heaven it was done. I have given up writing a detective novel—can’t write a novel, for I lack the faculty; but when the detectives were nosing around after Stewart’s loud remains, I threw a chapter into my present book in which I have very extravagantly burlesqued the detective business—if it is possible to burlesque that business extravagantly. You know I was going to send you that detective play, so that you could re-write it. Well I didn’t do it because I couldn’t find a single idea in it that could be useful to you. It was dreadfully witless and flat. I knew it would sadden you and unfit you for work.

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I have always been sorry we threw up that play embodying Orion which you began. It was a mistake to do that. Do keep that *Ms* and tackle it again. It will work out all right; you will see. I don't believe that that character exists in literature in so well-developed a condition as it exists in Orion's person. Now won't you put Orion in a story? Then he will go handsomely into a play afterwards. How deliciously you could paint him—it would make fascinating reading—the sort that makes a reader laugh and cry at the same time, for Orion is as good and ridiculous a soul as ever was.

Ah, to think of Bayard Taylor! It is too sad to talk about. I was so glad there was not a single sting and so many good praiseful words in the Atlantic's criticism of Deukalion.

Love to you all  
Yrs Ever

*Mark*

We remain here till middle of March.

In 'A Tramp Abroad' there is an incident in which the author describes himself as hunting for a lost sock in the dark, in a vast hotel bedroom at Heilbronn. The account of the real incident, as written to Twichell, seems even more amusing. The "Yarn About the Limburger Cheese and the Box of Guns," like "The Stolen White Elephant," did not find place in the travel-book, but was published in the same volume with the elephant story, added to the rambling notes of "An Idle Excursion."

With the discovery of the Swiss note-book, work with Mark Twain was going better. His letter reflects his enthusiasm.

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

*Munich*, Jan 26 '79. *Dear old Joe*,—Sunday. Your delicious letter arrived exactly at the right time. It was laid by my plate as I was finishing breakfast at 12 noon. Livy and Clara, (Spaulding) arrived from church 5 minutes later; I took a pipe and spread myself out on the sofa, and Livy sat by and read, and I warmed to that butcher the moment he began to swear. There is more than one way of praying, and I like the butcher's way because the petitioner is so apt to be in earnest. I was peculiarly alive to his performance just at this time, for another reason, to wit: Last night I awoke at 3 this morning, and after raging to my self for 2 interminable hours, I gave it up. I rose, assumed a catlike stealthiness, to keep from waking Livy, and proceeded to dress in the pitch dark. Slowly but surely I got on garment after garment—all down to one sock; I had one slipper on and the other in my hand. Well, on my hands and knees I crept softly around, pawing and feeling and scooping along the carpet, and among chair-legs for that missing sock; I kept that up; and still kept it up and kept it up. At first I only said to myself, "Blame that sock," but that soon ceased to answer;

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my expletives grew steadily stronger and stronger,—and at last, when I found I was lost, I had to sit flat down on the floor and take hold of something to keep from lifting the roof off with the profane explosion that was trying to get out of me. I could see the dim blur of the window, but of course it was in the wrong place and could give me no information as to where I was. But I had one comfort—I had not waked Livy; I believed I could find that sock in silence if the night lasted long enough. So I started again and softly pawed all over the place,—and sure enough at the end of half an hour I laid my hand on the missing article. I rose joyfully up and butted the wash-bowl and pitcher off the stand and simply raised—so to speak. Livy screamed, then said, “Who is that? what is the matter?” I said “There ain’t anything the matter—I’m hunting for my sock.” She said, “Are you hunting for it with a club?”

I went in the parlor and lit the lamp, and gradually the fury subsided and the ridiculous features of the thing began to suggest themselves. So I lay on the sofa, with note-book and pencil, and transferred the adventure to our big room in the hotel at Heilbronn, and got it on paper a good deal to my satisfaction.

I found the Swiss note-book, some time ago. When it was first lost I was glad of it, for I was getting an idea that I had lost my faculty of writing sketches of travel; therefore the loss of that note-book would render the writing of this one simply impossible, and let me gracefully out; I was about to write to Bliss and propose some other book, when the confounded thing turned up, and down went my heart into my boots. But there was now no excuse, so I went solidly to work—tore up a great part of the *Ms* written in Heidelberg,—wrote and tore up,—continued to write and tear up,—and at last, reward of patient and noble persistence, my pen got the old swing again!

Since then I’m glad Providence knew better what to do with the Swiss note-book than I did, for I like my work, now, exceedingly, and often turn out over 30 *Ms* pages a day and then quit sorry that Heaven makes the days so short.

One of my discouragements had been the belief that my interest in this tour had been so slender that I couldn’t gouge matter enough out of it to make a book. What a mistake. I’ve got 900 pages written (not a word in it about the sea voyage) yet I stepped my foot out of Heidelberg for the first time yesterday,—and then only to take our party of four on our first pedestrian tour—to Heilbronn. I’ve got them dressed elaborately in walking costume—knapsacks, canteens, field-glasses, leather leggings, patent walking shoes, muslin folds around their hats, with long tails hanging down behind, sun umbrellas, and Alpenstocks. They go all the way to Wimpfen by rail-thence to Heilbronn in a chance vegetable cart drawn by a donkey and a cow; I shall fetch them home on a raft; and if other people shall perceive that

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that was no pedestrian excursion, they themselves shall not be conscious of it.—This trip will take 100 pages or more,—oh, goodness knows how many! for the mood is everything, not the material, and I already seem to see 300 pages rising before me on that trip. Then, I propose to leave Heidelberg for good. Don't you see, the book (1800 *Ms* pages,) may really be finished before I ever get to Switzerland?

But there's one thing; I want to tell Frank Bliss and his father to be charitable toward me in,—that is, let me tear up all the *Ms* I want to, and give me time to write more. I shan't waste the time—I haven't the slightest desire to loaf, but a consuming desire to work, ever since I got back my swing. And you see this book is either going to be compared with the *Innocents Abroad*, or contrasted with it, to my disadvantage. I think I can make a book that will be no dead corpse of a thing and I mean to do my level best to accomplish that.

My crude plans are crystalizing. As the thing stands now, I went to Europe for three purposes. The first you know, and must keep secret, even from the *Blisses*; the second is to study Art; and the third to acquire a critical knowledge of the German language. My *Ms* already shows that the two latter objects are accomplished. It shows that I am moving about as an Artist and a Philologist, and unaware that there is any immodesty in assuming these titles. Having three definite objects has had the effect of seeming to enlarge my domain and give me the freedom of a loose costume. It is three strings to my bow, too.

Well, your butcher is magnificent. He won't stay out of my mind.—I keep trying to think of some way of getting your account of him into my book without his being offended—and yet confound him there isn't anything you have said which he would see any offense in,—I'm only thinking of his friends—they are the parties who busy themselves with seeing things for people. But I'm bound to have him in. I'm putting in the yarn about the Limburger cheese and the box of guns, too—mighty glad Howells declined it. It seems to gather richness and flavor with age. I have very nearly killed several companies with that narrative,—the American Artists Club, here, for instance, and Smith and wife and Miss Griffith (they were here in this house a week or two.) I've got other chapters that pretty nearly destroyed the same parties, too.

O, Switzerland! the further it recedes into the enriching haze of time, the more intolerably delicious the charm of it and the cheer of it and the glory and majesty and solemnity and pathos of it grow. Those mountains had a soul; they thought; they spoke,—one couldn't hear it with the ears of the body, but what a voice it was!—and how real. Deep down in my memory it is sounding yet. Alp calleth unto Alp!—that stately old Scriptural wording is the right one for God's Alps and God's ocean. How puny we were in that awful presence—and how painless it was to be so; how fitting and right it seemed, and how stingless was the sense of our unspeakable insignificance. And Lord

how pervading were the repose and peace and blessedness that poured out of the heart of the invisible Great Spirit of the Mountains.



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Now what is it? There are mountains and mountains and mountains in this world—but only these take you by the heart-strings. I wonder what the secret of it is. Well, time and time again it has seemed to me that I must drop everything and flee to Switzerland once more. It is a longing—a deep, strong, tugging longing—that is the word. We must go again, Joe.—October days, let us get up at dawn and breakfast at the tower. I should like that first rate.

Livy and all of us send deluges of love to you and Harmony and all the children. I dreamed last night that I woke up in the library at home and your children were frolicing around me and Julia was sitting in my lap; you and Harmony and both families of Warners had finished their welcomes and were filing out through the conservatory door, wrecking Patrick's flower pots with their dress skirts as they went. Peace and plenty abide with you all!

*Mark.*

I want the Blisses to know their part of this letter, if possible. They will see that my delay was not from choice.

Following the life of Mark Twain, whether through his letters or along the sequence of detailed occurrence, we are never more than a little while, or a little distance, from his brother Orion. In one form or another Orion is ever present, his inquiries, his proposals, his suggestions, his plans for improving his own fortunes, command our attention. He was one of the most human creatures that ever lived; indeed, his humanity excluded every form of artificiality—everything that needs to be acquired. Talented, trusting, child-like, carried away by the impulse of the moment, despite a keen sense of humor he was never able to see that his latest plan or project was not bound to succeed. Mark Twain loved him, pitied him—also enjoyed him, especially with Howells. Orion's new plan to lecture in the interest of religion found its way to Munich, with the following result:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Munich, Feb. 9. (1879) My dear Howells,*—I have just received this letter from Orion—take care of it, for it is worth preserving. I got as far as 9 pages in my answer to it, when Mrs. Clemens shut down on it, and said it was cruel, and made me send the money and simply wish his lecture success. I said I couldn't lose my 9 pages—so she said send them to you. But I will acknowledge that I thought I was writing a very kind letter.

Now just look at this letter of Orion's. Did you ever see the grotesquely absurd and the heart-breakingly pathetic more closely joined together? Mrs. Clemens said "Raise his monthly pension." So I wrote to Perkins to raise it a trifle.

Now only think of it! He still has 100 pages to write on his lecture, yet in one inking of his pen he has already swooped around the United States and invested the result!

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You must put him in a book or a play right away. You are the only man capable of doing it. You might die at any moment, and your very greatest work would be lost to the world. I could write Orion's simple biography, and make it effective, too, by merely stating the bald facts—and this I will do if he dies before I do; but you must put him into romance. This was the understanding you and I had the day I sailed.

Observe Orion's career—that is, a little of it: (1) He has belonged to as many as five different religious denominations; last March he withdrew from the deaconship in a Congregational Church and the Superintendency of its Sunday School, in a speech in which he said that for many months (it runs in my mind that he said 13 years,) he had been a confirmed infidel, and so felt it to be his duty to retire from the flock.

2. After being a republican for years, he wanted me to buy him a democratic newspaper. A few days before the Presidential election, he came out in a speech and publicly went over to the democrats; he prudently "hedged" by voting for 6 state republicans, also.

The new convert was made one of the secretaries of the democratic meeting, and placed in the list of speakers. He wrote me jubilantly of what a ten-strike he was going to make with that speech. All right—but think of his innocent and pathetic candor in writing me something like this, a week later:

"I was more diffident than I had expected to be, and this was increased by the silence with which I was received when I came forward; so I seemed unable to get the fire into my speech which I had calculated upon, and presently they began to get up and go out; and in a few minutes they all rose up and went away."

How could a man uncover such a sore as that and show it to another? Not a word of complaint, you see—only a patient, sad surprise.

3. His next project was to write a burlesque upon *Paradise Lost*.

4. Then, learning that the Times was paying Harte \$100 a column for stories, he concluded to write some for the same price. I read his first one and persuaded him not to write any more.

5. Then he read proof on the N. Y. Eve. Post at \$10 a week and meekly observed that the foreman swore at him and ordered him around "like a steamboat mate."

6. Being discharged from that post, he wanted to try agriculture—was sure he could make a fortune out of a chicken farm. I gave him \$900 and he went to a ten-house village a miles above Keokuk on the river bank —this place was a railway station. He soon asked for money to buy a horse and light wagon,—because the trains did not run at church time on Sunday and his wife found it rather far to walk.

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For a long time I answered demands for “loans” and by next mail always received his check for the interest due me to date. In the most guileless way he let it leak out that he did not underestimate the value of his custom to me, since it was not likely that any other customer of mine paid his interest quarterly, and this enabled me to use my capital twice in 6 months instead of only once. But alas, when the debt at last reached \$1800 or \$2500 (I have forgotten which) the interest ate too formidably into his borrowings, and so he quietly ceased to pay it or speak of it. At the end of two years I found that the chicken farm had long ago been abandoned, and he had moved into Keokuk. Later in one of his casual moments, he observed that there was no money in fattening a chicken on 65 cents worth of corn and then selling it for 50.

7. Finally, if I would lend him \$500 a year for two years, (this was 4 or 5 years ago,) he knew he could make a success as a lawyer, and would prove it. This is the pension which we have just increased to \$600. The first year his legal business brought him \$5. It also brought him an unremunerative case where some villains were trying to chouse some negro orphans out of \$700. He still has this case. He has waggled it around through various courts and made some booming speeches on it. The negro children have grown up and married off, now, I believe, and their litigated town-lot has been dug up and carted off by somebody—but Orion still infests the courts with his documents and makes the welkin ring with his venerable case. The second year, he didn’t make anything. The third he made \$6, and I made Bliss put a case in his hands—about half an hour’s work. Orion charged \$50 for it—Bliss paid him \$15. Thus four or five years of slaving has brought him \$26, but this will doubtless be increased when he gets done lecturing and buys that “law library.” Meantime his office rent has been \$60 a year, and he has stuck to that lair day by day as patiently as a spider.

8. Then he by and by conceived the idea of lecturing around America as “Mark Twain’s Brother”—that to be on the bills. Subject of proposed lecture, “On the, Formation of Character.”

9. I protested, and he got on his warpaint, couched his lance, and ran a bold tilt against total abstinence and the Red Ribbon fanatics. It raised a fine row among the virtuous Keokukians.

10. I wrote to encourage him in his good work, but I had let a mail intervene; so by the time my letter reached him he was already winning laurels as a Red Ribbon Howler.

11. Afterward he took a rabid part in a prayer-meeting epidemic; dropped that to travesty Jules Verne; dropped that, in the middle of the last chapter, last March, to digest the matter of an infidel book which he proposed to write; and now he comes to the surface to rescue our “noble and beautiful religion” from the sacrilegious talons of Bob Ingersoll.

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Now come! Don't fool away this treasure which Providence has laid at your feet, but take it up and use it. One can let his imagination run riot in portraying Orion, for there is nothing so extravagant as to be out of character with him.

Well-good-bye, and a short life and a merry one be yours. Poor old Methusaleh, how did he manage to stand it so long?

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

To Orion Clemens

(Unsent and inclosed with the foregoing, to W. D. Howells):

*Munich, Feb. 9, (1879) My dear Bro.,—*Yours has just arrived. I enclose a draft on Hartford for \$25. You will have abandoned the project you wanted it for, by the time it arrives,—but no matter, apply it to your newer and present project, whatever it is. You see I have an ineradicable faith in your unsteadfastness,—but mind you, I didn't invent that faith, you conferred it on me yourself. But fire away, fire away! I don't see why a changeable man shouldn't get as much enjoyment out of his changes, and transformations and transfigurations as a steadfast man gets out of standing still and pegging at the same old monotonous thing all the time. That is to say, I don't see why a kaleidoscope shouldn't enjoy itself as much as a telescope, nor a grindstone have as good a time as a whetstone, nor a barometer as good a time as a yardstick. I don't feel like girding at you any more about fickleness of purpose, because I recognize and realize at last that it is incurable; but before I learned to accept this truth, each new weekly project of yours possessed the power of throwing me into the most exhausting and helpless convulsions of profanity. But fire away, now! Your magic has lost its might. I am able to view your inspirations dispassionately and judicially, now, and say "This one or that one or the other one is not up to your average flight, or is above it, or below it."

And so, without passion, or prejudice, or bias of any kind, I sit in judgment upon your lecture project, and say it was up to your average, it was indeed above it, for it had possibilities in it, and even practical ones. While I was not sorry you abandoned it, I should not be sorry if you had stuck to it and given it a trial. But on the whole you did the wise thing to lay it aside, I think, because a lecture is a most easy thing to fail in; and at your time of life, and in your own town, such a failure would make a deep and cruel wound in your heart and in your pride. It was decidedly unwise in you to think for a moment of coming before a community who knew you, with such a course of lectures; because Keokuk is not unaware that you have been a Swedenborgian, a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist, and a Methodist (on probation), and that just a year ago you were an infidel. If Keokuk had gone to your lecture course, it would

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have gone to be amused, not instructed, for when a man is known to have no settled convictions of his own he can't convince other people. They would have gone to be amused and that would have been a deep humiliation to you. It could have been safe for you to appear only where you were unknown—then many of your hearers would think you were in earnest. And they would be right. You are in earnest while your convictions are new. But taking it by and large, you probably did best to discard that project altogether. But I leave you to judge of that, for you are the worst judge I know of.

(Unfinished.)

That Mark Twain in many ways was hardly less child-like than his brother is now and again revealed in his letters. He was of steadfast purpose, and he possessed the driving power which Orion Clemens lacked; but the importance to him of some of the smaller matters of life, as shown in a letter like the following, bespeaks a certain simplicity of nature which he never outgrew:

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

*Munich, Feb. 24. (1879) Dear old Joe,*—It was a mighty good letter, Joe—and that idea of yours is a rattling good one. But I have not sot down here to answer your letter,—for it is down at my study,—but only to impart some information.

For a months I had not shaved without crying. I'd spend 3/4 of an hour whetting away on my hand—no use, couldn't get an edge. Tried a razor strop—same result. So I sat down and put in an hour thinking out the mystery. Then it seemed plain—to wit: my hand can't give a razor an edge, it can only smooth and refine an edge that has already been given. I judge that a razor fresh from the hone is this shape V—the long point being the continuation of the edge—and that after much use the shape is this V—the attenuated edge all worn off and gone. By George I knew that was the explanation. And I knew that a freshly honed and freshly strapped razor won't cut, but after strapping on the hand as a final operation, it will cut.—So I sent out for an oil-stone; none to be had, but messenger brought back a little piece of rock the size of a Safety-match box—(it was bought in a shoemaker's shop) bad flaw in middle of it, too, but I put 4 drops of fine Olive oil on it, picked out the razor marked "Thursday" because it was never any account and would be no loss if I spoiled it—gave it a brisk and reckless honing for 10 minutes, then tried it on a hair—it wouldn't cut. Then I trotted it through a vigorous 20-minute course on a razor-strap and tried it on a hair—it wouldn't cut—tried it on my face—it made me cry—gave it a 5-minute stopping on my hand, and my land, what an edge she had! We thought we knew what sharp razors were when we were tramping in Switzerland, but it was a mistake—they were dull beside this old Thursday razor of mine—which I mean to name Thursday October Christian, in gratitude. I took my whetstone, and in 20 minutes I put two more of my razors in splendid condition—but I leave them in

the box—I never use any but Thursday O. C., and shan't till its edge is gone—and then I'll know how to restore it without any delay.

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We all go to Paris next Thursday—address, Monroe & Co., Bankers.

With love

Ys Ever

*Mark.*

In Paris they found pleasant quarters at the Hotel Normandy, but it was a chilly, rainy spring, and the travelers gained a rather poor impression of the French capital. Mark Twain's work did not go well, at first, because of the noises of the street. But then he found a quieter corner in the hotel and made better progress. In a brief note to Aldrich he said: "I sleep like a lamb and write like a lion—I mean the kind of a lion that writes—if any such." He expected to finish the book in six weeks; that is to say, before returning to America. He was looking after its illustrations himself, and a letter to Frank Bliss, of The American Publishing Company, refers to the frontpiece, which, from time to time, has caused question as to its origin. To Bliss he says: "It is a thing which I manufactured by pasting a popular comic picture into the middle of a celebrated Biblical one—shall attribute it to Titian. It needs to be engraved by a master." The weather continued bad in France and they left there in July to find it little better in England. They had planned a journey to Scotland to visit Doctor Brown, whose health was not very good. In after years Mark Twain blamed himself harshly for not making the trip, which he declared would have meant so much to Mrs. Clemens. He had forgotten by that time the real reasons for not going—the continued storms and uncertainty of trains (which made it barely possible for them to reach Liverpool in time for their sailing-date), and with characteristic self-reproach vowed that only perversity and obstinacy on his part had prevented the journey to Scotland. From Liverpool, on the eve of sailing, he sent Doctor Brown a good-by word.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

*Washingtonhotel, Lime street, Liverpool.*

Aug. (1879)

*My dear Mr. Brown,*—During all the 15 months we have been spending on the continent, we have been promising ourselves a sight of you as our latest and most prized delight in a foreign land—but our hope has failed, our plan has miscarried. One obstruction after another intruded itself, and our short sojourn of three or four weeks on English soil was thus frittered gradually away, and we were at last obliged to give up the idea of seeing you at all. It is a great disappointment, for we wanted to show you how much "Megalopis" has grown (she is 7 now) and what a fine creature her sister is, and how prettily they both speak German. There are six persons in my party, and they are as difficult to cart around as nearly any other menagerie would be. My wife and Miss Spaulding are along, and you may imagine how they take to heart this failure of our long promised Edinburgh trip. We never even wrote you, because we were always so sure, from day to day, that our affairs would finally so shape themselves as to let us get to



Scotland. But no,—everything went wrong we had only flying trips here and there in place of the leisurely ones which we had planned.

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We arrived in Liverpool an hour ago very tired, and have halted at this hotel (by the advice of misguided friends)—and if my instinct and experience are worth anything, it is the very worst hotel on earth, without any exception. We shall move to another hotel early in the morning to spend to-morrow. We sail for America next day in the “Gallic.”

