



Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies,  
Office of Continuing Education & Graduate Studies,  
Teacher Education Department, and the  
Greater Southern Tier Teacher Center



ELMIRA COLLEGE  
CONTINUING EDUCATION  
AND GRADUATE STUDIES



2019 Mark Twain  
Summer Institute for Teachers

## **“Mark Twain and Generation Z” Reader**

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

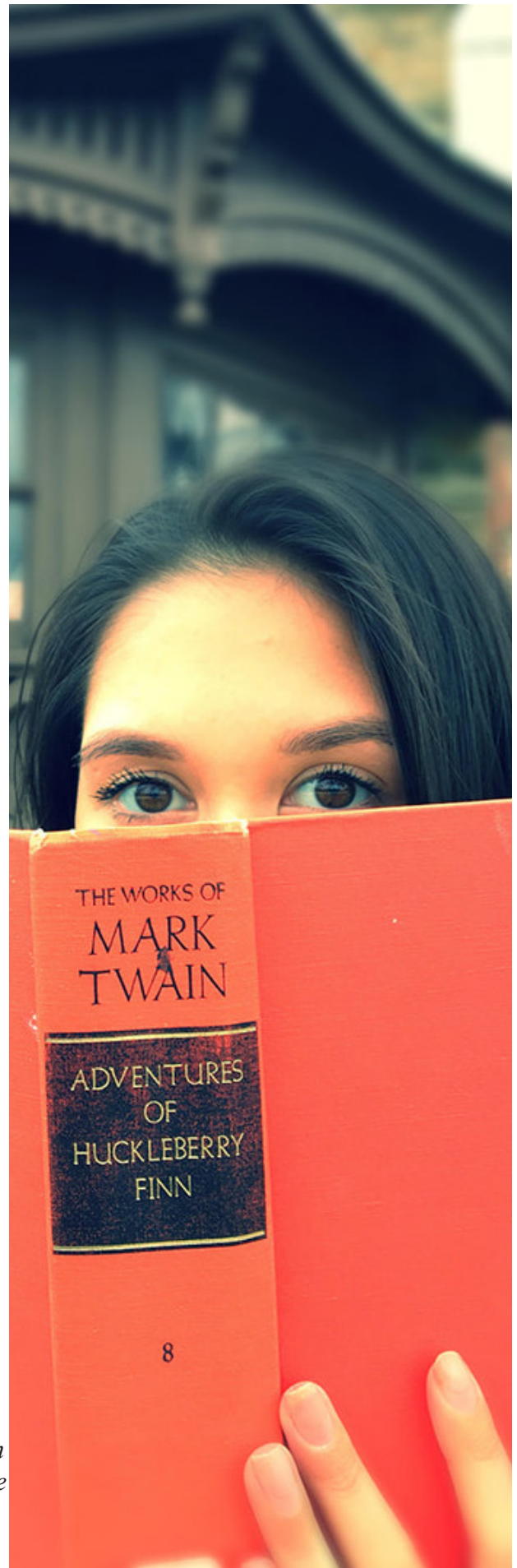
8:30 am - 3:30 pm;

Thursday, July 18, 2019

8:30 am - 3:30 pm

at Elmira College Kolker Hall  
and Quarry Farm

*Participants in the Summer Institute will have the option to extend the work begun in the summer and take a 6-week course in the Fall 2019 with Dr. Matt Seybold through the Elmira College Office of Continuing Education and Graduate Studies*





Dr. Joseph Lemak, Director  
Center for Mark Twain Studies  
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Dear Summer Institute Participant,

Thanks so much for your participation in one of the most meaningful events for the Center for Mark Twain Studies, namely our annual Summer Institute for Teachers. The Institute will take place on Wednesday, July 17 (Kolker Hall Auditorium, Elmira College) and Thursday, July 18 (Quarry Farm). Day One begins at the entrance of Kolker Hall on the Elmira College campus where a continental breakfast will be served from 8:15 – 8:55 AM. We will take that time for registration. The first day will end with a visit to the Mark Twain Study and historic Cowles Hall. Day Two begins on the Porch of Quarry Farm with a continental breakfast served from 8:15 – 9:00 AM.