We all join in the sincerest love to you, and in the kindest remembrance to “Jock”—[Son of Doctor Brown.]—and your sister.

Truly yours,  
S. L. Clemens.

It was September 3, 1879, that Mark Twain returned to America by the steamer Gallic. In the seventeen months of his absence he had taken on a “traveled look” and had added gray hairs. A New York paper said of his arrival that he looked older than when he went to Germany, and that his hair had turned quite gray. Mark Twain had not finished his book of travel in Paris—in fact, it seemed to him far from complete—and he settled down rather grimly to work on it at Quarry Farm. When, after a few days no word of greeting came from Howells, Clemens wrote to ask if he were dead or only sleeping. Howells hastily sent a line to say that he had been sleeping “The sleep of a torpid conscience. I will feign that I did not know where to write you; but I love you and all of yours, and I am tremendously glad that you are home again. When and where shall we meet? Have you come home with your pockets full of Atlantic papers?” Clemens, toiling away at his book, was, as usual, not without the prospect of other plans. Orion, as literary material, never failed to excite him.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Sept. 15, 1879. *My dear Howells*,—When and where? Here on the farm would be an elegant place to meet, but of course you cannot come so far. So we will say Hartford or Belmont, about the beginning of November. The date of our return to Hartford is uncertain, but will be three or four weeks hence, I judge. I hope to finish my book here before migrating.

I think maybe I’ve got some Atlantic stuff in my head, but there’s none in *Ms*, I believe.

Say—a friend of mine wants to write a play with me, I to furnish the broad-comedy cuss. I don’t know anything about his ability, but his letter serves to remind me of our old projects. If you haven’t used Orion or Old Wakeman, don’t you think you and I can get together and grind out a play with one of those fellows in it? Orion is a field which grows richer and richer the more he mulches it with each new top-dressing of religion or other guano. Drop me an immediate line about this, won’t you? I imagine I see Orion on the stage, always gentle, always melancholy, always changing his politics and religion, and trying to reform the world, always inventing something, and losing a limb by a new kind of explosion at the end of each of the four acts. Poor old chap, he is good material. I can imagine his wife or his sweetheart reluctantly adopting each of his new

religious in turn, just in time to see him waltz into the next one and leave her isolated once more.

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(Mem. Orion's wife has followed him into the outer darkness, after 30 years' rabid membership in the Presbyterian Church.)

Well, with the sincerest and most abounding love to you and yours, from  
all this family, I am,

Yrs ever  
Mark.

The idea of the play interested Howells, but he had twinges of conscience in the matter of using Orion as material. He wrote: "More than once I have taken the skeleton of that comedy of ours and viewed it with tears..... I really have a compunction or two about helping to put your brother into drama. You can say that he is your brother, to do what you like with him, but the alien hand might inflict an incurable hurt on his tender heart." As a matter of fact, Orion Clemens had a keen appreciation of his own shortcomings, and would have enjoyed himself in a play as much as any observer of it. Indeed, it is more than likely that he would have been pleased at the thought of such distinguished dramatization. From the next letter one might almost conclude that he had received a hint of this plan, and was bent upon supplying rich material.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Oct. 9 '79. *My dear Howells*,—Since my return, the mail facilities have enabled Orion to keep me informed as to his intentions. Twenty-eight days ago it was his purpose to complete a work aimed at religion, the preface to which he had already written. Afterward he began to sell off his furniture, with the idea of hurrying to Leadville and tackling silver-mining—threw up his law den and took in his sign. Then he wrote to Chicago and St. Louis newspapers asking for a situation as "paragrapher"—enclosing a taste of his quality in the shape of two stanzas of "humorous rhymes." By a later mail on the same day he applied to New York and Hartford insurance companies for copying to do.

However, it would take too long to detail all his projects. They comprise a removal to south-west Missouri; application for a reporter's berth on a Keokuk paper; application for a compositor's berth on a St. Louis paper; a re-hanging of his attorney's sign, "though it only creaks and catches no flies;" but last night's letter informs me that he has retackled the religious question, hired a distant den to write in, applied to my mother for \$50 to re-buy his furniture, which has advanced in value since the sale—purposes buying \$25 worth of books necessary to his labors which he had previously been borrowing, and his first chapter is already on its way to me for my decision as to whether it has enough ungodliness in it or not. Poor Orion!

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Your letter struck me while I was meditating a project to beguile you, and John Hay and Joe Twichell, into a descent upon Chicago which I dream of making, to witness the reunion of the great Commanders of the Western Army Corps on the 9th of next month. My sluggish soul needs a fierce upstirring, and if it would not get it when Grant enters the meeting place I must doubtless “lay” for the final resurrection. Can you and Hay go? At the same time, confound it, I doubt if I can go myself, for this book isn’t done yet. But I would give a heap to be there. I mean to heave some holiness into the Hartford primaries when I go back; and if there was a solitary office in the land which majestic ignorance and incapacity, coupled with purity of heart, could fill, I would run for it. This naturally reminds me of Bret Harte—but let him pass.

We propose to leave here for New York Oct. 21, reaching Hartford 24th or 25th. If, upon reflection, you Howellses find, you can stop over here on your way, I wish you would do it, and telegraph me. Getting pretty hungry to see you. I had an idea that this was your shortest way home, but like as not my geography is crippled again—it usually is.

Yrs ever

*Mark.*

The “Reunion of the Great Commanders,” mentioned in the foregoing, was a welcome to General Grant after his journey around the world. Grant’s trip had been one continuous ovation—a triumphal march. In ’79 most of his old commanders were still alive, and they had planned to assemble in Chicago to do him honor. A Presidential year was coming on, but if there was anything political in the project there were no surface indications. Mark Twain, once a Confederate soldier, had long since been completely “desouthernized”—at least to the point where he felt that the sight of old comrades paying tribute to the Union commander would stir his blood as perhaps it had not been stirred, even in that earlier time, when that same commander had chased him through the Missouri swamps. Grant, indeed, had long since become a hero to Mark Twain, though it is highly unlikely that Clemens favored the idea of a third term. Some days following the preceding letter an invitation came for him to be present at the Chicago reunion; but by this time he had decided not to go. The letter he wrote has been preserved.

To Gen. William E. Strong, in Chicago:

*Farmington Avenue, Hartford.*

*Oct. 28, 1879.*

*Gen. Wm. E. Strong, CH’M,*

*and gentlemen of the committee:*

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I have been hoping during several weeks that it might be my good fortune to receive an invitation to be present on that great occasion in Chicago; but now that my desire is accomplished my business matters have so shaped themselves as to bar me from being so far from home in the first half of November. It is with supreme regret that I lost this chance, for I have not had a thorough stirring up for some years, and I judged that if I could be in the banqueting hall and see and hear the veterans of the Army of the Tennessee at the moment that their old commander entered the room, or rose in his place to speak, my system would get the kind of upheaval it needs. General Grant's progress across the continent is of the marvelous nature of the returning Napoleon's progress from Grenoble to Paris; and as the crowning spectacle in the one case was the meeting with the Old Guard, so, likewise, the crowning spectacle in the other will be our great captain's meeting with his Old Guard—and that is the very climax which I wanted to witness.

Besides, I wanted to see the General again, any way, and renew the acquaintance. He would remember me, because I was the person who did not ask him for an office. However, I consume your time, and also wander from the point—which is, to thank you for the courtesy of your invitation, and yield up my seat at the table to some other guest who may possibly grace it better, but will certainly not appreciate its privileges more, than I should.

With great respect,  
I am, Gentlemen,  
Very truly yours,  
S. L. Clemens.

Private:—I beg to apologize for my delay, gentlemen, but the card of invitation went to Elmira, N. Y. and hence has only just now reached me.

This letter was not sent. He reconsidered and sent an acceptance, agreeing to speak, as the committee had requested. Certainly there was something picturesque in the idea of the Missouri private who had been chased for a rainy fortnight through the swamps of Ralls County being selected now to join in welcome to his ancient enemy.

The great reunion was to be something more than a mere banquet. It would continue for several days, with processions, great assemblages, and much oratory.

Mark Twain arrived in Chicago in good season to see it all. Three letters to Mrs. Clemens intimately present his experiences: his enthusiastic enjoyment and his own personal triumph.

The first was probably written after the morning of his arrival. The Doctor Jackson in it was Dr. A. Reeves Jackson, the guide-dismaying "Doctor" of Innocents Abroad.



To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

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*Palmer house, Chicago, Nov. 11.* Livy darling, I am getting a trifle leg-weary. Dr. Jackson called and dragged me out of bed at noon, yesterday, and then went off. I went down stairs and was introduced to some scores of people, and among them an elderly German gentleman named Raster, who said his wife owed her life to me—hurt in Chicago fire and lay menaced with death a long time, but the Innocents Abroad kept her mind in a cheerful attitude, and so, with the doctor's help for the body she pulled through.... They drove me to Dr. Jackson's and I had an hour's visit with Mrs. Jackson. Started to walk down Michigan Avenue, got a few steps on my way and met an erect, soldierly looking young gentleman who offered his hand; said, "Mr. Clemens, I believe—I wish to introduce myself—you were pointed out to me yesterday as I was driving down street—my name is Grant."

"Col. Fred Grant?"

"Yes. My house is not ten steps away, and I would like you to come and have a talk and a pipe, and let me introduce my wife."

So we turned back and entered the house next to Jackson's and talked something more than an hour and smoked many pipes and had a sociable good time. His wife is very gentle and intelligent and pretty, and they have a cunning little girl nearly as big as Bay but only three years old. They wanted me to come in and spend an evening, after the banquet, with them and Gen. Grant, after this grand pow-wow is over, but I said I was going home Friday. Then they asked me to come Friday afternoon, when they and the general will receive a few friends, and I said I would. Col. Grant said he and Gen. Sherman used the Innocents Abroad as their guide book when they were on their travels.

I stepped in next door and took Dr. Jackson to the hotel and we played billiards from 7 to 11.30 P.M. and then went to a beer-mill to meet some twenty Chicago journalists—talked, sang songs and made speeches till 6 o'clock this morning. Nobody got in the least degree "under the influence," and we had a pleasant time. Read awhile in bed, slept till 11, shaved, went to breakfast at noon, and by mistake got into the servants' hall. I remained there and breakfasted with twenty or thirty male and female servants, though I had a table to myself.

A temporary structure, clothed and canopied with flags, has been erected at the hotel front, and connected with the second-story windows of a drawing-room. It was for Gen. Grant to stand on and review the procession. Sixteen persons, besides reporters, had tickets for this place, and a seventeenth was issued for me. I was there, looking down on the packed and struggling crowd when Gen. Grant came forward and was saluted by the cheers of the multitude and the waving of ladies' handkerchiefs—for the windows and roofs of all neighboring buildings were massed full of life. Gen. Grant bowed to the people two or three times, then approached my side of the platform and the mayor pulled me forward and introduced me. It was dreadfully conspicuous. The General said



a word or so—I replied, and then said, “But I’ll step back, General, I don’t want to interrupt your speech.”

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"But I'm not going to make any—stay where you are—I'll get you to make it for me."

General Sherman came on the platform wearing the uniform of a full General, and you should have heard the cheers. Gen. Logan was going to introduce me, but I didn't want any more conspicuousness.

When the head of the procession passed it was grand to see Sheridan, in his military cloak and his plumed chapeau, sitting as erect and rigid as a statue on his immense black horse—by far the most martial figure I ever saw. And the crowd roared again.

It was chilly, and Gen. Deems lent me his overcoat until night. He came a few minutes ago—5.45 P.M., and got it, but brought Gen. Willard, who lent me his for the rest of my stay, and will get another for himself when he goes home to dinner. Mine is much too heavy for this warm weather.

I have a seat on the stage at Haverley's Theatre, tonight, where the Army of the Tennessee will receive Gen. Grant, and where Gen. Sherman will make a speech. At midnight I am to attend a meeting of the Owl Club.

I love you ever so much, my darling, and am hoping to  
get a word from you yet.  
SAML.

Following the procession, which he describes, came the grand ceremonies of welcome at Haverley's Theatre. The next letter is written the following morning, or at least soiree time the following day, after a night of ratification.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

*Chicago*, Nov. 12, '79. Livy darling, it was a great time. There were perhaps thirty people on the stage of the theatre, and I think I never sat elbow-to-elbow with so many historic names before. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Schofield, Pope, Logan, Augur, and so on. What an iron man Grant is! He sat facing the house, with his right leg crossed over his left and his right boot-sole tilted up at an angle, and his left hand and arm reposing on the arm of his chair—you note that position? Well, when glowing references were made to other grandees on the stage, those grandees always showed a trifle of nervous consciousness—and as these references came frequently, the nervous change of position and attitude were also frequent. But Grant!—he was under a tremendous and ceaseless bombardment of praise and gratulation, but as true as I'm sitting here he never moved a muscle of his body for a single instant, during 30 minutes! You could have played him on a stranger for an effigy. Perhaps he never would have moved, but at last a speaker made such a particularly ripping and blood-stirring remark about him that the audience rose and roared and yelled and stamped and clapped an entire minute—Grant sitting as serene as ever—when Gen. Sherman

stepped to him, laid his hand affectionately on his shoulder, bent respectfully down and whispered in his ear. Gen. Grant got up and bowed, and the storm of applause swelled into a hurricane. He sat down, took

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about the same position and froze to it till by and by there was another of those deafening and protracted roars, when Sherman made him get up and bow again. He broke up his attitude once more—the extent of something more than a hair's breadth—to indicate me to Sherman when the house was keeping up a determined and persistent call for me, and poor bewildered Sherman, (who did not know me), was peering abroad over the packed audience for me, not knowing I was only three feet from him and most conspicuously located, (Gen. Sherman was Chairman.)

One of the most illustrious individuals on that stage was “Ole Abe,” the historic war eagle. He stood on his perch—the old savage-eyed rascal —three or four feet behind Gen. Sherman, and as he had been in nearly every battle that was mentioned by the orators his soul was probably stirred pretty often, though he was too proud to let on.

Read Logan's bosh, and try to imagine a burly and magnificent Indian, in General's uniform, striking a heroic attitude and getting that stuff off in the style of a declaiming school-boy.

Please put the enclosed scraps in the drawer and I will scrap-book them.

I only staid at the Owl Club till 3 this morning and drank little or nothing. Went to sleep without whisky. Ich liebe dish.

SAML.

But it is in the third letter that we get the climax. On the same day he wrote a letter to Howells, which, in part, is very similar in substance and need not be included here.

A paragraph, however, must not be omitted.

“Imagine what it was like to see a bullet-shredded old battle-flag reverently unfolded to the gaze of a thousand middle-aged soldiers, most of whom hadn't seen it since they saw it advancing over victorious fields, when they were in their prime. And imagine what it was like when Grant, their first commander, stepped into view while they were still going mad over the flag, and then right in the midst of it all somebody struck up, ‘When we were marching through Georgia.’ Well, you should have heard the thousand voices lift that chorus and seen the tears stream down. If I live a hundred years I shan't ever forget these things, nor be able to talk about them .... Grand times, my boy, grand times!” At the great banquet Mark Twain's speech had been put last on the program, to hold the house. He had been invited to respond to the toast of “The Ladies,” but had replied that he had already responded to that toast more than once. There was one class of the community, he said, commonly overlooked on these occasions—the babies

—he would respond to that toast. In his letter to Howells he had not been willing to speak freely of his personal triumph, but to Mrs. Clemens he must tell it all, and with that child-like ingenuousness which never failed him to his last day.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

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*Chicago, Nov. 14 '79.*

A little after 5 in the morning.

I've just come to my room, Livy darling, I guess this was the memorable night of my life. By George, I never was so stirred since I was born. I heard four speeches which I can never forget. One by Emory Storrs, one by Gen. Vilas (O, wasn't it wonderful!) one by Gen. Logan (mighty stirring), one by somebody whose name escapes me, and one by that splendid old soul, Col. Bob Ingersoll,—oh, it was just the supremest combination of English words that was ever put together since the world began. My soul, how handsome he looked, as he stood on that table, in the midst of those 500 shouting men, and poured the molten silver from his lips! Lord, what an organ is human speech when it is played by a master! All these speeches may look dull in print, but how the lightning glared around them when they were uttered, and how the crowd roared in response! It was a great night, a memorable night. I am so richly repaid for my journey—and how I did wish with all my whole heart that you were there to be lifted into the very seventh heaven of enthusiasm, as I was. The army songs, the military music, the crashing applause —Lord bless me, it was unspeakable.

Out of compliment they placed me last in the list—No. 15—I was to “hold the crowd”—and bless my life I was in awful terror when No. 14. rose, at a o'clock this morning and killed all the enthusiasm by delivering the flattest, insipidest, silliest of all responses to “Woman” that ever a weary multitude listened to. Then Gen. Sherman (Chairman) announced my toast, and the crowd gave me a good round of applause as I mounted on top of the dinner table, but it was only on account of my name, nothing more —they were all tired and wretched. They let my first sentence go in. silence, till I paused and added “we stand on common ground”—then they burst forth like a hurricane and I saw that I had them! From that time on, I stopped at the end of each sentence, and let the tornado of applause and laughter sweep around me—and when I closed with “And if the child is but the prophecy of the man, there are mighty few who will doubt that he succeeded,” I say it who oughtn't to say it, the house came down with a crash. For two hours and a half, now, I've been shaking hands and listening to congratulations. Gen. Sherman said, “Lord bless you, my boy, I don't know how you do it—it's a secret that's beyond me—but it was great—give me your hand again.”

And do you know, Gen. Grant sat through fourteen speeches like a graven image, but I fetched him! I broke him up, utterly! He told me he laughed till the tears came and every bone in his body ached. (And do you know, the biggest part of the success of the speech lay in the fact that the audience saw that for once in his life he had been knocked out of his iron serenity.)

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Bless your soul, 'twas immense. I never was so proud in my life. Lots and lots of people—hundreds I might say—told me my speech was the triumph of the evening—which was a lie. Ladies, Tom, Dick and Harry—even the policemen—captured me in the halls and shook hands, and scores of army officers said “We shall always be grateful to you for coming.” General Pope came to bunt me up—I was afraid to speak to him on that theatre stage last night, thinking it might be presumptuous to tackle a man so high up in military history. Gen. Schofield, and other historic men, paid their compliments. Sheridan was ill and could not come, but I’m to go with a General of his staff and see him before I go to Col. Grant’s. Gen. Augur—well, I’ve talked with them all, received invitations from them all—from people living everywhere—and as I said before, it’s a memorable night. I wouldn’t have missed it for anything in the world.

But my sakes, you should have heard Ingersoll’s speech on that table! Half an hour ago he ran across me in the crowded halls and put his arms about me and said “Mark, if I live a hundred years, I’ll always be grateful for your speech—Lord what a supreme thing it was.” But I told him it wasn’t any use to talk, he had walked off with the honors of that occasion by something of a majority. Bully boy is Ingersoll—traveled with him in the cars the other day, and you can make up your mind we had a good time.

Of course I forgot to go and pay for my hotel car and so secure it, but the army officers told me an hour ago to rest easy, they would go at once, at this unholy hour of the night and compel the railways to do their duty by me, and said “You don’t need to request the Army of the Tennessee to do your desires—you can command its services.”

Well, I bummed around that banquet hall from 8 in the evening till 2 in the morning, talking with people and listening to speeches, and I never ate a single bite or took a sup of anything but ice water, so if I seem excited now, it is the intoxication of supreme enthusiasm. By George, it was a grand night, a historical night.

And now it is a quarter past 6 A.M.—so good bye and God bless you and the Bays,—  
[Family word for babies]—my darlings

SAML.

Show it to Joe if you want to—I saw some of his friends here.

Mark Twain’s admiration for Robert Ingersoll was very great, and we may believe that he was deeply impressed by the Chicago speech, when we find him, a few days later, writing to Ingersoll for a perfect copy to read to a young girls’ club in Hartford. Ingersoll sent the speech, also some of his books, and the next letter is Mark Twain’s acknowledgment.

To Col. Robert G. Ingersoll:

*Hartford, Dec. 14. My dear Ingersoll,*—Thank you most heartily for the books—I am devouring them—they have found a hungry place, and they content it and satisfy it to a miracle. I wish I could hear you speak these splendid chapters before a great audience—to read them by myself and hear the boom of the applause only in the ear of my imagination, leaves a something wanting—and there is also a still greater lack, your manner, and voice, and presence.



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The Chicago speech arrived an hour too late, but I was all right anyway, for I found that my memory had been able to correct all the errors. I read it to the Saturday Club (of young girls) and told them to remember that it was doubtful if its superior existed in our language.

Truly Yours,  
S. L. Clemens.

The reader may remember Mark Twain's Whittier dinner speech of 1877, and its disastrous effects. Now, in 1879, there was to be another Atlantic gathering: a breakfast to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, to which Clemens was invited. He was not eager to accept; it would naturally recall memories of two years before, but being urged by both Howells and Warner, he agreed to attend if they would permit him to speak. Mark Twain never lacked courage and he wanted to redeem himself. To Howells he wrote:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Nov. 28, 1879. My dear Howells,—If anybody talks, there, I shall claim the right to say a word myself, and be heard among the very earliest—else it would be confoundedly awkward for me—and for the rest, too. But you may read what I say, beforehand, and strike out whatever you choose.*

Of course I thought it wisest not to be there at all; but Warner took the opposite view, and most strenuously.

Speaking of Johnny's conclusion to become an outlaw, reminds me of Susie's newest and very earnest longing—to have crooked teeth and glasses—"like Mamma."

I would like to look into a child's head, once, and see what its processes are.

Yrs ever,  
S. L. Clemens.

The matter turned out well. Clemens, once more introduced by Howells—this time conservatively, it may be said—delivered a delicate and fitting tribute to Doctor Holmes, full of graceful humor and grateful acknowledgment, the kind of speech he should have given at the Whittier dinner of two years before. No reference was made to his former disaster, and this time he came away covered with glory, and fully restored in his self-respect.

## XX.

*Letters of 1880, chiefly to Howells. "The prince and the pauper." Mark twain mugwump society*

The book of travel,—[A Tramp Abroad.]—which Mark Twain had hoped to finish in Paris, and later in Elmira, for some reason would not come to an end. In December, in Hartford, he was still working on it, and he would seem to have finished it, at last, rather by a decree than by any natural process of authorship. This was early in January, 1880. To Howells he reports his difficulties, and his drastic method of ending them.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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*Hartford, Jan. 8, '80. My dear Howells,—*Am waiting for Patrick to come with the carriage. Mrs. Clemens and I are starting (without the children) to stay indefinitely in Elmira. The wear and tear of settling the house broke her down, and she has been growing weaker and weaker for a fortnight. All that time—in fact ever since I saw you—I have been fighting a life-and-death battle with this infernal book and hoping to get done some day. I required 300 pages of *Ms*, and I have written near 600 since I saw you—and tore it all up except 288. This I was about to tear up yesterday and begin again, when Mrs. Perkins came up to the billiard room and said, “You will never get any woman to do the thing necessary to save her life by mere persuasion; you see you have wasted your words for three weeks; it is time to use force; she must have a change; take her home and leave the children here.”

I said, “If there is one death that is painfuller than another, may I get it if I don’t do that thing.”

So I took the 288 pages to Bliss and told him that was the very last line I should ever write on this book. (A book which required 2600 pages of *Ms*, and I have written nearer four thousand, first and last.)

I am as soary (and flighty) as a rocket, to-day, with the unutterable joy of getting that Old Man of the Sea off my back, where he has been roosting for more than a year and a half. Next time I make a contract before writing the book, may I suffer the righteous penalty and be burnt, like the injudicious believer.

I am mighty glad you are done your book (this is from a man who, above all others, feels how much that sentence means) and am also mighty glad you have begun the next (this is also from a man who knows the felicity of that, and means straightway to enjoy it.) The Undiscovered starts off delightfully—I have read it aloud to Mrs. C. and we vastly enjoyed it.

Well, time’s about up—must drop a line to Aldrich.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

In a letter which Mark Twain wrote to his brother Orion at this period we get the first hint of a venture which was to play an increasingly important part in the Hartford home and fortunes during the next ten or a dozen years. This was the type-setting machine investment, which, in the end, all but wrecked Mark Twain’s finances. There is but a brief mention of it in the letter to Orion, and the letter itself is not worth preserving, but as references to the “machine” appear with increasing frequency, it seems proper to record here its first mention. In the same letter he suggests to his brother that he undertake an absolutely truthful autobiography, a confession in which nothing is to be

withheld. He cites the value of Casanova's memories, and the confessions of Rousseau. Of course, any literary suggestion

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from “Brother Sam” was gospel to Orion, who began at once piling up manuscript at a great rate. Meantime, Mark Twain himself, having got ‘A Tramp Abroad’ on the presses, was at work with enthusiasm on a story begun nearly three years before at Quarry Farm—a story for children—its name, as he called it then, “The Little Prince and The Little Pauper.” He was presently writing to Howells his delight in the new work.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Mch. 11, '80.*

*My dear Howells,--.....I take so much pleasure in my story that I am loth to hurry, not wanting to get it done. Did I ever tell you the plot of it? It begins at 9 a.m., Jan. 27, 1547, seventeen and a half hours before Henry VIII's death, by the swapping of clothes and place, between the prince of Wales and a pauper boy of the same age and countenance (and half as much learning and still more genius and imagination) and after that, the rightful small King has a rough time among tramps and ruffians in the country parts of Kent, whilst the small bogus King has a gilded and worshipped and dreary and restrained and cussed time of it on the throne—and this all goes on for three weeks—till the midst of the coronation grandeurs in Westminster Abbey, Feb. 20, when the ragged true King forces his way in but cannot prove his genuineness—until the bogus King, by a remembered incident of the first day is able to prove it for him—whereupon clothes are changed and the coronation proceeds under the new and rightful conditions.*

My idea is to afford a realizing sense of the exceeding severity of the laws of that day by inflicting some of their penalties upon the King himself and allowing him a chance to see the rest of them applied to others—all of which is to account for certain mildnesses which distinguished Edward VI's reign from those that preceded and followed it.

Imagine this fact—I have even fascinated Mrs. Clemens with this yarn for youth. My stuff generally gets considerable damning with faint praise out of her, but this time it is all the other way. She is become the horseleech's daughter and my mill doesn't grind fast enough to suit her. This is no mean triumph, my dear sir.

Last night, for the first time in ages, we went to the theatre—to see Yorick's Love. The magnificence of it is beyond praise. The language is so beautiful, the passion so fine, the plot so ingenious, the whole thing so stirring, so charming, so pathetic! But I will clip from the Courant—it says it right.



And what a good company it is, and how like live people they all acted!  
The “thee’s” and the “thou’s” had a pleasant sound, since it is the  
language of the Prince and the Pauper. You’ve done the country a service  
in that admirable work....

Yrs Ever,

*Mark.*

The play, “Yorick’s Love,” mentioned in this letter, was one which  
Howells had done for Lawrence Barrett.

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Orion Clemens, meantime, was forwarding his manuscript, and for once seems to have won his brother's approval, so much so that Mark Twain was willing, indeed anxious, that Howells should run the "autobiography" in the Atlantic. We may imagine how Orion prized the words of commendation which follow:

To Orion Clemens:

May 6, '80.

*My dear brother,*—It is a model autobiography.

Continue to develop your character in the same gradual inconspicuous and apparently unconscious way. The reader, up to this time, may have his doubts, perhaps, but he can't say decidedly, "This writer is not such a simpleton as he has been letting on to be." Keep him in that state of mind. If, when you shall have finished, the reader shall say, "The man is an ass, but I really don't know whether he knows it or not," your work will be a triumph.

Stop re-writing. I saw places in your last batch where re-writing had done formidable injury. Do not try to find those places, else you will mar them further by trying to better them. It is perilous to revise a book while it is under way. All of us have injured our books in that foolish way.

Keep in mind what I told you—when you recollect something which belonged in an earlier chapter, do not go back, but jam it in where you are. Discursiveness does not hurt an autobiography in the least.

I have penciled the *Ms* here and there, but have not needed to make any criticisms or to knock out anything.

The elder Bliss has heart disease badly, and thenceforth his life hangs upon a thread.

Yr Bro  
*Sam.*

But Howells could not bring himself to print so frank a confession as Orion had been willing to make. "It wrung my heart," he said, "and I felt haggard after I had finished it. The writer's soul is laid bare; it is shocking." Howells added that the best touches in it were those which made one acquainted with the writer's brother; that is to say, Mark Twain, and that these would prove valuable material hereafter—a true prophecy, for Mark Twain's early biography would have lacked most of its vital incident, and at least half of its background, without those faithful chapters, fortunately preserved. Had Orion continued, as he began, the work might have proved an important contribution to literature, but he went trailing off into by-paths of theology and discussion where the interest was lost. There were, perhaps, as many as two thousand pages of it, which few

could undertake to read. Mark Twain's mind was always busy with plans and inventions, many of them of serious intent, some semi-serious, others of a purely whimsical character. Once he proposed a "Modest Club," of which the first and main qualification for membership was modesty. "At present," he wrote, "I



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am the only member; and as the modesty required must be of a quite aggravated type, the enterprise did seem for a time doomed to stop dead still with myself, for lack of further material; but upon reflection I have come to the conclusion that you are eligible. Therefore, I have held a meeting and voted to offer you the distinction of membership. I do not know that we can find any others, though I have had some thought of Hay, Warner, Twichell, Aldrich, Osgood, Fields, Higginson, and a few more—together with Mrs. Howells, Mrs. Clemens, and certain others of the sex.”Howells replied that the only reason he had for not joining the Modest Club was that he was too modest—too modest to confess his modesty. “If I could get over this difficulty I should like to join, for I approve highly of the Club and its object.... It ought to be given an annual dinner at the public expense. If you think I am not too modest you may put my name down and I will try to think the same of you. Mrs. Howells applauded the notion of the club from the very first. She said that she knew one thing: that she was modest enough, anyway. Her manner of saying it implied that the other persons you had named were not, and created a painful impression in my mind. I have sent your letter and the rules to Hay, but I doubt his modesty. He will think he has a right to belong to it as much as you or I; whereas, other people ought only to be admitted on sufferance.”Our next letter to Howells is, in the main, pure foolery, but we get in it a hint what was to become in time one of Mark Twain’s strongest interests, the matter of copyright. He had both a personal and general interest in the subject. His own books were constantly pirated in Canada, and the rights of foreign authors were not respected in America. We have already seen how he had drawn a petition which Holmes, Lowell, Longfellow, and others were to sign, and while nothing had come of this plan he had never ceased to formulate others. Yet he hesitated when he found that the proposed protection was likely to work a hardship to readers of the poorer class. Once he wrote: “My notions have mightily changed lately.... I can buy a lot of the copyright classics, in paper, at from three to thirty cents apiece. These things must find their way into the very kitchens and hovels of the country..... And even if the treaty will kill Canadian piracy, and thus save me an average of \$5,000 a year, I am down on it anyway, and I’d like cussed well to write an article opposing the treaty.”

To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass.:

Thursday, June 6th, 1880. *My dear Howells*,—There you stick, at Belmont, and now I’m going to Washington for a few days; and of course, between you and Providence that visit is going to get mixed, and you’ll have been here and gone again just about the time I get back. Bother it all, I wanted to astonish you with a chapter or two from Orion’s latest book—not the seventeen which he has begun in the last four months, but the one which he began last week.

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Last night, when I went to bed, Mrs. Clemens said, "George didn't take the cat down to the cellar—Rosa says he has left it shut up in the conservatory." So I went down to attend to Abner (the cat.) About 3 in the morning Mrs. C. woke me and said, "I do believe I hear that cat in the drawing-room—what did you do with him?" I answered up with the confidence of a man who has managed to do the right thing for once, and said "I opened the conservatory doors, took the library off the alarm, and spread everything open, so that there wasn't any obstruction between him and the cellar." Language wasn't capable of conveying this woman's disgust. But the sense of what she said, was, "He couldn't have done any harm in the conservatory—so you must go and make the entire house free to him and the burglars, imagining that he will prefer the coal-bins to the drawing-room. If you had had Mr. Howells to help you, I should have admired but not been astonished, because I should know that together you would be equal to it; but how you managed to contrive such a stately blunder all by yourself, is what I cannot understand."

So, you see, even she knows how to appreciate our gifts.

Brisk times here.—Saturday, these things happened: Our neighbor Chas. Smith was stricken with heart disease, and came near joining the majority; my publisher, Bliss, ditto, ditto; a neighbor's child died; neighbor Whitmore's sixth child added to his five other cases of measles; neighbor Niles sent for, and responded; Susie Warner down, abed; Mrs. George Warner threatened with death during several hours; her son Frank, whilst imitating the marvels in Barnum's circus bills, thrown from his aged horse and brought home insensible: Warner's friend Max Yortzburg, shot in the back by a locomotive and broken into 32 distinct pieces and his life threatened; and Mrs. Clemens, after writing all these cheerful things to Clara Spaulding, taken at midnight, and if the doctor had not been pretty prompt the contemplated Clemens would have called before his apartments were ready.

However, everybody is all right, now, except Yortzburg, and he is mending—that is, he is being mended. I knocked off, during these stirring times, and don't intend to go to work again till we go away for the Summer, 3 or 6 weeks hence. So I am writing to you not because I have anything to say, but because you don't have to answer and I need something to do this afternoon.....

I have a letter from a Congressman this morning, and he says Congress couldn't be persuaded to bother about Canadian pirates at a time like this when all legislation must have a political and Presidential bearing, else Congress won't look at it. So have changed my mind and my course; I go north, to kill a pirate. I must procure repose some way, else I cannot get down to work again.

Pray offer my most sincere and respectful approval to the President—is approval the proper word? I find it is the one I most value here in the household and seldomest get.

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With our affection to you both.  
Yrs ever

*Mark.*

It was always dangerous to send strangers with letters of introduction to Mark Twain. They were so apt to arrive at the wrong time, or to find him in the wrong mood. Howells was willing to risk it, and that the result was only amusing instead of tragic is the best proof of their friendship.

To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass.:

June 9, '80. Well, old practical joker, the corpse of Mr. X——has been here, and I have bedded it and fed it, and put down my work during 24 hours and tried my level best to make it do something, or say something, or appreciate something—but no, it was worse than Lazarus. A kind-hearted, well-meaning corpse was the Boston young man, but lawsy bless me, horribly dull company. Now, old man, unless you have great confidence in Mr. X's judgment, you ought to make him submit his article to you before he prints it. For only think how true I was to you: Every hour that he was here I was saying, gloatingly, "O G— d—— you, when you are in bed and your light out, I will fix you" (meaning to kill him)...., but then the thought would follow—"No, Howells sent him—he shall be spared, he shall be respected he shall travel hell-wards by his own route."

Breakfast is frozen by this time, and Mrs. Clemens correspondingly hot.  
Good bye.

Yrs ever,  
*Mark.*

"I did not expect you to ask that man to live with you," Howells answered. "What I was afraid of was that you would turn him out of doors, on sight, and so I tried to put in a good word for him. After this when I want you to board people, I'll ask you. I am sorry for your suffering. I suppose I have mostly lost my smell for bores; but yours is preternaturally keen. I shall begin to be afraid I bore you. (How does that make you feel?)" In a letter to Twichell—a remarkable letter—when baby Jean Clemens was about a month old, we get a happy hint of conditions at Quarry Farm, and in the background a glimpse of Mark Twain's unfailing tragic reflection.

To Rev. Twichell, in Hartford:

*Quarryfarm*, Aug. 29 ['80]. *Dear old Joe*,—Concerning Jean Clemens, if anybody said he "didn't see no pints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog," I should think he was convicting himself of being a pretty poor sort of observer.... I will not go into details; it is not necessary; you will soon be in Hartford, where I have already hired a hall; the admission fee will be but a trifle.

It is curious to note the change in the stock-quotation of the Affection Board brought about by throwing this new security on the market. Four weeks ago the children still put Mamma at the head of the list right along, where she had always been. But now:

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Jean  
Mamma  
Motley [a cat]  
Fraulein [another]  
Papa

That is the way it stands, now Mamma is become No. 2; I have dropped from No. 4., and am become No. 5. Some time ago it used to be nip and tuck between me and the cats, but after the cats “developed” I didn’t stand any more show.

I’ve got a swollen ear; so I take advantage of it to lie abed most of the day, and read and smoke and scribble and have a good time. Last evening Livy said with deep concern, “O dear, I believe an abscess is forming in your ear.”

I responded as the poet would have done if he had had a cold in the head—

“Tis said that abscess conquers love,  
But O believe it not.”

This made a coolness.

Been reading Daniel Webster’s Private Correspondence. Have read a hundred of his diffuse, conceited, “eloquent,” bathotic (or bathostic) letters written in that dim (no, vanished) Past when he was a student; and Lord, to think that this boy who is so real to me now, and so booming with fresh young blood and bountiful life, and sappy cynicisms about girls, has since climbed the Alps of fame and stood against the sun one brief tremendous moment with the world’s eyes upon him, and then—f-z-t-! where is he? Why the only long thing, the only real thing about the whole shadowy business is the sense of the lagging dull and hoary lapse of time that has drifted by since then; a vast empty level, it seems, with a formless spectre glimpsed fitfully through the smoke and mist that lie along its remote verge.

Well, we are all getting along here first-rate; Livy gains strength daily, and sits up a deal; the baby is five weeks old and—but no more of this; somebody may be reading this letter 80 years hence. And so, my friend (you pitying snob, I mean, who are holding this yellow paper in your hand in 1960,) save yourself the trouble of looking further; I know how pathetically trivial our small concerns will seem to you, and I will not let your eye profane them. No, I keep my news; you keep your compassion. Suffice it you to know, scoffer and ribald, that the little child is old and blind, now, and once more toothless; and the rest of us are shadows, these many, many years. Yes, and your time cometh!

*Mark.*

At the Farm that year Mark Twain was working on *The Prince and the Pauper*, and, according to a letter to Aldrich, brought it to an end September 19th. It is a pleasant letter, worth preserving. The book by Aldrich here mentioned was 'The Stillwater Tragedy.'

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

*Elmira*, Sept. 15, '80. *My dear Aldrich*,—Thank you ever so much for the book—I had already finished it, and prodigiously enjoyed it, in the periodical of the notorious Howells, but it hits Mrs. Clemens just right, for she is having a reading holiday, now, for the first time in some months; so between-times, when the new baby is asleep and strengthening up for another attempt to take possession of this place, she is going to read it. Her strong friendship for you makes her think she is going to like it.

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I finished a story yesterday, myself. I counted up and found it between sixty and eighty thousand words—about the size of your book. It is for boys and girls—been at work at it several years, off and on.

I hope Howells is enjoying his journey to the Pacific. He wrote me that you and Osgood were going, also, but I doubted it, believing he was in liquor when he wrote it. In my opinion, this universal applause over his book is going to land that man in a Retreat inside of two months. I notice the papers say mighty fine things about your book, too. You ought to try to get into the same establishment with Howells. But applause does not affect me—I am always calm—this is because I am used to it.

Well, good-bye, my boy, and good luck to you. Mrs. Clemens asks me to send her warmest regards to you and Mrs. Aldrich—which I do, and add those of

Yrs ever  
Mark.

While Mark Twain was a journalist in San Francisco, there was a middle-aged man named Soule, who had a desk near him on the Morning Call. Soule was in those days highly considered as a poet by his associates, most of whom were younger and less gracefully poetic. But Soule's gift had never been an important one. Now, in his old age, he found his fame still local, and he yearned for wider recognition. He wished to have a volume of poems issued by a publisher of recognized standing. Because Mark Twain had been one of Soule's admirers and a warm friend in the old days, it was natural that Soule should turn to him now, and equally natural that Clemens should turn to Howells.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Sunday, Oct. 2 '80. *My dear Howells*,—Here's a letter which I wrote you to San Francisco the second time you didn't go there.... I told Soule he needn't write you, but simply send the *Ms.* to you. O dear, dear, it is dreadful to be an unrecognized poet. How wise it was in Charles Warren Stoddard to take in his sign and go for some other calling while still young.

I'm laying for that Encyclopedical Scotchman—and he'll need to lock the door behind him, when he comes in; otherwise when he hears my proposed tariff his skin will probably crawl away with him. He is accustomed to seeing the publisher impoverish the author—that spectacle must be getting stale to him—if he contracts with the undersigned he will experience a change in that programme that will make the enamel peel off his teeth for very surprise—and joy. No, that last is what Mrs. Clemens thinks—but it's not so. The proposed work is growing, mightily, in my estimation, day by day; and I'm not going to throw it away for any mere trifle. If I make a contract with the canny Scot, I will then tell him the plan which you and I have devised (that of taking in the



humor of all countries)—otherwise I'll keep it to myself, I think. Why should we assist our fellowman for mere love of God?

Yrs ever

*Mark.*



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One wishes that Howells might have found value enough in the verses of Frank Soule to recommend them to Osgood. To Clemens he wrote: "You have touched me in regard to him, and I will deal gently with his poetry. Poor old fellow! I can imagine him, and how he must have to struggle not to be hard or sour."

The verdict, however, was inevitable. Soule's graceful verses proved to be not poetry at all. No publisher of standing could afford to give them his imprint.

The "Encyclopedical Scotchman" mentioned in the preceding letter was the publisher Gebbie, who had a plan to engage Howells and Clemens to prepare some sort of anthology of the world's literature. The idea came to nothing, though the other plan mentioned—for a library of humor—in time grew into a book. Mark Twain's contracts with Bliss for the publication of his books on the subscription plan had been made on a royalty basis, beginning with 5 per cent. on 'The Innocents Abroad' increasing to 7 per cent. on 'Roughing It,' and to 10 per cent. on later books. Bliss had held that these later percentages fairly represented one half the profits. Clemens, however, had never been fully satisfied, and his brother Orion had more than once urged him to demand a specific contract on the half-profit basis. The agreement for the publication of 'A Tramp Abroad' was made on these terms. Bliss died before Clemens received his first statement of sales. Whatever may have been the facts under earlier conditions, the statement proved to Mark Twain's satisfaction; at least, that the half-profit arrangement was to his advantage. It produced another result; it gave Samuel Clemens an excuse to place his brother Orion in a position of independence.

To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

Sunday, Oct 24 '80. *My dear Bro.*,—Bliss is dead. The aspect of the balance-sheet is enlightening. It reveals the fact, through my present contract, (which is for half the profits on the book above actual cost of paper, printing and binding,) that I have lost considerably by all this nonsense—sixty thousand dollars, I should say—and if Bliss were alive I would stay with the concern and get it all back; for on each new book I would require a portion of that back pay; but as it is (this in the very strictest confidence,) I shall probably go to a new publisher 6 or 8 months hence, for I am afraid Frank, with his poor health, will lack push and drive.