One of primary goals of CMTS is promoting Mark Twain Studies at a local and regional level. This two-day, intensive seminar has grown throughout the years and has proven to be an effective way of bringing fresh perspectives of Mark Twain's work into the primary and secondary school classroom.

This year's theme is "Mark Twain and Generation Z." The facilitators of the Summer Institute will be Dr. Jocelyn Chadwick (Harvard Graduate School of Education) and Dr. Matt Seybold (Elmira College).

You hold in your hands this year's Institute Reader. *Please familiarize yourself closely with both before you arrive.*

On the first day, parking is available directly behind Kolker Hall; on the next day, please park behind the red barn at Quarry Farm. Due to its fragile condition and historical importance, exercise caution at all times at Quarry Farm. I have included a map of Elmira College for your convenience. Directions to Quarry Farm will be announced during the first day of instruction.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or write. See you soon for a great two days!

Sincerely,

JL

Joe Lemak  
Director, Center for Mark Twain Studies

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# SUMMER INSTITUTE SCHEDULE

*Wednesday, July 17 AT KOLKER LECTURE HALL*

**8:15 – 8:55:** Registration and Light Breakfast

**9:00 – 10:00:** Session #1- “Starting with the Basics” - Let’s begin with one central inquiry: of all the writers whom we teach, why is Mark Twain still so problematic and yet so relevant? Also, we will explore what we don’t know about Mark Twain that our students would want to know. The session will focus on past and present social issues, social media, and Twain’s contemporaries.

**10:00 – 10:15:** Mid-morning Break

**10:15 – 12:00:** Session #2 - Attendees will discuss and explore topics from Session #1, considering which topics most reflect and would interest current students.

**12:00 – 1:00:** Luncheon Buffet

**12:30 – 2:00:** Session #3 - “Cross-Curricular Relevance” - This session will occur in 20 minute intervals, comprising lecture, authentic classroom teachers’ voices, and participants’ interaction. Topics will include Social Studies, Mathematics/Science, and Humanities.

**2:00 – 2:15:** Mid-afternoon Break

**2:15 – 3:30:** Session #4 – Participants will continue work from Session #3 and discuss which topics would be most successful in current classrooms

Closing Visit to the Study, the Exhibit, and historic Cowles Hall

*Thursday, July 18 AT QUARRY FARM*

**8:15 – 8:55:** Arrival at Quarry Farm and Light Breakfast

**9:00 – 10:00:** Session #1 - “Using Mark Twain’s Fiction as Vehicle to Foment Critical Reading, Writing, and Inquiry”- The session will explore how Mark Twain’s poetry can be leveraged to complement standing curricula and facilitate assessment preparation

**10:00 – 10:15:** Mid-morning Break

**10:15 – 12:00:** Session #2 - A continuation of Session #1, exploring Twain’s short stories and novels in the current classroom setting

**12:00 – 1:00:** Lunch and Tour of the Grounds of Quarry Farm

**1:00 – 2:20:** Session #3: “Practicum: How Do We Make What We Have Learned Work in Our Classrooms?” - This session will explore artifacts (student work, students’ voices, and teachers’ voices) from current classes from around the country.

**2:20 – 2:30:** Mid-afternoon Break

**2:30 – 3:30:** Session #4- “Implementation” - Participants will work on ideas/plans to implement into standing curricula. We will also ask “What did we learn and what are the next steps?”



# ABOUT THE 2019 INSTITUTE

“Out of the public school grows the greatness of a nation.” -Mark Twain (1900)

Join Jocelyn Chadwick and Matt Seybold at the Center for Mark Twain Studies Summer Institute for Teachers. This summer the aim is to explore, discover, and reflect on how Mark Twain reads and speaks to this generation of students - Generation Z. In addition, we will examine how we can leverage and realign what Mark Twain/Samuel Clemens wrote that elucidates our students' here and now from a “safe-literary distance” of both his nonfiction and fiction.

This summer's Institute is interactive, focusing on how to use Mark Twain's time and his writings, as well as that of his contemporaries, to address Standards' targets and create an engaged and inquiry-driven classroom K-12. We will rely on both primary and secondary texts, and we will hear from classroom teachers and students from around the country who rely on Mark Twain year on year—some with no controversy and others who are enmeshed in controversy.