Out of the suspicions you bred in me years ago, has grown this result, —to wit, that I shall within the twelvemonth get \$40,000 out of this "Tramp" instead Of \$20,000. Twenty thousand dollars, after taxes and other expenses are stripped away, is worth to the investor about \$75 a month—so I shall tell Mr. Perkins to make your check that amount per month, hereafter, while our income is able to afford it. This ends the loan business; and hereafter you can reflect that you are living not on borrowed money but on money which you have squarely earned, and which has no taint or savor of charity about it—and you can also reflect that the money you have been receiving of me all

these years is interest charged against the heavy bill which the next publisher will have to stand who gets a book of mine.

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Jean got the stockings and is much obliged; Mollie wants to know whom she most resembles, but I can't tell; she has blue eyes and brown hair, and three chins, and is very fat and happy; and at one time or another she has resembled all the different Clemenses and Langdons, in turn, that have ever lived.

Livy is too much beaten out with the baby, nights, to write, these times; and I don't know of anything urgent to say, except that a basket full of letters has accumulated in the 7 days that I have been whooping and cursing over a cold in the head—and I must attack the pile this very minute.

With love from us  
Y aff  
Sam

\$25 enclosed.

On the completion of *The Prince and Pauper* story, Clemens had naturally sent it to Howells for consideration. Howells wrote: "I have read the two P's and I like it immensely, it begins well and it ends well." He pointed out some things that might be changed or omitted, and added: "It is such a book as I would expect from you, knowing what a bottom of fury there is to your fun." Clemens had thought somewhat of publishing the story anonymously, in the fear that it would not be accepted seriously over his own signature.

The "bull story" referred to in the next letter is the one later used in the *Joan of Arc* book, the story told Joan by "Uncle Laxart," how he rode a bull to a funeral.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Xmas Eve, 1880. *My dear Howells*,—I was prodigiously delighted with what you said about the book—so, on the whole, I've concluded to publish intrepidly, instead of concealing the authorship. I shall leave out that bull story.

I wish you had gone to New York. The company was small, and we had a first-rate time. Smith's an enjoyable fellow. I liked Barrett, too. And the oysters were as good as the rest of the company. It was worth going there to learn how to cook them.

Next day I attended to business—which was, to introduce Twichell to Gen. Grant and procure a private talk in the interest of the Chinese Educational Mission here in the U. S. Well, it was very funny. Joe had been sitting up nights building facts and arguments together into a mighty and unassailable array and had studied them out and got them by heart—all with the trembling half-hearted hope of getting Grant to add his signature to a sort of petition to the Viceroy of China; but Grant took in the whole situation in a jiffy, and before Joe had more than fairly got started, the old man said: "I'll write the Viceroy a Letter—a separate letter—and bring strong reasons to bear upon him; I know him well,

and what I say will have weight with him; I will attend to it right away. No, no thanks—I shall be glad to do it—it will be a labor of love.”

So all Joe’s laborious hours were for naught! It was as if he had come to borrow a dollar, and been offered a thousand before he could unfold his case....

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But it's getting dark. Merry Christmas to all of you.  
Yrs Ever,

*Mark.*

The Chinese Educational Mission, mentioned in the foregoing, was a thriving Hartford institution, projected eight years before by a Yale graduate named Yung Wing. The mission was now threatened, and Yung Wing, knowing the high honor in which General Grant was held in China, believed that through him it might be saved. Twichell, of course, was deeply concerned and naturally overjoyed at Grant's interest. A day or two following the return to Hartford, Clemens received a letter from General Grant, in which he wrote: "Li Hung Chang is the most powerful and most influential Chinaman in his country. He professed great friendship for me when I was there, and I have had assurances of the same thing since. I hope, if he is strong enough with his government, that the decision to withdraw the Chinese students from this country may be changed."

But perhaps Li Hung Chang was experiencing one of his partial eclipses just then, or possibly he was not interested, for the Hartford Mission did not survive.

## XXI.

*Letters 1881, to Howells and others. Assisting A young sculptor. Literary plans*

With all of Mark Twain's admiration for Grant, he had opposed him as a third-term President and approved of the nomination of Garfield. He had made speeches for Garfield during the campaign just ended, and had been otherwise active in his support. Upon Garfield's election, however, he felt himself entitled to no special favor, and the single request which he preferred at length could hardly be classed as, personal, though made for a "personal friend."

To President-elect James A. Garfield, in Washington:

*Hartford, Jany. 12, '81.*  
*Gen. Garfield*

*Dear sir,*—Several times since your election persons wanting office have asked me "to use my influence" with you in their behalf.

To word it in that way was such a pleasant compliment to me that I never complied. I could not without exposing the fact that I hadn't any influence with you and that was a thing I had no mind to do.

It seems to me that it is better to have a good man's flattering estimate of my influence—and to keep it—than to fool it away with trying to get him an office. But when my brother—on my wife's side—Mr. Charles J. Langdon—late of the Chicago Convention—desires me to speak a word for Mr. Fred Douglass, I am not asked "to use my influence" consequently I am not risking anything. So I am writing this as a simple citizen. I am not drawing on my fund of influence at all. A simple citizen may express a desire with all propriety, in the matter of a recommendation

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to office, and so I beg permission to hope that you will retain Mr. Douglass in his present office of Marshall of the District of Columbia, if such a course will not clash with your own preferences or with the expediencies and interest of your administration. I offer this petition with peculiar pleasure and strong desire, because I so honor this man's high and blemishless character and so admire his brave, long crusade for the liberties and elevation of his race.

He is a personal friend of mine, but that is nothing to the point, his history would move me to say these things without that, and I feel them too.

With great respect  
I am, General,  
Yours truly,  
S. L. Clemens.

Clemens would go out of his way any time to grant favor to the colored race. His childhood associations were partly accountable for this, but he also felt that the white man owed the negro a debt for generations of enforced bondage. He would lecture any time in a colored church, when he would as likely as not refuse point-blank to speak for a white congregation. Once, in Elmira, he received a request, poorly and none too politely phrased, to speak for one of the churches. He was annoyed and about to send a brief refusal, when Mrs. Clemens, who was present, said: "I think I know that church, and if so this preacher is a colored man; he does not know how to write a polished letter—how should he?" Her husband's manner changed so suddenly that she added: "I will give you a motto, and it will be useful to you if you will adopt it: Consider every man colored until he is proved white."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford*, Feb. 27, 1881. *My dear Howells*,—I go to West Point with Twichell tomorrow, but shall be back Tuesday or Wednesday; and then just as soon thereafter as you and Mrs. Howells and Winny can come you will find us ready and most glad to see you—and the longer you can stay the gladder we shall be. I am not going to have a thing to do, but you shall work if you want to. On the evening of March 10th, I am going to read to the colored folk in the African Church here (no whites admitted except such as I bring with me), and a choir of colored folk will sing jubilee songs. I count on a good time, and shall hope to have you folks there, and Livy. I read in Twichell's chapel Friday night and had a most rattling high time—but the thing that went best of all was Uncle Remus's Tar Baby. I mean to try that on my dusky audience. They've all heard that tale from childhood—at least the older members have.

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I arrived home in time to make a most noble blunder—invited Charley Warner here (in Livy's name) to dinner with the Gerhardts, and told him Livy had invited his wife by letter and by word of mouth also. I don't know where I got these impressions, but I came home feeling as one does who realizes that he has done a neat thing for once and left no flaws or loop-holes. Well, Livy said she had never told me to invite Charley and she hadn't dreamed of inviting Susy, and moreover there wasn't any dinner, but just one lean duck. But Susy Warner's intuitions were correct—so she choked off Charley, and staid home herself—we waited dinner an hour and you ought to have seen that duck when he was done drying in the oven.

*Mark.*

Clemens and his wife were always privately assisting worthy and ambitious young people along the way of achievement. Young actors were helped through dramatic schools; young men and women were assisted through college and to travel abroad. Among others Clemens paid the way of two colored students, one through a Southern institution and another through the Yale law school. The mention of the name of Gerhardt in the preceding letter introduces the most important, or at least the most extensive, of these benefactions. The following letter gives the beginning of the story:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Private and Confidential.

*Hartford, Feb. 21, 1881.*

*My dear Howells,—Well, here is our romance.*

It happened in this way. One morning, a month ago—no, three weeks —Livy, and Clara Spaulding and I were at breakfast, at 10 A.M., and I was in an irritable mood, for the barber was up stairs waiting and his hot water getting cold, when the colored George returned from answering the bell and said: "There's a lady in the drawing-room wants to see you." "A book agent!" says I, with heat. "I won't see her; I will die in my tracks, first."

Then I got up with a soul full of rage, and went in there and bent scowling over that person, and began a succession of rude and raspy questions—and without even offering to sit down.

Not even the defendant's youth and beauty and (seeming) timidity were able to modify my savagery, for a time—and meantime question and answer were going on. She had risen to her feet with the first question; and there she stood, with her pretty face bent floorward whilst I inquired, but always with her honest eyes looking me in the face when it came her turn to answer.



And this was her tale, and her plea-diffidently stated, but straight-forwardly; and bravely, and most winningly simply and earnestly: I put it in my own fashion, for I do not remember her words:

Mr. Karl Gerhardt, who works in Pratt & Whitney's machine shops, has made a statue in clay, and would I be so kind as to come and look at it, and tell him if there is any promise in it? He has none to go to, and he would be so glad.

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"O, dear me," I said, "I don't know anything about art—there's nothing I could tell him."

But she went on, just as earnestly and as simply as before, with her plea—and so she did after repeated rebuffs; and dull as I am, even I began by and by to admire this brave and gentle persistence, and to perceive how her heart of hearts was in this thing, and how she couldn't give it up, but must carry her point. So at last I wavered, and promised in general terms that I would come down the first day that fell idle—and as I conducted her to the door, I tamed more and more, and said I would come during the very next week—"We shall be so glad—but—but, would you please come early in the week?—the statue is just finished and we are so anxious—and—and—we did hope you could come this week—and"—well, I came down another peg, and said I would come Monday, as sure as death; and before I got to the dining room remorse was doing its work and I was saying to myself, "Damnation, how can a man be such a hound? why didn't I go with her now?" Yes, and how mean I should have felt if I had known that out of her poverty she had hired a hack and brought it along to convey me. But luckily for what was left of my peace of mind, I didn't know that.

Well, it appears that from here she went to Charley Warner's. There was a better light, there, and the eloquence of her face had a better chance to do its office. Warner fought, as I had done; and he was in the midst of an article and very busy; but no matter, she won him completely. He laid aside his *Ms* and said, "Come, let us go and see your father's statue. That is—is he your father?" "No, he is my husband." So this child was married, you see.

This was a Saturday. Next day Warner came to dinner and said "Go!—go tomorrow—don't fail." He was in love with the girl, and with her husband too, and said he believed there was merit in the statue. Pretty crude work, maybe, but merit in it.

Patrick and I hunted up the place, next day; the girl saw us driving up, and flew down the stairs and received me. Her quarters were the second story of a little wooden house—another family on the ground floor. The husband was at the machine shop, the wife kept no servant, she was there alone. She had a little parlor, with a chair or two and a sofa; and the artist-husband's hand was visible in a couple of plaster busts, one of the wife, and another of a neighbor's child; visible also in a couple of water colors of flowers and birds; an ambitious unfinished portrait of his wife in oils: some paint decorations on the pine mantel; and an excellent human ear, done in some plastic material at 16.

Then we went into the kitchen, and the girl flew around, with enthusiasm, and snatched rag after rag from a tall something in the corner, and presently there stood the clay statue, life size—a graceful girlish creature, nude to the waist, and holding up a single garment with one hand the expression attempted being a modified scare—she was interrupted when about to enter the bath.

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Then this young wife posed herself alongside the image and so remained—a thing I didn't understand. But presently I did—then I said:

“O, it's you!”

“Yes,” she said, “I was the model. He has no model but me. I have stood for this many and many an hour—and you can't think how it does tire one! But I don't mind it. He works all day at the shop; and then, nights and Sundays he works on his statue as long as I can keep up.”

She got a big chisel, to use as a lever, and between us we managed to twist the pedestal round and round, so as to afford a view of the statue from all points. Well, sir, it was perfectly charming, this girl's innocence and purity—exhibiting her naked self, as it were, to a stranger and alone, and never once dreaming that there was the slightest indelicacy about the matter. And so there wasn't; but it will be many along day before I run across another woman who can do the like and show no trace of self-consciousness.

Well, then we sat down, and I took a smoke, and she told me all about her people in Massachusetts—her father is a physician and it is an old and respectable family—(I am able to believe anything she says.) And she told me how “Karl” is 26 years old; and how he has had passionate longings all his life toward art, but has always been poor and obliged to struggle for his daily bread; and how he felt sure that if he could only have one or two lessons in—

“Lessons? Hasn't he had any lessons?”

No. He had never had a lesson.

And presently it was dinner time and “Karl” arrived—a slender young fellow with a marvelous head and a noble eye—and he was as simple and natural, and as beautiful in spirit as his wife was. But she had to do the talking—mainly—there was too much thought behind his cavernous eyes for glib speech.

I went home enchanted. Told Livy and Clara Spaulding all about the paradise down yonder where those two enthusiasts are happy with a yearly expense of \$350. Livy and Clara went there next day and came away enchanted. A few nights later the Gerhardts kept their promise and came here for the evening. It was billiard night and I had company and so was not down; but Livy and Clara became more charmed with these children than ever.

Warner and I planned to get somebody to criticise the statue whose judgment would be worth something. So I laid for Champney, and after two failures I captured him and took him around, and he said “this statue is full of faults—but it has merits enough in it to

make up for them” —whereat the young wife danced around as delighted as a child. When we came away, Champney said, “I did not want to say too much there, but the truth is, it seems to me an extraordinary performance for an untrained hand. You ask if there is promise enough there to justify the Hartford folk in going to an expense of training this young man. I should say, yes, decidedly; but still, to make everything safe, you had better get the judgment of a sculptor.”

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Warner was in New York. I wrote him, and he said he would fetch up Ward—which he did. Yesterday they went to the Gerhardts and spent two hours, and Ward came away bewitched with those people and marveling at the winning innocence of the young wife, who dropped naturally into model-attitude beside the statue (which is stark naked from head to heel, now—G. had removed the drapery, fearing Ward would think he was afraid to try legs and hips) just as she has always done before.

Livy and I had two long talks with Ward yesterday evening. He spoke strongly. He said, “if any stranger had told me that this apprentice did not model that thing from plaster casts, I would not have believed it.” He said “it is full of crudities, but it is full of genius, too. It is such a statue as the man of average talent would achieve after two years training in the schools. And the boldness of the fellow, in going straight to nature! He is an apprentice—his work shows that, all over; but the stuff is in him, sure. Hartford must send him to Paris—two years; then if the promise holds good, keep him there three more—and warn him to study, study, work, work, and keep his name out of the papers, and neither ask for orders nor accept them when offered.”

Well, you see, that’s all we wanted. After Ward was gone Livy came out with the thing that was in her mind. She said, “Go privately and start the Gerhardts off to Paris, and say nothing about it to any one else.”

So I tramped down this morning in the snow-storm—and there was a stirring time. They will sail a week or ten days from now.

As I was starting out at the front door, with Gerhardt beside me and the young wife dancing and jubilating behind, this latter cried out impulsively, “Tell Mrs. Clemens I want to hug her—I want to hug you both!”

I gave them my old French book and they were going to tackle the language, straight off.

Now this letter is a secret—keep it quiet—I don’t think Livy would mind my telling you these things, but then she might, you know, for she is a queer girl.

Yrs ever,

*Mark.*

Champney was J. Wells Champney, a portrait-painter of distinction; Ward was the sculptor, J. Q. A. Ward.

The Gerhardts were presently off to Paris, well provided with means to make their dreams reality; in due time the letters will report them again.

The Uncle Remus tales of Joel Chandler Harris gave Mark Twain great pleasure. He frequently read them aloud, not only at home but in public. Finally, he wrote Harris, expressing his warm appreciation, and mentioning one of the negro stories of his own childhood, "The Golden Arm," which he urged Harris to look up and add to his collection.

"You have pinned a proud feather in Uncle-Remus's cap," replied Harris. "I do not know what higher honor he could have than to appear before the Hartford public arm in arm with Mark Twain."

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He disclaimed any originality for the stories, adding, "I understand that my relations toward Uncle Remus are similar to those that exist between an almanac maker and the calendar." He had not heard the "Golden Arm" story and asked for the outlines; also for some publishing advice, out of Mark Twain's long experience.

To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta:

*Elmira, N.Y., Aug. 10. My dear Mr. Harris,—*You can argue yourself into the delusion that the principle of life is in the stories themselves and not in their setting; but you will save labor by stopping with that solitary convert, for he is the only intelligent one you will bag. In reality the stories are only alligator pears—one merely eats them for the sake of the salad-dressing. Uncle Remus is most deftly drawn, and is a lovable and delightful creation; he, and the little boy, and their relations with each other, are high and fine literature, and worthy to live, for their own sakes; and certainly the stories are not to be credited with them. But enough of this; I seem to be proving to the man that made the multiplication table that twice one are two.

I have been thinking, yesterday and to-day (plenty of chance to think, as I am abed with lumbago at our little summering farm among the solitudes of the Mountaintops,) and I have concluded that I can answer one of your questions with full confidence—thus: Make it a subscription book. Mighty few books that come strictly under the head of literature will sell by subscription; but if Uncle Remus won't, the gift of prophecy has departed out of me. When a book will sell by subscription, it will sell two or three times as many copies as it would in the trade; and the profit is bulkier because the retail price is greater.....

You didn't ask me for a subscription-publisher. If you had, I should have recommended Osgood to you. He inaugurates his subscription department with my new book in the fall.....

Now the doctor has been here and tried to interrupt my yarn about "The Golden Arm," but I've got through, anyway.

Of course I tell it in the negro dialect—that is necessary; but I have not written it so, for I can't spell it in your matchless way. It is marvelous the way you and Cable spell the negro and creole dialects.

Two grand features are lost in print: the weird wailing, the rising and falling cadences of the wind, so easily mimicked with one's mouth; and the impressive pauses and eloquent silences, and subdued utterances, toward the end of the yarn (which chain the attention of the children hand and foot, and they sit with parted lips and breathless, to be wrenched limb from limb with the sudden and appalling "You got it").



Old Uncle Dan'l, a slave of my uncle's' aged 60, used to tell us children yarns every night by the kitchen fire (no other light;) and the last yarn demanded, every night, was this one. By this time there was but a ghastly blaze or two flickering about the back-log. We would huddle close about the old man, and begin to shudder with the first familiar words; and under the spell of his impressive delivery we always fell a prey to that climax at the end when the rigid black shape in the twilight sprang at us with a shout.



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When you come to glance at the tale you will recollect it—it is as common and familiar as the Tar Baby. Work up the atmosphere with your customary skill and it will “go” in print.

Lumbago seems to make a body garrulous—but you’ll forgive it.

Truly yours

S. L. Clemens

The “Golden Arm” story was one that Clemens often used in his public readings, and was very effective as he gave it.

In his sketch, “How to Tell a Story,” it appears about as he used to tell it. Harris, receiving the outlines of the old Missouri tale, presently announced that he had dug up its Georgia relative, an interesting variant, as we gather from Mark Twain’s reply.

To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta:

*Hartford, '81. My dear Mr. Harris,—I was very sure you would run across that Story somewhere, and am glad you have. A Drummond light—no, I mean a Brush light—is thrown upon the negro estimate of values by his willingness to risk his soul and his mighty peace forever for the sake of a silver sev’m-punce. And this form of the story seems rather nearer the true field-hand standard than that achieved by my Florida, Mo., negroes with their sumptuous arm of solid gold.*

I judge you haven’t received my new book yet—however, you will in a day or two. Meantime you must not take it ill if I drop Osgood a hint about your proposed story of slave life.....

When you come north I wish you would drop me a line and then follow it in person and give me a day or two at our house in Hartford. If you will, I will snatch Osgood down from Boston, and you won’t have to go there at all unless you want to. Please to bear this strictly in mind, and don’t forget it.

Sincerely yours

S. L. Clemens.

Charles Warren Stoddard, to whom the next letter is written, was one of the old California literary crowd, a graceful writer of verse and prose, never quite arriving at the success believed by his friends to be his due. He was a gentle, irresponsible soul, well loved by all who knew him, and always, by one or another, provided against want. The reader may remember that during Mark Twain’s great lecture engagement in London, winter of 1873-74, Stoddard lived with him, acting as his secretary. At a later period in his life he lived for several years with the great telephone magnate, Theodore N. Vail. At the time of this letter, Stoddard had decided that in the warm light and comfort of the Sandwich Islands he could survive on his literary earnings.

To Charles Warren Stoddard, in the Sandwich Islands:

*Hartford, Oct. 26 '81. My dear Charlie,—*Now what have I ever done to you that you should not only slide off to Heaven before you have earned a right to go, but must add the gratuitous villainy of informing me of it?.....

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The house is full of carpenters and decorators; whereas, what we really need here, is an incendiary. If the house would only burn down, we would pack up the cubs and fly to the isles of the blest, and shut ourselves up in the healing solitudes of the crater of Haleakala and get a good rest; for the mails do not intrude there, nor yet the telephone and the telegraph. And after resting, we would come down the mountain a piece and board with a godly, breech-clouted native, and eat poi and dirt and give thanks to whom all thanks belong, for these privileges, and never house-keep any more.

I think my wife would be twice as strong as she is, but for this wearing and wearying slavery of house-keeping. However, she thinks she must submit to it for the sake of the children; whereas, I have always had a tenderness for parents too, so, for her sake and mine, I sigh for the incendiary. When the evening comes and the gas is lit and the wear and tear of life ceases, we want to keep house always; but next morning we wish, once more, that we were free and irresponsible boarders.

Work?—one can't you know, to any purpose. I don't really get anything done worth speaking of, except during the three or four months that we are away in the Summer. I wish the Summer were seven years long. I keep three or four books on the stocks all the time, but I seldom add a satisfactory chapter to one of them at home. Yes, and it is all because my time is taken up with answering the letters of strangers. It can't be done through a short hand amanuensis—I've tried that—it wouldn't work—I couldn't learn to dictate. What does possess strangers to write so many letters? I never could find that out. However, I suppose I did it myself when I was a stranger. But I will never do it again.

Maybe you think I am not happy? the very thing that gravels me is that I am. I don't want to be happy when I can't work; I am resolved that hereafter I won't be. What I have always longed for, was the privilege of living forever away up on one of those mountains in the Sandwich Islands overlooking the sea.

Yours ever

*Mark.*

That magazine article of yours was mighty good: up to your very best I think. I enclose a book review written by Howells.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford*, Oct. 26 '81. *My dear Howells*,—I am delighted with your review, and so is Mrs. Clemens. What you have said, there, will convince anybody that reads it; a body cannot help being convinced by it. That is the kind of a review to have; the doubtful man; even the prejudiced man, is persuaded and succumbs.

What a queer blunder that was, about the baronet. I can't quite see how I ever made it. There was an opulent abundance of things I didn't know; and consequently no need to trench upon the vest-pocketful of things I did know, to get material for a blunder.

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Charley Warren Stoddard has gone to the Sandwich Islands permanently. Lucky devil. It is the only supremely delightful place on earth. It does seem that the more advantage a body doesn't earn, here, the more of them God throws at his head. This fellow's postal card has set the vision of those gracious islands before my mind, again, with not a leaf withered, nor a rainbow vanished, nor a sun-flash missing from the waves, and now it will be months, I reckon, before I can drive it away again. It is beautiful company, but it makes one restless and dissatisfied.

With love and thanks,  
Yrs ever,  
Mark.

The review mentioned in this letter was of *The Prince and the Pauper*. What the queer "blunder" about the baronet was, the present writer confesses he does not know; but perhaps a careful reader could find it, at least in the early edition; very likely it was corrected without loss of time. Clemens now and then found it necessary to pay a visit to Canada in the effort to protect his copyright. He usually had a grand time on these trips, being lavishly entertained by the Canadian literary fraternity. In November, 1881, he made one of these journeys in the interest of *The Prince and the Pauper*, this time with Osgood, who was now his publisher. In letters written home we get a hint of his diversions. The Monsieur Frechette mentioned was a Canadian poet of considerable distinction. "Clara" was Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira, who had accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Clemens to Europe in 1873, and again in 1878. Later she became Mrs. John B. Staachfield, of New York City. Her name has already appeared in these letters many times.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

*Montreal*, Nov. 28 '81. Livy darling, you and Clara ought to have been at breakfast in the great dining room this morning. English female faces, distinctive English costumes, strange and marvelous English gaits—and yet such honest, honorable, clean-souled countenances, just as these English women almost always have, you know. Right away

---

But they've come to take me to the top of Mount Royal, it being a cold, dry, sunny, magnificent day. Going in a sleigh.

Yours lovingly,  
SAML.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

*Montreal*, Sunday, November 27, 1881. Livy dear, a mouse kept me awake last night till 3 or 4 o'clock—so I am lying abed this morning. I would not give sixpence to be out yonder in the storm, although it is only snow.

[The above paragraph is written in the form of a rebus illustrated with various sketches.]

There—that's for the children—was not sure that they could read writing; especially  
jean, who is strangely ignorant in some things.

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I can not only look out upon the beautiful snow-storm, past the vigorous blaze of my fire; and upon the snow-veiled buildings which I have sketched; and upon the churchward drifting umbrellas; and upon the buffalo-clad cabmen stamping their feet and thrashing their arms on the corner yonder: but I also look out upon the spot where the first white men stood, in the neighborhood of four hundred years ago, admiring the mighty stretch of leafy solitudes, and being admired and marveled at by an eager multitude of naked savages. The discoverer of this region, and namer of it, Jacques Cartier, has a square named for him in the city. I wish you were here; you would enjoy your birthday, I think.

I hoped for a letter, and thought I had one when the mail was handed in, a minute ago, but it was only that note from Sylvester Baxter. You must write—do you hear?—or I will be remiss myself.

Give my love and a kiss to the children, and ask them to give you my love and a kiss from

SAML.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

*Quebec*, Sunday. '81. Livy darling, I received a letter from Monsieur Frechette this morning, in which certain citizens of Montreal tendered me a public dinner next Thursday, and by Osgood's advice I accepted it. I would have accepted anyway, and very cheerfully but for the delay of two days—for I was purposing to go to Boston Tuesday and home Wednesday; whereas, now I go to Boston Friday and home Saturday. I have to go by Boston on account of business.

We drove about the steep hills and narrow, crooked streets of this old town during three hours, yesterday, in a sleigh, in a driving snow-storm. The people here don't mind snow; they were all out, plodding around on their affairs—especially the children, who were wallowing around everywhere, like snow images, and having a mighty good time. I wish I could describe the winter costume of the young girls, but I can't. It is grave and simple, but graceful and pretty—the top of it is a brimless fur cap. Maybe it is the costume that makes pretty girls seem so monotonously plenty here. It was a kind of relief to strike a homely face occasionally.

You descend into some of the streets by long, deep stairways; and in the strong moonlight, last night, these were very picturesque. I did wish you were here to see these things. You couldn't by any possibility sleep in these beds, though, or enjoy the food.

Good night, sweetheart, and give my respects to the cubs.

SAML.

It had been hoped that W. D. Howells would join the Canadian excursion, but Howells was not very well that autumn. He wrote that he had been in bed five weeks, “most of the time recovering; so you see how bad I must have been to begin with. But now I am out of any first-class pain; I have a good appetite, and I am as abusive and peremptory as Guiteau.” Clemens, returning to Hartford, wrote him a letter that explains itself.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:



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*Hartford*, Dec. 16 '81. *My dear Howells*,—It was a sharp disappointment—your inability to connect, on the Canadian raid. What a gaudy good time we should have had!

Disappointed, again, when I got back to Boston; for I was promising myself half an hour's look at you, in Belmont; but your note to Osgood showed that that could not be allowed out yet.

The Atlantic arrived an hour ago, and your faultless and delicious Police Report brought that blamed Joe Twichell powerfully before me. There's a man who can tell such things himself (by word of mouth,) and has as sure an eye for detecting a thing that is before his eyes, as any man in the world, perhaps—then why in the nation doesn't he report himself with a pen?

One of those drenching days last week, he slopped down town with his cubs, and visited a poor little beggarly shed where were a dwarf, a fat woman, and a giant of honest eight feet, on exhibition behind tawdry show-canvases, but with nobody to exhibit to. The giant had a broom, and was cleaning up and fixing around, diligently. Joe conceived the idea of getting some talk out of him. Now that never would have occurred to me. So he dropped in under the man's elbow, dogged him patiently around, prodding him with questions and getting irritated snarls in return which would have finished me early—but at last one of Joe's random shafts drove the centre of that giant's sympathies somehow, and fetched him. The fountains of his great deep were broken up, and he rained a flood of personal history that was unspeakably entertaining.

Among other things it turned out that he had been a Turkish (native) colonel, and had fought all through the Crimean war—and so, for the first time, Joe got a picture of the Charge of the Six Hundred that made him see the living spectacle, the flash of flag and tongue-flame, the rolling smoke, and hear the booming of the guns; and for the first time also, he heard the reasons for that wild charge delivered from the mouth of a master, and realized that nobody had “blundered,” but that a cold, logical, military brain had perceived this one and sole way to win an already lost battle, and so gave the command and did achieve the victory.

And mind you Joe was able to come up here, days afterwards, and reproduce that giant's picturesque and admirable history. But dern him, he can't write it—which is all wrong, and not as it should be.

And he has gone and raked up the *Ms* autobiography (written in 1848,) of Mrs. Phebe Brown, (author of “I Love to Steal a While Away,”) who educated Yung Wing in her family when he was a little boy; and I came near not getting to bed at all, last night, on account of the lurid fascinations of it. Why in the nation it has never got into print, I can't understand.



But, by jings! the postman will be here in a minute; so, congratulations upon your mending health, and gratitude that it is mending; and love to you all.

Yrs Ever  
*Mark.*

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Don't answer—I spare the sick.

### XXII.

*Letters, 1882, mainly to Howells. Wasted fury. Old scenes revisited.  
The Mississippi book*

A man of Mark Twain's profession and prominence must necessarily be the subject of much newspaper comment. Jest, compliment, criticism —none of these things disturbed him, as a rule. He was pleased that his books should receive favorable notices by men whose opinion he respected, but he was not grieved by adverse expressions. Jests at his expense, if well written, usually amused him; cheap jokes only made him sad; but sarcasms and innuendoes were likely to enrage him, particularly if he believed them prompted by malice. Perhaps among all the letters he ever wrote, there is none more characteristic than this confession of violence and eagerness for reprisal, followed by his acknowledgment of error and a manifest appreciation of his own weakness. It should be said that Mark Twain and Whitelaw Reid were generally very good friends, and perhaps for the moment this fact seemed to magnify the offense.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Jan. 28 '82. My dear Howells,*—Nobody knows better than I, that there are times when swearing cannot meet the emergency. How sharply I feel that, at this moment. Not a single profane word has issued from my lips this mornin' —I have not even had the impulse to swear, so wholly ineffectual would swearing have manifestly been, in the circumstances. But I will tell you about it.

About three weeks ago, a sensitive friend, approaching his revelation cautiously, intimated that the N. Y. Tribune was engaged in a kind of crusade against me. This seemed a higher compliment than I deserved; but no matter, it made me very angry. I asked many questions, and gathered, in substance, this: Since Reid's return from Europe, the Tribune had been flinging sneers and brutalities at me with such persistent frequency "as to attract general remark." I was an angered—which is just as good an expression, I take it, as an hungered. Next, I learned that Osgood, among the rest of the "general," was worrying over these constant and pitiless attacks. Next came the testimony of another friend, that the attacks were not merely "frequent," but "almost daily." Reflect upon that: "Almost daily" insults, for two months on a stretch. What would you have done?

As for me, I did the thing which was the natural thing for me to do, that is, I set about contriving a plan to accomplish one or the other of two things: 1. Force a peace; or 2. Get revenge. When I got my plan finished, it pleased me marvelously. It was in six or seven sections, each section to be used in its turn and by itself; the assault to begin at

once with No. 1, and the rest to follow, one after the other, to keep the communication open while I wrote my biography of Reid. I meant to wind up with this latter great work, and then dismiss the subject for good.

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Well, ever since then I have worked day and night making notes and collecting and classifying material. I've got collectors at work in England. I went to New York and sat three hours taking evidence while a stenographer set it down. As my labors grew, so also grew my fascination. Malice and malignity faded out of me—or maybe I drove them out of me, knowing that a malignant book would hurt nobody but the fool who wrote it. I got thoroughly in love with this work; for I saw that I was going to write a book which the very devils and angels themselves would delight to read, and which would draw disapproval from nobody but the hero of it, (and Mrs. Clemens, who was bitter against the whole thing.) One part of my plan was so delicious that I had to try my hand on it right away, just for the luxury of it. I set about it, and sure enough it panned out to admiration. I wrote that chapter most carefully, and I couldn't find a fault with it. (It was not for the biography—no, it belonged to an immediate and deadlier project.)

Well, five days ago, this thought came into my mind (from Mrs. Clemens's): "Wouldn't it be well to make sure that the attacks have been 'almost daily'?—and to also make sure that their number and character will justify me in doing what I am proposing to do?"

I at once set a man to work in New York to seek out and copy every unpleasant reference which had been made to me in the Tribune from Nov. 1st to date. On my own part I began to watch the current numbers, for I had subscribed for the paper.

The result arrived from my New York man this morning. O, what a pitiable wreck of high hopes! The "almost daily" assaults, for two months, consist of—1. Adverse criticism of P. & P. from an enraged idiot in the London Atheneum; 2. Paragraph from some indignant Englishman in the Pall Mall Gazette who pays me the vast compliment of gravely rebuking some imaginary ass who has set me up in the neighborhood of Rabelais; 3. A remark of the Tribune's about the Montreal dinner, touched with an almost invisible satire; 4. A remark of the Tribune's about refusal of Canadian copyright, not complimentary, but not necessarily malicious—and of course adverse criticism which is not malicious is a thing which none but fools irritate themselves about.

There—that is the prodigious bugaboo, in its entirety! Can you conceive of a man's getting himself into a sweat over so diminutive a provocation? I am sure I can't. What the devil can those friends of mine have been thinking about, to spread these 3 or 4 harmless things out into two months of daily sneers and affronts? The whole offense, boiled down, amounts to just this: one uncourteous remark of the Tribune about my book—not me between Nov. 1 and Dec. 20; and a couple of foreign criticisms (of my writings, not me,) between Nov. 1 and Jan. 26! If I can't stand that amount of friction, I certainly need reconstruction. Further boiled down, this vast outpouring of malice amounts to simply this: one jest from the Tribune (one can make nothing more serious than that out of it.) One jest—and that is all; for the foreign criticisms do not count, they being matters of news, and proper for publication in anybody's newspaper.

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And to offset that one jest, the Tribune paid me one compliment Dec. 23, by publishing my note declining the New York New England dinner, while merely (in the same breath,) mentioning that similar letters were read from General Sherman and other men whom we all know to be persons of real consequence.

Well, my mountain has brought forth its mouse, and a sufficiently small mouse it is, God knows. And my three weeks' hard work have got to go into the ignominious pigeon-hole. Confound it, I could have earned ten thousand dollars with infinitely less trouble. However, I shouldn't have done it, for I am too lazy, now, in my sere and yellow leaf, to be willing to work for anything but love..... I kind of envy you people who are permitted for your righteousness' sake to dwell in a boarding house; not that I should always want to live in one, but I should like the change occasionally from this housekeeping slavery to that wild independence. A life of don't-care-a-damn in a boarding house is what I have asked for in many a secret prayer. I shall come by and by and require of you what you have offered me there.

Yours ever,

*Mark.*

Howells, who had already known something of the gathering storm, replied: "Your letter was an immense relief to me, for although I had an abiding faith that you would get sick of your enterprise, I wasn't easy until I knew that you had given it up." Joel Chandler Harris appears again in the letters of this period. Twichell, during a trip South about this time, had called on Harris with some sort of proposition or suggestion from Clemens that Harris appear with him in public, and tell, or read, the Remus stories from the platform. But Harris was abnormally diffident. Clemens later pronounced him "the shyest full-grown man" he had ever met, and the word which Twichell brought home evidently did not encourage the platform idea.

To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta:

*Hartford, Apl. 2, '82.*

Private.

*My dear Mr. Harris,*—Jo Twichell brought me your note and told me of his talk with you. He said you didn't believe you would ever be able to muster a sufficiency of reckless daring to make you comfortable and at ease before an audience. Well, I have thought out a device whereby I believe we can get around that difficulty. I will explain when I see you.

Jo says you want to go to Canada within a month or six weeks—I forget just exactly what he did say; but he intimated the trip could be delayed a while, if necessary. If this is so, suppose you meet Osgood and me in New Orleans early in May—say somewhere between the 1st and 6th?

It will be well worth your while to do this, because the author who goes to Canada unposted, will not know what course to pursue [to secure copyright] when he gets there; he will find himself in a hopeless confusion as to what is the correct thing to do. Now Osgood is the only man in America, who can lay out your course for you and tell you exactly what to do. Therefore, you just come to New Orleans and have a talk with him.

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Our idea is to strike across lots and reach St. Louis the 20th of April —thence we propose to drift southward, stopping at some town a few hours or a night, every day, and making notes.

To escape the interviewers, I shall follow my usual course and use a fictitious name (C. L. Samuel, of New York.) I don't know what Osgood's name will be, but he can't use his own.

If you see your way to meet us in New Orleans, drop me a line, now, and as we approach that city I will telegraph you what day we shall arrive there.

I would go to Atlanta if I could, but shan't be able. We shall go back up the river to St. Paul, and thence by rail X-lots home.

(I am making this letter so dreadfully private and confidential because my movements must be kept secret, else I shan't be able to pick up the kind of book-material I want.)

If you are diffident, I suspect that you ought to let Osgood be your magazine-agent. He makes those people pay three or four times as much as an article is worth, whereas I never had the cheek to make them pay more than double.

Yrs Sincerely  
S. L. Clemens.

“My backwardness is an affliction,” wrote Harris..... “The ordeal of appearing on the stage would be a terrible one, but my experience is that when a diffident man does become familiar with his surroundings he has more impudence than his neighbors. Extremes meet.”

He was sorely tempted, but his courage became as water at the thought of footlights and assembled listeners. Once in New York he appears to have been caught unawares at a Tile Club dinner and made to tell a story, but his agony was such that at the prospect of a similar ordeal in Boston he avoided that city and headed straight for Georgia and safety. The New Orleans excursion with Osgood, as planned by Clemens, proved a great success. The little party took the steamer Gold Dust from St. Louis down river toward New Orleans. Clemens was quickly recognized, of course, and his assumed name laid aside. The author of “Uncle Remus” made the trip to New Orleans. George W. Cable was there at the time, and we may believe that in the company of Mark Twain and Osgood those Southern authors passed two or three delightful days. Clemens also met his old teacher Bixby in New Orleans, and came back up the river with him, spending most of his time in the pilot-house, as in the old days. It was a glorious trip, and, reaching St. Louis, he continued it northward, stopping off at Hannibal and Quincy.’



To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

*Quincy, ill.* May 17, '82. Livy darling, I am desperately homesick. But I have promised Osgood, and must stick it out; otherwise I would take the train at once and break for home.

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I have spent three delightful days in Hannibal, loitering around all day long, examining the old localities and talking with the grey-heads who were boys and girls with me 30 or 40 years ago. It has been a moving time. I spent my nights with John and Helen Garth, three miles from town, in their spacious and beautiful house. They were children with me, and afterwards schoolmates. Now they have a daughter 19 or 20 years old. Spent an hour, yesterday, with A. W. Lamb, who was not married when I saw him last. He married a young lady whom I knew. And now I have been talking with their grown-up sons and daughters. Lieutenant Hickman, the spruce young handsomely-uniformed volunteer of 1846, called on me—a grisly elephantine patriarch of 65 now, his grace all vanished.

That world which I knew in its blossoming youth is old and bowed and melancholy, now; its soft cheeks are leathery and wrinkled, the fire is gone out in its eyes, and the spring from its step. It will be dust and ashes when I come again. I have been clasping hands with the moribund—and usually they said, “It is for the last time.”

Now I am under way again, upon this hideous trip to St. Paul, with a heart brimming full of thoughts and images of you and Susie and Bay and the peerless Jean. And so good night, my love.

SAML.

Clemens's trip had been saddened by learning, in New Orleans, the news of the death of Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. To Doctor Brown's son, whom he had known as “Jock,” he wrote immediately on his return to Hartford.

To Mr. John Brown, in Edinburgh

*Hartford*, June 1, 1882. *My dear Mr. Brown*,—I was three thousand miles from home, at breakfast in New Orleans, when the damp morning paper revealed the sorrowful news among the cable dispatches. There was no place in America, however remote, or however rich, or poor or high or humble where words of mourning for your father were not uttered that morning, for his works had made him known and loved all over the land. To Mrs. Clemens and me, the loss is personal; and our grief the grief one feels for one who was peculiarly near and dear. Mrs. Clemens has never ceased to express regret that we came away from England the last time without going to see him, and often we have since projected a voyage across the Atlantic for the sole purpose of taking him by the hand and looking into his kind eyes once more before he should be called to his rest.

We both thank you greatly for the Edinburgh papers which you sent. My wife and I join in affectionate remembrances and greetings to yourself and your aunt, and in the sincere tender of our sympathies.

Faithfully yours,  
S. L. *Clemens*.

Our Susie is still “Megalops.” He gave her that name:

Can you spare a photograph of your father? We have none but the one taken in a group with ourselves.

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William Dean Howells, at the age of forty-five, reached what many still regard his highest point of achievement in American realism. His novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, which was running as a Century serial during the summer of 1882, attracted wide attention, and upon its issue in book form took first place among his published novels. Mark Twain, to the end of his life, loved all that Howells wrote. Once, long afterward, he said: "Most authors give us glimpses of a radiant moon, but Howells's moon shines and sails all night long." When the instalments of *The Rise of Silas Lapham* began to appear, he overflowed in adjectives, the sincerity of which we need not doubt, in view of his quite open criticisms of the author's reading delivery.

To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass.:

*My dear Howells*,—I am in a state of wild enthusiasm over this July instalment of your story. It's perfectly dazzling—it's masterly—incomparable. Yet I heard you read it—without losing my balance. Well, the difference between your reading and your writing is-remarkable. I mean, in the effects produced and the impression left behind. Why, the one is to the other as is one of Joe Twichell's yarns repeated by a somnambulist. Goodness gracious, you read me a chapter, and it is a gentle, pearly dawn, with a sprinkle of faint stars in it; but by and by I strike it in print, and shout to myself, "God bless us, how has that pallid former spectacle been turned into these gorgeous sunset splendors!"

Well, I don't care how much you read your truck to me, you can't permanently damage it for me that way. It is always perfectly fresh and dazzling when I come on it in the magazine. Of course I recognize the form of it as being familiar—but that is all. That is, I remember it as pyrotechnic figures which you set up before me, dead and cold, but ready for the match—and now I see them touched off and all ablaze with blinding fires. You can read, if you want to, but you don't read worth a damn. I know you can read, because your readings of Cable and your repetitions of the German doctor's remarks prove that.

That's the best drunk scene—because the truest—that I ever read. There are touches in it that I never saw any writer take note of before. And they are set before the reader with amazing accuracy. How very drunk, and how recently drunk, and how altogether admirably drunk you must have been to enable you to contrive that masterpiece!

Why I didn't notice that that religious interview between Marcia and Mrs. Halleck was so deliciously humorous when you read it to me—but dear me, it's just too lovely for anything. (Wrote Clark to collar it for the "Library.")

Hang it, I know where the mystery is, now; when you are reading, you glide right along, and I don't get a chance to let the things soak home; but when I catch it in the magazine, I give a page 20 or 30 minutes in which to gently and thoroughly filter into me. Your humor is so very subtle, and elusive—(well, often it's just a vanishing breath

of perfume which a body isn't certain he smelt till he stops and takes another smell)  
whereas you can smell other

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(Remainder obliterated.)

Among Mark Twain's old schoolmates in Hannibal was little Helen Kercheval, for whom in those early days he had a very tender spot indeed. But she married another schoolmate, John Garth, who in time became a banker, highly respected and a great influence. John and Helen Garth have already been mentioned in the letter of May 17th.

To John Garth, in Hannibal:

*Hartford, July 3 '82. Dear John,—*Your letter of June 19 arrived just one day after we ought to have been in Elmira, N. Y. for the summer: but at the last moment the baby was seized with scarlet fever. I had to telegraph and countermand the order for special sleeping car; and in fact we all had to fly around in a lively way and undo the patient preparations of weeks—rehabilitate the dismantled house, unpack the trunks, and so on. A couple of days later, the eldest child was taken down with so fierce a fever that she was soon delirious—not scarlet fever, however. Next, I myself was stretched on the bed with three diseases at once, and all of them fatal. But I never did care for fatal diseases if I could only have privacy and room to express myself concerning them.

We gave early warning, and of course nobody has entered the house in all this time but one or two reckless old bachelors—and they probably wanted to carry the disease to the children of former flames of theirs. The house is still in quarantine and must remain so for a week or two yet—at which time we are hoping to leave for Elmira.

Always your friend  
S. L. Clemens.

By the end of summer Howells was in Europe, and Clemens, in Elmira, was trying to finish his Mississippi book, which was giving him a great deal of trouble. It was usually so with his non-fiction books; his interest in them was not cumulative; he was prone to grow weary of them, while the menace of his publisher's contract was maddening. Howells's letters, meant to be comforting, or at least entertaining, did not always contribute to his peace of mind. The Library of American Humor which they had planned was an added burden. Before sailing, Howells had written: "Do you suppose you can do your share of the reading at Elmira, while you are writing at the Mississippi book?" In a letter from London, Howells writes of the good times he is having over there with Osgood, Hutton, John Hay, Aldrich, and Alma Tadema, excursions to Oxford, feasting, especially "at the Mitre Tavern, where they let you choose your dinner from the joints hanging from the rafter, and have passages that you lose yourself in every time you try to go to your room..... Couldn't you and Mrs. Clemens step over for a little while?..... We have seen lots of nice people and have been most pleasantly made of; but I would rather have you smoke in my face, and talk for half a day just for pleasure, than to go to the best house or club in London." The reader will gather that this could

not be entirely soothing to a man shackled by a contract and a book that refused to come to an end.

To W. D. Howells, in London:

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*Hartford, Conn. Oct 30, 1882. My dear Howells,*—I do not expect to find you, so I shan't spend many words on you to wind up in the perdition of some European dead-letter office. I only just want to say that the closing installments of the story are prodigious. All along I was afraid it would be impossible for you to keep up so splendidly to the end; but you were only, I see now, striking eleven. It is in these last chapters that you struck twelve. Go on and write; you can write good books yet, but you can never match this one. And speaking of the book, I inclose something which has been happening here lately.

We have only just arrived at home, and I have not seen Clark on our matters. I cannot see him or any one else, until I get my book finished. The weather turned cold, and we had to rush home, while I still lacked thirty thousand words. I had been sick and got delayed. I am going to write all day and two thirds of the night, until the thing is done, or break down at it. The spur and burden of the contract are intolerable to me. I can endure the irritation of it no longer. I went to work at nine o'clock yesterday morning, and went to bed an hour after midnight. Result of the day, (mainly stolen from books, tho' credit given,) 9500 words, so I reduced my burden by one third in one day. It was five days work in one. I have nothing more to borrow or steal; the rest must all be written. It is ten days work, and unless something breaks, it will be finished in five. We all send love to you and Mrs. Howells, and all the family.

Yours as ever,  
Mark.

Again, from Villeneuve, on lake Geneva, Howells wrote urging him this time to spend the winter with them in Florence, where they would write their great American Comedy of 'Orme's Motor,' "which is to enrich us beyond the dreams of avarice.... We could have a lot of fun writing it, and you could go home with some of the good old Etruscan malaria in your bones, instead of the wretched pinch-beck Hartford article that you are suffering from now.... it's a great opportunity for you. Besides, nobody over there likes you half as well as I do."

It should be added that 'Orme's Motor' was the provisional title that Clemens and Howells had selected for their comedy, which was to be built, in some measure, at least, around the character, or rather from the peculiarities, of Orion Clemens. The Cable mentioned in Mark Twain's reply is, of course, George W. Cable, who only a little while before had come up from New Orleans to conquer the North with his wonderful tales and readings.

To W. D. Howells, in Switzerland:

*Hartford, Nov. 4th, 1882. My dear Howells,*—Yes, it would be profitable for me to do that, because with your society to help me, I should swiftly finish this now apparently interminable book. But I cannot come, because I am not Boss here, and nothing but dynamite can move Mrs. Clemens away from home in the winter season.



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I never had such a fight over a book in my life before. And the foolish part of the whole business is, that I started Osgood to editing it before I had finished writing it. As a consequence, large areas of it are condemned here and there and yonder, and I have the burden of these unfilled gaps harassing me and the thought of the broken continuity of the work, while I am at the same time trying to build the last quarter of the book. However, at last I have said with sufficient positiveness that I will finish the book at no particular date; that I will not hurry it; that I will not hurry myself; that I will take things easy and comfortably, write when I choose to write, leave it alone when I so prefer. The printers must wait, the artists, the canvassers, and all the rest. I have got everything at a dead standstill, and that is where it ought to be, and that is where it must remain; to follow any other policy would be to make the book worse than it already is. I ought to have finished it before showing to anybody, and then sent it across the ocean to you to be edited, as usual; for you seem to be a great many shades happier than you deserve to be, and if I had thought of this thing earlier, I would have acted upon it and taken the tuck somewhat out of your joyousness.

In the same mail with your letter, arrived the enclosed from Orme the motor man. You will observe that he has an office. I will explain that this is a law office and I think it probably does him as much good to have a law office without anything to do in it, as it would another man to have one with an active business attached. You see he is on the electric light lay now. Going to light the city and allow me to take all the stock if I want to. And he will manage it free of charge. It never would occur to this simple soul how much less costly it would be to me, to hire him on a good salary not to manage it. Do you observe the same old eagerness, the same old hurry, springing from the fear that if he does not move with the utmost swiftness, that colossal opportunity will escape him? Now just fancy this same frantic plunging after vast opportunities, going on week after week with this same man, during fifty entire years, and he has not yet learned, in the slightest degree, that there isn't any occasion to hurry; that his vast opportunity will always wait; and that whether it waits or flies, he certainly will never catch it. This immortal hopefulness, fortified by its immortal and unteachable misjudgment, is the immortal feature of this character, for a play; and we will write that play. We should be fools else. That staccato postscript reads as if some new and mighty business were imminent, for it is slung on the paper telegraphically, all the small words left out. I am afraid something newer and bigger than the electric light is swinging across his orbit. Save this letter for an inspiration. I have got a hundred more.

## Page 100

Cable has been here, creating worshipers on all hands. He is a marvelous talker on a deep subject. I do not see how even Spencer could unwind a thought more smoothly or orderly, and do it in a cleaner, clearer, crisper English. He astounded Twichell with his faculty. You know when it comes down to moral honesty, limpid innocence, and utterly blemishless piety, the Apostles were mere policemen to Cable; so with this in mind you must imagine him at a midnight dinner in Boston the other night, where we gathered around the board of the Summerset Club; Osgood, full, Boyle O'Reilly, full, Fairchild responsively loaded, and Aldrich and myself possessing the floor, and properly fortified. Cable told Mrs. Clemens when he returned here, that he seemed to have been entertaining himself with horses, and had a dreamy idea that he must have gone to Boston in a cattle-car. It was a very large time. He called it an orgy. And no doubt it was, viewed from his standpoint.

I wish I were in Switzerland, and I wish we could go to Florence; but we have to leave these delights to you; there is no helping it. We all join in love to you and all the family.

Yours as ever

Mark.

### XXIII.

*Letters, 1883, to Howells and others. A guest of the Marquis of Lorne. The history game. A play by Howells and Mark twain*

Mark Twain, in due season, finished the Mississippi book and placed it in Osgood's hands for publication. It was a sort of partnership arrangement in which Clemens was to furnish the money to make the book, and pay Osgood a percentage for handling it. It was, in fact, the beginning of Mark Twain's adventures as a publisher. Howells was not as happy in Florence as he had hoped to be. The social life there overwhelmed him. In February he wrote: "Our two months in Florence have been the most ridiculous time that ever even half-witted people passed. We have spent them in chasing round after people for whom we cared nothing, and being chased by them. My story isn't finished yet, and what part of it is done bears the fatal marks of haste and distraction. Of course, I haven't put pen to paper yet on the play. I wring my hands and beat my breast when I think of how these weeks have been wasted; and how I have been forced to waste them by the infernal social circumstances from which I couldn't escape." Clemens, now free from the burden of his own book, was light of heart and full of ideas and news; also of sympathy and appreciation. Howells's story of this time was "A Woman's Reason." Governor Jewell, of this letter, was Marshall Jewell, Governor of Connecticut from 1871 to 1873. Later, he was Minister to Russia, and in 1874 was United States Postmaster-General.

To W. D. Howells, in Florence:

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*Hartford*, March 1st, 1883. *My dear Howells*,—We got ourselves ground up in that same mill, once, in London, and another time in Paris. It is a kind of foretaste of hell. There is no way to avoid it except by the method which you have now chosen. One must live secretly and cut himself utterly off from the human race, or life in Europe becomes an unbearable burden and work an impossibility. I learned something last night, and maybe it may reconcile me to go to Europe again sometime. I attended one of the astonishingly popular lectures of a man by the name of Stoddard, who exhibits interesting stereopticon pictures and then knocks the interest all out of them with his comments upon them. But all the world go there to look and listen, and are apparently well satisfied. And they ought to be fully satisfied, if the lecturer would only keep still, or die in the first act. But he described how retired tradesmen and farmers in Holland load a lazy scow with the family and the household effects, and then loaf along the waterways of the low countries all the summer long, paying no visits, receiving none, and just lazying a heavenly life out in their own private unpestered society, and doing their literary work, if they have any, wholly uninterrupted. If you had hired such a boat and sent for us we should have a couple of satisfactory books ready for the press now with no marks of interruption, vexatious wearinesses, and other hellishnesses visible upon them anywhere. We shall have to do this another time. We have lost an opportunity for the present. Do you forget that Heaven is packed with a multitude of all nations and that these people are all on the most familiar how-the-hell-are-you footing with Talmage swinging around the circle to all eternity hugging the saints and patriarchs and archangels, and forcing you to do the same unless you choose to make yourself an object of remark if you refrain? Then why do you try to get to Heaven? Be warned in time.

We have all read your two opening numbers in the *Century*, and consider them almost beyond praise. I hear no dissent from this verdict. I did not know there was an untouched personage in American life, but I had forgotten the auctioneer. You have photographed him accurately.

I have been an utterly free person for a month or two; and I do not believe I ever so greatly appreciated and enjoyed—and realized the absence of the chains of slavery as I do this time. Usually my first waking thought in the morning is, “I have nothing to do to-day, I belong to nobody, I have ceased from being a slave.” Of course the highest pleasure to be got out of freedom, and having nothing to do, is labor. Therefore I labor. But I take my time about it. I work one hour or four as happens to suit my mind, and quit when I please. And so these days are days of entire enjoyment. I told Clark the other day, to jog along comfortable and not get in a sweat. I said I believed you would not be able to enjoy editing that library over there, where you have your own legitimate work to do and be pestered to death by society besides; therefore I thought if he got it ready for you against your return, that that would be best and pleasantest.

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You remember Governor Jewell, and the night he told about Russia, down in the library. He was taken with a cold about three weeks ago, and I stepped over one evening, proposing to beguile an idle hour for him with a yarn or two, but was received at the door with whispers, and the information that he was dying. His case had been dangerous during that day only and he died that night, two hours after I left. His taking off was a prodigious surprise, and his death has been most widely and sincerely regretted. Win. E. Dodge, the father-in-law of one of Jewell's daughters, dropped suddenly dead the day before Jewell died, but Jewell died without knowing that. Jewell's widow went down to New York, to Dodge's house, the day after Jewell's funeral, and was to return here day before yesterday, and she did—in a coffin. She fell dead, of heart disease, while her trunks were being packed for her return home. Florence Strong, one of Jewell's daughters, who lives in Detroit, started East on an urgent telegram, but missed a connection somewhere, and did not arrive here in time to see her father alive. She was his favorite child, and they had always been like lovers together. He always sent her a box of fresh flowers once a week to the day of his death; a custom which he never suspended even when he was in Russia. Mrs. Strong had only just reached her Western home again when she was summoned to Hartford to attend her mother's funeral.

I have had the impulse to write you several times. I shall try to remember better henceforth.

With sincerest regards to all of you,  
Yours as ever,

*Mark.*

Mark Twain made another trip to Canada in the interest of copyright —this time to protect the Mississippi book. When his journey was announced by the press, the Marquis of Lorne telegraphed an invitation inviting him to be his guest at Rideau Hall, in Ottawa. Clemens accepted, of course, and was handsomely entertained by the daughter of Queen Victoria and her husband, then Governor-General of Canada. On his return to Hartford he found that Osgood had issued a curious little book, for which Clemens had prepared an introduction. It was an absurd volume, though originally issued with serious intent, its title being *The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English.*—[*The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English*, by Pedro Caxolino, with an introduction by Mark Twain. Osgood, Boston, 1883.]—Evidently the “New Guide” was prepared by some simple Portuguese soul with but slight knowledge of English beyond that which could be obtained from a dictionary, and his literal translation of English idioms are often startling, as, for instance, this one, taken at random:

“A little learneds are happies enough for to may to satisfy their fancies on the literature.”

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Mark Twain thought this quaint book might amuse his royal hostess, and forwarded a copy in what he considered to be the safe and proper form.

To Col. De Winton, in Ottawa, Canada:

*Hartford*, June 4, '83. *Dear colonel de Winton*,—I very much want to send a little book to her Royal Highness—the famous Portuguese phrase book; but I do not know the etiquette of the matter, and I would not wittingly infringe any rule of propriety. It is a book which I perfectly well know will amuse her “some at most” if she has not seen it before, and will still amuse her “some at least,” even if she has inspected it a hundred times already. So I will send the book to you, and you who know all about the proper observances will protect me from indiscretion, in case of need, by putting the said book in the fire, and remaining as dumb as I generally was when I was up there. I do not rebind the thing, because that would look as if I thought it worth keeping, whereas it is only worth glancing at and casting aside.

Will you please present my compliments to Mrs. De Winton and Mrs. Mackenzie?—and I beg to make my sincere compliments to you, also, for your infinite kindnesses to me. I did have a delightful time up there, most certainly.

Truly yours

S. L. Clemens.

P. S. Although the introduction dates a year back, the book is only just now issued. A good long delay.

S. L. C.

Howells, writing from Venice, in April, manifested special interest in the play project: “Something that would run like Scheherazade, for a thousand and one nights,” so perhaps his book was going better. He proposed that they devote the month of October to the work, and inclosed a letter from Mallory, who owned not only a religious paper, *The Churchman*, but also the Madison Square Theater, and was anxious for a Howells play. Twenty years before Howells had been Consul to Venice, and he wrote, now: “The idea of my being here is benumbing and silencing. I feel like the Wandering Jew, or the ghost of the Cardiff giant.” He returned to America in July. Clemens sent him word of welcome, with glowing reports of his own undertakings. The story on which he was piling up *Ms.* was *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, begun seven years before at Quarry Farm. He had no great faith in it then, and though he had taken it up again in 1880, his interest had not lasted to its conclusion. This time, however, he was in the proper spirit, and the story would be finished.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, July 20, '83. *My dear Howells*,—We are desperately glad you and your gang are home again—may you never travel again, till you go aloft or alow. Charley Clark has gone to the other side for a run—will be back in August. He has been sick, and needed the trip very much.

## Page 104

Mrs. Clemens had a long and wasting spell of sickness last Spring, but she is pulling up, now. The children are booming, and my health is ridiculous, it's so robust, notwithstanding the newspaper misreports.

I haven't piled up *Ms* so in years as I have done since we came here to the farm three weeks and a half ago. Why, it's like old times, to step right into the study, damp from the breakfast table, and sail right in and sail right on, the whole day long, without thought of running short of stuff or words.

I wrote 4000 words to-day and I touch 3000 and upwards pretty often, and don't fall below 1600 any working day. And when I get fagged out, I lie abed a couple of days and read and smoke, and then go it again for 6 or 7 days. I have finished one small book, and am away along in a big 433 one that I half-finished two or three years ago. I expect to complete it in a month or six weeks or two months more. And I shall like it, whether anybody else does or not.

It's a kind of companion to Tom Sawyer. There's a raft episode from it in second or third chapter of life on the Mississippi.....

I'm booming, these days—got health and spirits to waste—got an overplus; and if I were at home, we would write a play. But we must do it anyhow by and by.

We stay here till Sep. 10; then maybe a week at Indian Neck for sea air, then home.

We are powerful glad you are all back; and send love according.

Yrs Ever  
Mark

To Onion Clemens and family, in Keokuk, Id.:

*Elmira*, July 22, '83.  
Private.

*Dear Ma and Orion and Mollie*,—I don't know that I have anything new to report, except that Livy is still gaining, and all the rest of us flourishing. I haven't had such booming working-days for many years. I am piling up manuscript in a really astonishing way. I believe I shall complete, in two months, a book which I have been fooling over for 7 years. This summer it is no more trouble to me to write than it is to lie.

Day before yesterday I felt slightly warned to knock off work for one day. So I did it, and took the open air. Then I struck an idea for the instruction of the children, and went to work and carried it out. It took me all day. I measured off 817 feet of the road-way in





our farm grounds, with a foot-rule, and then divided it up among the English reigns, from the Conqueror down to 1883, allowing one foot to the year. I whittled out a basket of little pegs and drove one in the ground at the beginning of each reign, and gave it that King's name—thus:

I measured all the reigns exactly as many feet to the reign as there were years in it. You can look out over the grounds and see the little pegs from the front door—some of them close together, like Richard II, Richard Cromwell, James II, &c; and some prodigiously wide apart, like Henry III, Edward III, George III, &c. It gives the children a realizing sense of the length or brevity of a reign. Shall invent a violent game to go with it.

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And in bed, last night, I invented a way to play it indoors—in a far more voluminous way, as to multiplicity of dates and events—on a cribbage board.

Hello, supper's ready.

Love to all.

Good bye.

SAML.

Onion Clemens would naturally get excited over the idea of the game and its commercial possibilities. Not more so than his brother, however, who presently employed him to arrange a quantity of historical data which the game was to teach. For a season, indeed, interest in the game became a sort of midsummer madness which pervaded the two households, at Keokuk and at Quarry Farm. Howells wrote his approval of the idea of "learning history by the running foot," which was a pun, even if unintentional, for in its out-door form it was a game of speed as well as knowledge.

Howells adds that he has noticed that the newspapers are exploiting Mark Twain's new invention of a history game, and we shall presently see how this happened.

Also, in this letter, Howells speaks of an English nobleman to whom he has given a letter of introduction. "He seemed a simple, quiet, gentlemanly man, with a good taste in literature, which he evinced by going about with my books in his pockets, and talking of yours."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*My dear Howells,*—How odd it seems, to sit down to write a letter with the feeling that you've got time to do it. But I'm done work, for this season, and so have got time. I've done two seasons' work in one, and haven't anything left to do, now, but revise. I've written eight or nine hundred *Ms* pages in such a brief space of time that I mustn't name the number of days; I shouldn't believe it myself, and of course couldn't expect you to. I used to restrict myself to 4 or 5 hours a day and 5 days in the week, but this time I've wrought from breakfast till 5.15 p.m. six days in the week; and once or twice I smouched a Sunday when the boss wasn't looking. Nothing is half so good as literature hooked on Sunday, on the sly.

I wrote you and Twichell on the same night, about the game, and was appalled to get a note from him saying he was going to print part of my letter, and was going to do it before I could get a chance to forbid it. I telegraphed him, but was of course too late.

If you haven't ever tried to invent an indoor historical game, don't. I've got the thing at last so it will work, I guess, but I don't want any more tasks of that kind. When I wrote you, I thought I had it; whereas I was only merely entering upon the initiatory difficulties

of it. I might have known it wouldn't be an easy job, or somebody would have invented a decent historical game long ago—a thing which nobody had done. I think I've got it in pretty fair shape—so I have caveated it.

Earl of Onston—is that it? All right, we shall be very glad to receive them and get acquainted with them. And much obliged to you, too. There's plenty of worse people than the nobilities. I went up and spent a week with the Marquis and the Princess Louise, and had as good a time as I want.



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I'm powerful glad you are all back again; and we will come up there if our little tribe will give us the necessary furlough; and if we can't get it, you folks must come to us and give us an extension of time. We get home Sept. 11.

Hello, I think I see Waring coming!

Good-by-letter from Clark, which explains for him.

Love to you all from the  
*Clemenses.*

No—it wasn't Waring. I wonder what the devil has become of that man. He was to spend to-day with us, and the day's most gone, now.

We are enjoying your story with our usual unspeakableness; and I'm right glad you threw in the shipwreck and the mystery—I like it. Mrs. Crane thinks it's the best story you've written yet. We—but we always think the last one is the best. And why shouldn't it be? Practice helps.

P. S. I thought I had sent all our loves to all of you, but Mrs. Clemens says I haven't. Damn it, a body can't think of everything; but a woman thinks you can. I better seal this, now—else there'll be more criticism.

I perceive I haven't got the love in, yet. Well, we do send the love of all the family to all the Howellses.

S. L. C.

There had been some delay and postponement in the matter of the play which Howells and Clemens agreed to write. They did not put in the entire month of October as they had planned, but they did put in a portion of that month, the latter half, working out their old idea. In the end it became a revival of Colonel Sellers, or rather a caricature of that gentle hearted old visionary. Clemens had always complained that the actor Raymond had never brought out the finer shades of Colonel Sellers's character, but Raymond in his worst performance never belied his original as did Howells and Clemens in his dramatic revival. These two, working together, let their imaginations run riot with disastrous results. The reader can judge something of this himself, from *The American Claimant* the book which Mark Twain would later build from the play.

But at this time they thought it a great triumph. They had "cracked their sides" laughing over its construction, as Howells once said, and they thought the world would do the same over its performance. They decided to offer it to Raymond, but rather haughtily, indifferently, because any number of other actors would be waiting for it.

But this was a miscalculation. Raymond now turned the tables. Though favorable to the idea of a new play, he declared this one did not present his old Sellers at all, but a

lunatic. In the end he returned the *Ms.* with a brief note. Attempts had already been made to interest other actors, and would continue for some time.

## XXIV

*Letters, 1884, to Howells and others. Cable's great April fool. "Huck Finn" In press. Mark twain for Cleveland. Clemens and cable*

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Mark Twain had a lingering attack of the dramatic fever that winter. He made a play of the Prince and Pauper, which Howells pronounced "too thin and slight and not half long enough." He made another of Tom Sawyer, and probably destroyed it, for no trace of the *Ms.* exists to-day. Howells could not join in these ventures, for he was otherwise occupied and had sickness in his household.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Jan. 7, '84. *My dear Howells*,—"O my goodn's", as Jean says. You have now encountered at last the heaviest calamity that can befall an author. The scarlet fever, once domesticated, is a permanent member of the family. Money may desert you, friends forsake you, enemies grow indifferent to you, but the scarlet fever will be true to you, through thick and thin, till you be all saved or damned, down to the last one. I say these things to cheer you.

The bare suggestion of scarlet fever in the family makes me shudder; I believe I would almost rather have Osgood publish a book for me.

You folks have our most sincere sympathy. Oh, the intrusion of this hideous disease is an unspeakable disaster.

My billiard table is stacked up with books relating to the Sandwich Islands: the walls are upholstered with scraps of paper penciled with notes drawn from them. I have saturated myself with knowledge of that unimaginably beautiful land and that most strange and fascinating people. And I have begun a story. Its hidden motive will illustrate a but-little considered fact in human nature; that the religious folly you are born in you will die in, no matter what apparently reasonabler religious folly may seem to have taken its place meanwhile, and abolished and obliterated it. I start Bill Ragsdale at 12 years of age, and the heroine at 4, in the midst of the ancient idolatrous system, with its picturesque and amazing customs and superstitions, 3 months before the arrival of the missionaries and the erection of a shallow Christianity upon the ruins of the old paganism. Then these two will become educated Christians, and highly civilized.

And then I will jump 15 years, and do Ragsdale's leper business. When we came to dramatize, we can draw a deal of matter from the story, all ready to our hand.

Yrs Ever  
*Mark.*

He never finished the Sandwich Islands story which he and Howells were to dramatize later. His head filled up with other projects, such as publishing plans, reading-tours, and the like. The type-setting machine does not appear in the letters of this period, but it was an important factor, nevertheless. It was costing several thousand dollars a month for construction and becoming a heavy drain on Mark Twain's finances. It was

necessary to recuperate, and the anxiety for a profitable play, or some other adventure that would bring a quick

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and generous return, grew out of this need. Clemens had established Charles L. Webster, his nephew by marriage, in a New York office, as selling agent for the Mississippi book and for his plays. He was also planning to let Webster publish the new book, Huck Finn.

George W. Cable had proven his ability as a reader, and Clemens saw possibilities in a reading combination, which was first planned to include Aldrich, and Howells, and a private car.

But Aldrich and Howells did not warm to the idea, and the car was eliminated from the plan. Cable came to visit Clemens in Hartford, and was taken with the mumps, so that the reading-trip was postponed. The fortunes of the Sellers play were most uncertain and becoming daily more doubtful. In February, Howells wrote: "If you have got any comfort in regard to our play I wish you would heave it into my bosom." Cable recovered in time, and out of gratitude planned a great April-fool surprise for his host. He was a systematic man, and did it in his usual thorough way. He sent a "private and confidential" suggestion to a hundred and fifty of Mark Twain's friends and admirers, nearly all distinguished literary men. The suggestion was that each one of them should send a request for Mark Twain's autograph, timing it so that it would arrive on the 1st of April. All seemed to have responded. Mark Twain's writing-table on April Fool morning was heaped with letters, asking in every ridiculous fashion for his "valuable autograph." The one from Aldrich was a fair sample. He wrote: "I am making a collection of autographs of our distinguished writers, and having read one of your works, Gabriel Convoy, I would like to add your name to the list." Of course, the joke in this was that Gabriel Convoy was by Bret Harte, who by this time was thoroughly detested by Mark Twain. The first one or two of the letters puzzled the victim; then he comprehended the size and character of the joke and entered into it thoroughly. One of the letters was from Bloodgood H. Cutter, the "Poet Lariat" of *Innocents Abroad*. Cutter, of course, wrote in "poetry," that is to say, doggerel. Mark Twain's April Fool was a most pleasant one.

Rhymed letter by Bloodgood H. Cutter to Mark Twain:

*Littleneck, long island.*

*Long island farmer, to his friend and Pilgrim brother,  
Samuel L. Clemens, Esq.*

Friends, suggest in each one's behalf  
To write, and ask your autograph.  
To refuse that, I will not do,  
After the long voyage had with you.



That was a memorable time You wrote in prose, I wrote in Rhyme To  
describe the wonders of each place, And the queer customs of each race.

That is in my memory yet  
For while I live I'll not forget.  
I often think of that affair  
And the many that were with us there.

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As your friends think it for the best  
I ask your Autograph with the rest,  
Hoping you will it to me send  
'Twill please and cheer your dear old friend:

Yours truly,  
*Bloodgood H. Cutter.*

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford, Apl 8, '84. My dear Howells,* It took my breath away, and I haven't recovered it yet, entirely—I mean the generosity of your proposal to read the proofs of *Huck Finn*.

Now if you mean it, old man—if you are in earnest—proceed, in God's name, and be by me forever blest. I cannot conceive of a rational man deliberately piling such an atrocious job upon himself; but if there is such a man and you be that man, why then pile it on. It will cost me a pang every time I think of it, but this anguish will be eingebusst to me in the joy and comfort I shall get out of the not having to read the verfluchtete proofs myself. But if you have repented of your augenblichlicher Tobsucht and got back to calm cold reason again, I won't hold you to it unless I find I have got you down in writing somewhere. Herr, I would not read the proof of one of my books for any fair and reasonable sum whatever, if I could get out of it.

The proof-reading on the P & P cost me the last rags of my religion.  
M.

Howells had written that he would be glad to help out in the reading of the proofs of *Huck Finn*, which book Webster by this time had in hand. Replying to Clemens's eager and grateful acceptance now, he wrote: "It is all perfectly true about the generosity, unless I am going to read your proofs from one of the shabby motives which I always find at the bottom of my soul if I examine it." A characteristic utterance, though we may be permitted to believe that his shabby motives were fewer and less shabby than those of mankind in general.

The proofs which Howells was reading pleased him mightily. Once, during the summer, he wrote: "if I had written half as good a book as *Huck Finn* I shouldn't ask anything better than to read the proofs; even as it is, I don't, so send them on; they will always find me somewhere."

This was the summer of the Blaine-Cleveland campaign. Mark Twain, in company with many other leading men, had mugwumped, and was supporting Cleveland. From the next letter we gather something of the aspects of that memorable campaign, which was one of scandal and vituperation. We learn, too, that the young sculptor, Karl Gerhardt,

having completed a three years' study in Paris, had returned to America a qualified artist.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Aug. 21, '84. *My dear Howells*,—This presidential campaign is too delicious for anything. Isn't human nature the most consummate sham and lie that was ever invented? Isn't man a creature to be ashamed of in pretty much all his aspects? Man, "know thyself"—and then thou wilt despise thyself, to a dead moral certainty. Take three quite good specimens—Hawley, Warner, and Charley Clark. Even I do not loathe Blaine more than they do; yet Hawley is howling for Blaine, Warner and Clark are eating their daily crow in the paper for him, and all three will vote for him. O Stultification, where is thy sting, O slave where is thy hickory!

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I suppose you heard how a marble monument for which St. Gaudens was pecuniarily responsible, burned down in Hartford the other day, uninsured—for who in the world would ever think of insuring a marble shaft in a cemetery against a fire?—and left St. Gauden out of pocket \$15,000.

It was a bad day for artists. Gerhardt finished my bust that day, and the work was pronounced admirable by all the kin and friends; but in putting it in plaster (or rather taking it out) next day it got ruined. It was four or five weeks hard work gone to the dogs. The news flew, and everybody on the farm flocked to the arbor and grouped themselves about the wreck in a profound and moving silence—the farm-help, the colored servants, the German nurse, the children, everybody—a silence interrupted at wide intervals by absent-minded ejaculations wising from unconscious breasts as the whole size of the disaster gradually worked its way home to the realization of one spirit after another.

Some burst out with one thing, some another; the German nurse put up her hands and said, “Oh, Schade! oh, schrecklich! “But Gerhardt said nothing; or almost that. He couldn’t word it, I suppose. But he went to work, and by dark had everything thoroughly well under way for a fresh start in the morning; and in three days’ time had built a new bust which was a trifle better than the old one—and to-morrow we shall put the finishing touches on it, and it will be about as good a one as nearly anybody can make.

Yrs Ever

Mark.

If you run across anybody who wants a bust, be sure and recommend Gerhardt on my say-so.

But Howells was determinedly for Blaine. “I shall vote for Blaine,” he replied. “I do not believe he is guilty of the things they accuse him of, and I know they are not proved against him. As for Cleveland, his private life may be no worse than that of most men, but as an enemy of that contemptible, hypocritical, lop-sided morality which says a woman shall suffer all the shame of unchastity and man none, I want to see him destroyed politically by his past. The men who defend him would take their wives to the White House if he were president, but if he married his concubine—’made her an honest woman’ they would not go near him. I can’t stand that.”

Certainly this was sound logic, in that day, at least. But it left Clemens far from satisfied.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira*, Sept. 17, '84. *My dear Howells*,—Somehow I can't seem to rest quiet under the idea of your voting for Blaine. I believe you said something about the country and the party. Certainly allegiance to these is well; but as certainly a man's first duty is to his own conscience and honor—the party or the country come second to that, and never

first. I don't ask you to vote at all—I only urge you to not soil yourself by voting for Blaine.

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When you wrote before, you were able to say the charges against him were not proven. But you know now that they are proven, and it seems to me that that bars you and all other honest and honorable men (who are independently situated) from voting for him.

It is not necessary to vote for Cleveland; the only necessary thing to do, as I understand it, is that a man shall keep himself clean, (by withholding his vote for an improper man) even though the party and the country go to destruction in consequence. It is not parties that make or save countries or that build them to greatness—it is clean men, clean ordinary citizens, rank and file, the masses. Clean masses are not made by individuals standing back till the rest become clean.

As I said before, I think a man's first duty is to his own honor; not to his country and not to his party. Don't be offended; I mean no offence. I am not so concerned about the rest of the nation, but—well, good-bye.

Ys Ever

*Mark.*

There does not appear to be any further discussion of the matter between Howells and Clemens. Their letters for a time contained no suggestion of politics.

Perhaps Mark Twain's own political conscience was not entirely clear in his repudiation of his party; at least we may believe from his next letter that his Cleveland enthusiasm was qualified by a willingness to support a Republican who would command his admiration and honor. The idea of an eleventh-hour nomination was rather startling, whatever its motive.

To Mr. Pierce, in Boston:

*Hartford, Oct. 22, '84. My dear Mr. Pierce,*—You know, as well as I do, that the reason the majority of republicans are going to vote for Blaine is because they feel that they cannot help themselves. Do not you believe that if Mr. Edmunds would consent to run for President, on the Independent ticket—even at this late day—he might be elected?

Well, if he wouldn't consent, but should even strenuously protest and say he wouldn't serve if elected, isn't it still wise and fair to nominate him and vote for him? since his protest would relieve him from all responsibility; and he couldn't surely find fault with people for forcing a compliment upon him. And do not you believe that his name thus compulsorily placed at the head of the Independent column would work absolutely certain defeat to Blain and save the country's honor?

Politicians often carry a victory by springing some disgraceful and rascally mine under the feet of the adversary at the eleventh hour; would it not be wholesome to vary this



thing for once and spring as formidable a mine of a better sort under the enemy's works?

If Edmunds's name were put up, I would vote for him in the teeth of all the protesting and blaspheming he could do in a month; and there are lots of others who would do likewise.

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If this notion is not a foolish and wicked one, won't you just consult with some chief Independents, and see if they won't call a sudden convention and whoop the thing through? To nominate Edmunds the 1st of November, would be soon enough, wouldn't it?

With kindest regards to you and the Aldriches,  
Yr Truly  
S. L. Clemens.

Clemens and Cable set out on their reading-tour in November. They were a curiously-assorted pair: Cable was of orthodox religion, exact as to habits, neat, prim, all that Clemens was not. In the beginning Cable undertook to read the Bible aloud to Clemens each evening, but this part of the day's program was presently omitted by request. If they spent Sunday in a town, Cable was up bright and early visiting the various churches and Sunday-schools, while Mark Twain remained at the hotel, in bed, reading or asleep.

## XXV

*The great year of 1885. Clemens and cable. Publication of "Huck Finn." The grant memoirs. Mark twain at fifty*

The year 1885 was in some respects the most important, certainly the most pleasantly exciting, in Mark Twain's life. It was the year in which he entered fully into the publishing business and launched one of the most spectacular of all publishing adventures, The Personal Memoirs of General U. S. Grant. Clemens had not intended to do general publishing when he arranged with Webster to become sales-agent for the Mississippi book, and later general agent for Huck Finn's adventures; he had intended only to handle his own books, because he was pretty thoroughly dissatisfied with other publishing arrangements. Even the Library of Humor, which Howells, with Clark, of the Courant, had put together for him, he left with Osgood until that publisher failed, during the spring of 1885. Certainly he never dreamed of undertaking anything of the proportions of the Grant book. He had always believed that Grant could make a book. More than once, when they had met, he had urged the General to prepare his memoirs for publication. Howells, in his 'My Mark Twain', tells of going with Clemens to see Grant, then a member of the ill-fated firm of Grant and Ward, and how they lunched on beans, bacon and coffee brought in from a near-by restaurant. It was while they were eating this soldier fare that Clemens—very likely abetted by Howells—especially urged the great commander to prepare his memoirs. But Grant had become a financier, as he believed, and the prospect of literary earnings, however large, did not appeal to him. Furthermore, he was convinced that he was without literary ability and that a book by him would prove a failure.



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But then, by and by, came a failure more disastrous than anything he had foreseen—the downfall of his firm through the Napoleonic rascality of Ward. General Grant was utterly ruined; he was left without income and apparently without the means of earning one. It was the period when the great War Series was appeasing in the Century Magazine. General Grant, hard-pressed, was induced by the editors to prepare one or more articles, and, finding that he could write them, became interested in the idea of a book. It is unnecessary to repeat here the story of how the publication of this important work passed into the hands of Mark Twain; that is to say, the firm of Charles L. Webster & Co., the details having been fully given elsewhere.—[See Mark Twain: A Biography, chap. cliv.]—We will now return for the moment to other matters, as reported in order by the letters. Clemens and Cable had continued their reading-tour into Canada, and in February found themselves in Montreal. Here they were invited by the Toque Bleue Snow-shoe Club to join in one of their weekly excursions across Mt. Royal. They could not go, and the reasons given by Mark Twain are not without interest. The letter is to Mr. George Iles, author of *Flame*, *Electricity*, and the *Camera*, and many other useful works.

To George Iles, far the Toque Blew Snow-shoe Club,  
Montreal:

*Detroit*, February 12, 1885.

Midnight, P.S.

*My dear Iles*,—I got your other telegram a while ago, and answered it, explaining that I get only a couple of hours in the middle of the day for social life. I know it doesn't seem rational that a man should have to lie abed all day in order to be rested and equipped for talking an hour at night, and yet in my case and Cable's it is so. Unless I get a great deal of rest, a ghastly dulness settles down upon me on the platform, and turns my performance into work, and hard work, whereas it ought always to be pastime, recreation, solid enjoyment. Usually it is just this latter, but that is because I take my rest faithfully, and prepare myself to do my duty by my audience.

I am the obliged and appreciative servant of my brethren of the Snow-shoe Club, and nothing in the world would delight me more than to come to their house without naming time or terms on my own part—but you see how it is. My cast iron duty is to my audience—it leaves me no liberty and no option.

With kindest regards to the Club, and to you,

I am Sincerely yours

S. L. Clemens.

In the next letter we reach the end of the Clemens-Cable venture and get a characteristic summing up of Mark Twain's general attitude toward the companion of his travels. It must be read only in the clear realization of Mark Twain's attitude toward

orthodoxy, and his habit of humor. Cable was as rigidly orthodox as Mark Twain was revolutionary. The two were never anything but the best of friends.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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PHILADA. Feb. 27, '85. *My dear Howells*,—To-night in Baltimore, to-morrow afternoon and night in Washington, and my four-months platform campaign is ended at last. It has been a curious experience. It has taught me that Cable's gifts of mind are greater and higher than I had suspected. But—

That "But" is pointing toward his religion. You will never, never know, never divine, guess, imagine, how loathsome a thing the Christian religion can be made until you come to know and study Cable daily and hourly. Mind you, I like him; he is pleasant company; I rage and swear at him sometimes, but we do not quarrel; we get along mighty happily together; but in him and his person I have learned to hate all religions. He has taught me to abhor and detest the Sabbath-day and hunt up new and troublesome ways to dishonor it.

Nat Goodwin was on the train yesterday. He plays in Washington all the coming week. He is very anxious to get our Sellers play and play it under changed names. I said the only thing I could do would be to write to you. Well, I've done it.

Ys Ever

*Mark.*

Clemens and Webster were often at the house of General Grant during these early days of 1885, and it must have been Webster who was present with Clemens on the great occasion described in the following telegram. It was on the last day and hour of President Arthur's administration that the bill was passed which placed Ulysses S. Grant as full General with full pay on the retired list, and it is said that the congressional clock was set back in order that this enactment might become a law before the administration changed. General Grant had by this time developed cancer and was already in feeble health.

Telegram to Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

*New York*, Mar. 4, 1885. To *Mrs. S. L. Clemens*, We were at General Grant's at noon and a telegram arrived that the last act of the expiring congress late this morning retired him with full General's rank and accompanying emoluments. The effect upon him was like raising the dead. We were present when the telegram was put in his hand.

*S. L. Clemens.*

Something has been mentioned before of Mark Twain's investments and the generally unprofitable habit of them. He had a trusting nature, and was usually willing to invest money on any plausible recommendation. He was one of thousands such, and being a person of distinction he now and then received letters of inquiry, complaint, or condolence. A minister wrote him that he had bought some stocks recommended by a Hartford banker and advertised in a religious paper. He added, "After I made that

purchase they wrote me that you had just bought a hundred shares and that you were a 'shrewd' man." The writer closed by asking for further information. He received it, as follows:

To the Rev. J——, in Baltimore:

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Washington, Mch. 2, '85.

*My dear sir,*—I take my earliest opportunity to answer your favor of Feb.

B—— was premature in calling me a “shrewd man.” I wasn’t one at that time, but am one now—that is, I am at least too shrewd to ever again invest in anything put on the market by B——. I know nothing whatever about the Bank Note Co., and never did know anything about it. B—— sold me about \$4,000 or \$5,000 worth of the stock at \$110, and I own it yet. He sold me \$10,000 worth of another rose-tinted stock about the same time. I have got that yet, also. I judge that a peculiarity of B——’s stocks is that they are of the staying kind. I think you should have asked somebody else whether I was a shrewd man or not for two reasons: the stock was advertised in a religious paper, a circumstance which was very suspicious; and the compliment came to you from a man who was interested to make a purchaser of you. I am afraid you deserve your loss. A financial scheme advertised in any religious paper is a thing which any living person ought to know enough to avoid; and when the factor is added that M. runs that religious paper, a dead person ought to know enough to avoid it.

Very Truly Yours  
S. L. Clemens.

The story of Huck Finn was having a wide success. Webster handled it skillfully, and the sales were large. In almost every quarter its welcome was enthusiastic. Here and there, however, could be found an exception; Huck’s morals were not always approved of by library reading-committees. The first instance of this kind was reported from Concord; and would seem not to have depressed the author-publisher.

To Chas. L. Webster, in New York:

Mch 18, '85. *Dear Charley,*—The Committee of the Public Library of Concord, Mass, have given us a rattling tip-top puff which will go into every paper in the country. They have expelled Huck from their library as “trash and suitable only for the slums.” That will sell 25,000 copies for us sure.

S. L. C.

Perhaps the Concord Free Trade Club had some idea of making amends to Mark Twain for the slight put upon his book by their librarians, for immediately after the Huck Finn incident they notified him of his election to honorary membership. Those were the days of “authors’ readings,” and Clemens and Howells not infrequently assisted at these functions, usually given as benefits of one kind or another. From the next letter, written following an entertainment given for the Longfellow memorial, we gather that Mark Twain’s opinion of Howells’s reading was steadily improving.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

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*Hartford, May 5, '85.*

*My dear Howells*,--.....Who taught you to read? Observation and thought, I guess. And practice at the Tavern Club?—yes; and that was the best teaching of all:

Well, you sent even your daintiest and most delicate and fleeting points home to that audience—absolute proof of good reading. But you couldn't read worth a damn a few years ago. I do not say this to flatter. It is true I looked around for you when I was leaving, but you had already gone.

Alas, Osgood has failed at last. It was easy to see that he was on the very verge of it a year ago, and it was also easy to see that he was still on the verge of it a month or two ago; but I continued to hope—but not expect that he would pull through. The Library of Humor is at his dwelling house, and he will hand it to you whenever you want it.

To save it from any possibility of getting mixed up in the failure, perhaps you had better send down and get it. I told him, the other day, that an order of any kind from you would be his sufficient warrant for its delivery to you.

In two days General Grant has dictated 50 pages of foolscap, and thus the Wilderness and Appomattox stand for all time in his own words. This makes the second volume of his book as valuable as the first.

He looks mighty well, these latter days.

Yrs Ever

*Mark.*

"I am exceedingly glad," wrote Howells, "that you approve of my reading, for it gives me some hope that I may do something on the platform next winter..... but I would never read within a hundred miles of you, if I could help it. You simply straddled down to the footlights and took that house up in the hollow of your hand and tickled it."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Elmira, July 21, 1885.*

*My dear Howells*,—You are really my only author; I am restricted to you, I wouldn't give a damn for the rest.

I bored through *Middlemarch* during the past week, with its labored and tedious analyses of feelings and motives, its paltry and tiresome people, its unexciting and uninteresting story, and its frequent blinding flashes of single-sentence poetry, philosophy, wit, and what not, and nearly died from the overwork. I wouldn't read

another of those books for a farm. I did try to read one other—Daniel Deronda. I dragged through three chapters, losing flesh all the time, and then was honest enough to quit, and confess to myself that I haven't any romance literature appetite, as far as I can see, except for your books.

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But what I started to say, was, that I have just read Part II of Indian Summer, and to my mind there isn't a waste line in it, or one that could be improved. I read it yesterday, ending with that opinion; and read it again to-day, ending with the same opinion emphasized. I haven't read Part I yet, because that number must have reached Hartford after we left; but we are going to send down town for a copy, and when it comes I am to read both parts aloud to the family. It is a beautiful story, and makes a body laugh all the time, and cry inside, and feel so old and so forlorn; and gives him gracious glimpses of his lost youth that fill him with a measureless regret, and build up in him a cloudy sense of his having been a prince, once, in some enchanted far-off land, and of being an exile now, and desolate—and Lord, no chance ever to get back there again! That is the thing that hurts. Well, you have done it with marvelous facility and you make all the motives and feelings perfectly clear without analyzing the guts out of them, the way George Eliot does. I can't stand George Eliot and Hawthorne and those people; I see what they are at a hundred years before they get to it and they just tire me to death. And as for "The Bostonians," I would rather be damned to John Bunyan's heaven than read that.

Yrs Ever

*Mark*

It is as easy to understand Mark Twain's enjoyment of Indian Summer as his revolt against Daniel Deronda and The Bostonians. He cared little for writing that did not convey its purpose in the simplest and most direct terms. It is interesting to note that in thanking Clemens for his compliment Howells wrote: "What people cannot see is that I analyze as little as possible; they go on talking about the analytical school, which I am supposed to belong to, and I want to thank you for using your eyes..... Did you ever read De Foe's 'Roxana'? If not, then read it, not merely for some of the deepest insights into the lying, suffering, sinning, well-meaning human soul, but for the best and most natural English that a book was ever written in." General Grant worked steadily on his book, dictating when he could, making brief notes on slips of paper when he could no longer speak. Clemens visited him at Mt. McGregor and brought the dying soldier the comforting news that enough of his books were already sold to provide generously for his family, and that the sales would aggregate at least twice as much by the end of the year. This was some time in July. On the 23d of that month General Grant died. Immediately there was a newspaper discussion as to the most suitable place for the great chieftain to lie. Mark Twain's contribution to this debate, though in the form of an open letter, seems worthy of preservation here.

To the New York "Sun," on the proper place for Grant's Tomb:



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To *the editor op' the sun*:—*Sir*,—The newspaper atmosphere is charged with objections to New York as a place of sepulchre for General Grant, and the objectors are strenuous that Washington is the right place. They offer good reasons—good temporary reasons—for both of these positions.

But it seems to me that temporary reasons are not mete for the occasion. We need to consider posterity rather than our own generation. We should select a grave which will not merely be in the right place now, but will still be in the right place 500 years from now.

How does Washington promise as to that? You have only to hit it in one place to kill it. Some day the west will be numerically strong enough to move the seat of government; her past attempts are a fair warning that when the day comes she will do it. Then the city of Washington will lose its consequence and pass out of the public view and public talk. It is quite within the possibilities that, a century hence, people would wonder and say, "How did your predecessors come to bury their great dead in this deserted place?"

But as long as American civilisation lasts New York will last. I cannot but think she has been well and wisely chosen as the guardian of a grave which is destined to become almost the most conspicuous in the world's history. Twenty centuries from now New York will still be New York, still a vast city, and the most notable object in it will still be the tomb and monument of General Grant.

I observe that the common and strongest objection to New York is that she is not "national ground." Let us give ourselves no uneasiness about that. Wherever General Grant's body lies, that is national ground.

S. L. Clemens.  
*Elmira*, July 27.

The letter that follows is very long, but it seems too important and too interesting to be omitted in any part. General Grant's early indulgence in liquors had long been a matter of wide, though not very definite, knowledge. Every one had heard how Lincoln, on being told that Grant drank, remarked something to the effect that he would like to know what kind of whisky Grant used so that he might get some of it for his other generals. Henry Ward Beecher, selected to deliver a eulogy on the dead soldier, and doubtless wishing neither to ignore the matter nor to make too much of it, naturally turned for information to the publisher of Grant's own memoirs, hoping from an advance copy to obtain light.

To Henry Ward Beecher,.Brooklyn:



*Elmira*, N. Y. Sept. 11, '85. *My dear Mr. Beecher*,—My nephew Webster is in Europe making contracts for the Memoirs. Before he sailed he came to me with a writing, directed to the printers and binders, to this effect:

“Honor no order for a sight or copy of the Memoirs while I am absent, even though it be signed by Mr. Clemens himself.”

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I gave my permission. There were weighty reasons why I should not only give my permission, but hold it a matter of honor to not dissolve the order or modify it at any time. So I did all of that—said the order should stand undisturbed to the end. If a principal could dissolve his promise as innocently as he can dissolve his written order unguarded by his promise, I would send you a copy of the Memoirs instantly. I did not foresee you, or I would have made an exception.

.....

My idea gained from army men, is that the drunkenness (and sometimes pretty reckless spreeing, nights,) ceased before he came East to be Lt. General. (Refer especially to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin—[If you could see Franklin and talk with him—then he would unbosom,]) It was while Grant was still in the West that Mr. Lincoln said he wished he could find out what brand of whisky that fellow used, so he could furnish it to some of the other generals. Franklin saw Grant tumble from his horse drunk, while reviewing troops in New Orleans. The fall gave him a good deal of a hurt. He was then on the point of leaving for the Chattanooga region. I naturally put “that and that together” when I read Gen. O. O. Howards’s article in the Christian Union, three or four weeks ago—where he mentions that the new General arrived lame from a recent accident. (See that article.) And why not write Howard?

Franklin spoke positively of the frequent spreeing. In camp—in time of war.

.....

Captain Grant was frequently threatened by the Commandant of his Oregon post with a report to the War Department of his conduct unless he modified his intemperance. The report would mean dismissal from the service. At last the report had to be made out; and then, so greatly was the captain beloved, that he was privately informed, and was thus enabled to rush his resignation to Washington ahead of the report. Did the report go, nevertheless? I don’t know. If it did, it is in the War Department now, possibly, and seeable. I got all this from a regular army man, but I can’t name him to save me.

The only time General Grant ever mentioned liquor to me was about last April or possibly May. He said:

“If I could only build up my strength! The doctors urge whisky and champagne; but I can’t take them; I can’t abide the taste of any kind of liquor.”



Had he made a conquest so complete that even the taste of liquor was become an offense? Or was he so sore over what had been said about his habit that he wanted to persuade others and likewise himself that he hadn't even ever had any taste for it? It sounded like the latter, but that's no evidence.

He told me in the fall of '84 that there was something the matter with his throat, and that at the suggestion of his physicians he had reduced his smoking to one cigar a day. Then he added, in a casual fashion, that he didn't care for that one, and seldom smoked it.

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I could understand that feeling. He had set out to conquer not the habit but the inclination—the desire. He had gone at the root, not the trunk. It's the perfect way and the only true way (I speak from experience.) How I do hate those enemies of the human race who go around enslaving God's free people with pledges—to quit drinking instead of to quit wanting to drink.

But Sherman and Van Vliet know everything concerning Grant; and if you tell them how you want to use the facts, both of them will testify. Regular army men have no concealments about each other; and yet they make their awful statements without shade or color or malice with a frankness and a child-like naivety, indeed, which is enchanting-and stupefying. West Point seems to teach them that, among other priceless things not to be got in any other college in this world. If we talked about our guild-mates as I have heard Sherman, Grant, Van Vliet and others talk about theirs—mates with whom they were on the best possible terms—we could never expect them to speak to us again.

.....

I am reminded, now, of another matter. The day of the funeral I sat an hour over a single drink and several cigars with Van Vliet and Sherman and Senator Sherman; and among other things Gen. Sherman said, with impatient scorn:

“The idea of all this nonsense about Grant not being able to stand rude language and indelicate stories! Why Grant was full of humor, and full of the appreciation of it. I have sat with him by the hour listening to Jim Nye's yarns, and I reckon you know the style of Jim Nye's histories, Clemens. It makes me sick—that newspaper nonsense. Grant was no namby-pamby fool, he was a man—all over—rounded and complete.”

I wish I had thought of it! I would have said to General Grant: “Put the drunkenness in the Memoirs—and the repentance and reform. Trust the people.”

But I will wager there is not a hint in the book. He was sore, there. As much of the book as I have read gives no hint, as far as I recollect.

The sick-room brought out the points of Gen. Grant's character—some of them particularly, to wit:

His patience; his indestructible equability of temper; his exceeding gentleness, kindness, forbearance, lovingness, charity; his loyalty: to friends, to convictions, to promises, half-promises, infinitesimal fractions and shadows of promises; (There was a requirement of him which I considered an atrocity, an injustice, an outrage; I wanted to implore him to repudiate it; Fred Grant said, “Save your labor, I know him; he is in doubt

as to whether he made that half-promise or not—and, he will give the thing the benefit of the doubt; he will fulfill that half-promise or kill himself trying;" Fred Grant was right—he did fulfill it;) his aggravatingly trustful nature; his genuineness, simplicity, modesty, diffidence, self-depreciation, poverty in the quality of vanity-and,

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in no contradiction of this last, his simple pleasure in the flowers and general ruck sent to him by Tom, Dick and Harry from everywhere—a pleasure that suggested a perennial surprise that he should be the object of so much fine attention—he was the most lovable great child in the world; (I mentioned his loyalty: you remember Harrison, the colored body-servant? the whole family hated him, but that did not make any difference, the General always stood at his back, wouldn't allow him to be scolded; always excused his failures and deficiencies with the one unvarying formula, "We are responsible for these things in his race—it is not fair to visit our fault upon them —let him alone;" so they did let him alone, under compulsion, until the great heart that was his shield was taken away; then—well they simply couldn't stand him, and so they were excusable for determining to discharge him—a thing which they mortally hated to do, and by lucky accident were saved from the necessity of doing;) his toughness as a bargainer when doing business for other people or for his country (witness his "terms" at Donelson, Vicksburg, *etc.*; Fred Grant told me his father wound up an estate for the widow and orphans of a friend in St. Louis—it took several years; at the end every complication had been straightened out, and the property put upon a prosperous basis; great sums had passed through his hands, and when he handed over the papers there were vouchers to show what had been done with every penny) and his trusting, easy, unexact fashion when doing business for himself (at that same time he was paying out money in dribbles to a man who was running his farm for him—and in his first Presidency he paid every one of those dribbles again (total, \$3,000 F. said,) for he hadn't a scrap of paper to show that he had ever paid them before; in his dealings with me he would not listen to terms which would place my money at risk and leave him protected—the thought plainly gave him pain, and he put it from him, waved it off with his hands, as one does accounts of crushings and mutilations—wouldn't listen, changed the subject;) and his fortitude! He was under, sentence of death last spring; he sat thinking, musing, several days—nobody knows what about; then he pulled himself together and set to work to finish that book, a colossal task for a dying man. Presently his hand gave out; fate seemed to have got him checkmated. Dictation was suggested. No, he never could do that; had never tried it; too old to learn, now. By and by—if he could only do Appomattox—well. So he sent for a stenographer, and dictated 9,000 words at a single sitting!—never pausing, never hesitating for a word, never repeating —and in the written-out copy he made hardly a correction. He dictated again, every two or three days—the intervals were intervals of exhaustion and slow recuperation—and at last he was able to tell me that he had written more matter than could be got into the book.

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I then enlarged the book—had to. Then he lost his voice. He was not quite done yet, however:—there was no end of little plums and spices to be stuck in, here and there; and this work he patiently continued, a few lines a day, with pad and pencil, till far into July, at Mt. McGregor. One day he put his pencil aside, and said he was done—there was nothing more to do. If I had been there I could have foretold the shock that struck the world three days later.

Well, I've written all this, and it doesn't seem to amount to anything. But I do want to help, if I only could. I will enclose some scraps from my Autobiography—scraps about General Grant—they may be of some trifle of use, and they may not—they at least verify known traits of his character. My Autobiography is pretty freely dictated, but my idea is to jack-plane it a little before I die, some day or other; I mean the rude construction and rotten grammar. It is the only dictating I ever did, and it was most troublesome and awkward work. You may return it to Hartford.

Sincerely Yours

S. L. Clemens.

The old long-deferred Library of Humor came up again for discussion, when in the fall of 1885 Howells associated himself with Harper & Brothers. Howells's contract provided that his name was not to appear on any book not published by the Harper firm. He wrote, therefore, offering to sell out his interest in the enterprise for two thousand dollars, in addition to the five hundred which he had already received—an amount considered to be less than he was to have received as joint author and compiler. Mark Twain's answer pretty fully covers the details of this undertaking.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hartford*, Oct. 18, 1885.

Private.

*My dear Howells*,—I reckon it would ruin the book that is, make it necessary to pigeon-hole it and leave it unpublished. I couldn't publish it without a very responsible name to support my own on the title page, because it has so much of my own matter in it. I bought Osgood's rights for \$3,000 cash, I have paid Clark \$800 and owe him \$700 more, which must of course be paid whether I publish or not. Yet I fully recognize that I have no sort of moral right to let that ancient and procrastinated contract hamper you in any way, and I most certainly won't. So, it is my decision,—after thinking over and rejecting the idea of trying to buy permission of the Harpers for \$2,500 to use your name, (a proposition which they would hate to refuse to a man in a perplexed position, and yet would naturally have to refuse it,) to pigeon-hole the "Library": not destroy it, but merely pigeon-hole it and wait a few years and see what new notion Providence will take concerning it. He will not desert us now, after putting in four licks to our one on this



book all this time. It really seems in a sense discourteous not to call it “Providence’s Library of Humor.”

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Now that deal is all settled, the next question is, do you need and must you require that \$2,000 now? Since last March, you know, I am carrying a mighty load, solitary and alone—General Grant's book—and must carry it till the first volume is 30 days old (Jan. 1st) before the relief money will begin to flow in. From now till the first of January every dollar is as valuable to me as it could be to a famishing tramp. If you can wait till then—I mean without discomfort, without inconvenience—it will be a large accommodation to me; but I will not allow you to do this favor if it will discommode you. So, speak right out, frankly, and if you need the money I will go out on the highway and get it, using violence, if necessary.

Mind, I am not in financial difficulties, and am not going to be. I am merely a starving beggar standing outside the door of plenty—obstructed by a Yale time-lock which is set for Jan. 1st. I can stand it, and stand it perfectly well; but the days do seem to fool along considerable slower than they used to.

I am mighty glad you are with the Harpers. I have noticed that good men in their employ go there to stay.

Yours ever,

*Mark.*

In the next letter we begin to get some idea of the size of Mark Twain's first publishing venture, and a brief summary of results may not be out of place here.

The Grant Life was issued in two volumes. In the early months of the year when the agents' canvass was just beginning, Mark Twain, with what seems now almost clairvoyant vision, prophesied a sale of three hundred thousand sets. The actual sales ran somewhat more than this number. On February 27, 1886, Charles L. Webster & Co. paid to Mrs. Grant the largest single royalty check in the history of book-publishing. The amount of it was two hundred thousand dollars. Subsequent checks increased the aggregate return to considerably more than double this figure. In a memorandum made by Clemens in the midst of the canvass he wrote. "'During 100 consecutive days the sales (i. e., subscriptions) of General Grant's book averaged 3,000 sets (6,000 single volumes) per day: Roughly stated, Mrs. Grant's income during all that time was \$5,000 a day."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

*Hotel Normandie*

*new York, Dec. 2, '85.*

*My dear Howells,*—I told Webster, this afternoon, to send you that \$2,000; but he is in such a rush, these first days of publication, that he may possibly forget it; so I write lest I forget it too. Remind me, if he should forget. When I postponed you lately, I did it

because I thought I should be cramped for money until January, but that has turned out to be an error, so I hasten to cut short the postponement.

I judge by the newspapers that you are in Auburndale, but I don't know it officially.

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I've got the first volume launched safely; consequently, half of the suspense is over, and I am that much nearer the goal. We've bound and shipped 200,000 books; and by the 10th shall finish and ship the remaining 125,000 of the first edition. I got nervous and came down to help hump-up the binderies; and I mean to stay here pretty much all the time till the first days of March, when the second volume will issue. Shan't have so much trouble, this time, though, if we get to press pretty soon, because we can get more binderies then than are to be had in front of the holidays. One lives and learns. I find it takes 7 binderies four months to bind 325,000 books.

This is a good book to publish. I heard a canvasser say, yesterday, that while delivering eleven books he took 7 new subscriptions. But we shall be in a hell of a fix if that goes on—it will “ball up” the binderies again.

Yrs ever

*Mark.*

November 30th that year was Mark Twain's fiftieth birthday, an event noticed by the newspapers generally, and especially observed by many of his friends. Warner, Stockton and many others sent letters; Andrew Lang contributed a fine poem; also Oliver Wendell. Holmes—the latter by special request of Miss Gilder—for the Critic. These attentions came as a sort of crowning happiness at the end of a golden year. At no time in his life were Mark Twain's fortunes and prospects brighter; he had a beautiful family and a perfect home. Also, he had great prosperity. The reading-tour with Cable had been a fine success. His latest book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, had added largely to his fame and income. The publication of the *Grant Memoirs* had been a dazzling triumph. Mark Twain had become recognized, not only as America's most distinguished author, but as its most envied publisher. And now, with his fiftieth birthday, had come this laurel from Holmes, last of the Brahmins, to add a touch of glory to all the rest. We feel his exaltation in his note of acknowledgment.

To Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in Boston:

*Dear Mr. Holmes,*—I shall never be able to tell you the half of how proud you have made me. If I could you would say you were nearly paid for the trouble you took. And then the family: If I can convey the electrical surprise and gratitude and exaltation of the wife and the children last night, when they happened upon that Critic where I had, with artful artlessness, spread it open and retired out of view to see what would happen—well, it was great and fine and beautiful to see, and made me feel as the victor feels when the shouting hosts march by; and if you also could have seen it you would have said the account was squared. For I have brought them up in your company, as in the company of a warm and friendly and beneficent but far-distant sun; and so, for you to do this thing was for the sun to send down out of the skies the miracle of a special ray and transfigure me before their faces. I knew what that poem would be to them; I knew it would raise me up to remote and shining heights in their eyes, to very fellowship with the chambered Nautilus itself, and that from that fellowship they could never more

dissociate me while they should live; and so I made sure to be by when the surprise should come.

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Charles Dudley Warner is charmed with the poem for its own felicitous sake; and so indeed am I, but more because it has drawn the sting of my fiftieth year; taken away the pain of it, the grief of it, the somehow shame of it, and made me glad and proud it happened.

With reverence and affection,  
Sincerely yours,  
S. L. *Clemens*.

Holmes wrote with his own hand: "Did Miss Gilder tell you I had twenty-three letters spread out for answer when her suggestion came about your anniversary? I stopped my correspondence and made my letters wait until the lines were done."