Elmira College is the perfect place to “talk Twain,” since it is the home of the international Center for Mark Twain Studies. The Center has stewardship of Quarry Farm, the summer home of Olivia Langdon Clemens' family and site of her sister Susan Crane's home. Quarry Farm also includes the original location of the Study as well as the landmark home where Clemens wrote and first read many of his major writings to his family while on the porch at “the Farm.

## MEET OUR FACULTY...

**Jocelyn Chadwick** is a Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and past president of the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE). Dr. Chadwick also serves as a consultant for school districts around the country and assists English departments with curricula to reflect diversity and cross-curricular content. She is also a consultant for NBC News Education, The Folger Shakespeare Library, *PBS American Masters* and *The Great American Read*, and Pearson. Her many publications include *The Jim Dilemma: Reading Race in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1998), *Common Core: Paradigmatic Shift* (2015), and *Teaching Literature on the Context of Literacy Construction* (2015).



**Matt Seybold** is the lead curriculum organizer of the CMTS Summer Institute for Teachers and Assistant Professor of American Literature & Mark Twain Studies at Elmira College, as well as editor of MarkTwainStudies.org. He is co-editor of the **Routledge Companion to Literature & Economics** (2018). Recent publications can be found in *Aeon Magazine*, *American Studies*, *boundary 2*, *Henry James Review*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Mark Twain Annual*, *Reception*, and *T.S. Eliot Studies Annual*.



## “Oh Lord, Our Father” by Mark Twain

O Lord, our father,  
Our young patriots, idols of our hearts,  
Go forth to battle - be Thou near them!  
With them, in spirit, we also go forth  
From the sweet peace of our beloved firesides To smite the foe.

O Lord, our God,  
Help us to tear their soldiers  
To bloody shreds with our shells;  
Help us to cover their smiling fields  
With the pale forms of their patriot dead; Help us to drown the thunder of  
the guns With the shrieks of their wounded,  
Writhing in pain.

Help us to lay waste their humble homes  
With a hurricane of fire;  
Help us to wring the hearts of their  
Unoffending widows with unavailing grief; Help us to turn them out roofless  
With their little children to wander unfriended The wastes of their  
desolated land  
In rags and hunger and thirst,  
Sports of the sun flames of summer  
And the icy winds of winter,  
Burdened in spirit, worn with travail,  
Imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it -

For our sakes who adore Thee, Lord,  
Blast their hopes,  
Blight their lives,  
Protract their bitter pilgrimage,  
Make heavy their steps,  
Water their way with their tears,  
Stain the white snow with the blood  
Of their wounded feet!

We ask it in the spirit of love -  
Of Him who is the source of love,  
And Who is the ever-faithful  
Refuge and Friend of all that are sore beset And seek His aid with humble  
and contrite hearts.

Amen

# “Genius” by Mark Twain

Genius, like gold and precious stones,  
is chiefly prized because of its rarity.

Geniuses are people who dash of weird, wild,  
incomprehensible poems with astonishing facility,  
and get booming drunk and sleep in the gutter.

Genius elevates its possessor to ineffable spheres  
far above the vulgar world and fills his soul  
with regal contempt for the gross and sordid things of earth.

It is probably on account of this  
that people who have genius  
do not pay their board, as a general thing.

Geniuses are very singular.

If you see a young man who has frowsy hair  
and distraught look, and affects eccentricity in dress,  
you may set him down for a genius.

If he sings about the degeneracy of a world  
which courts vulgar opulence  
and neglects brains,  
he is undoubtedly a genius.

If he is too proud to accept assistance,  
and spurns it with a lordly air  
at the very same time  
that he knows he can't make a living to save his life,  
he is most certainly a genius.

If he hangs on and sticks to poetry,  
notwithstanding sawing wood comes handier to him,  
he is a true genius.

If he throws away every opportunity in life  
and crushes the affection and the patience of his friends  
and then protests in sickly rhymes of his hard lot,  
and finally persists,  
in spite of the sound advice of persons who have got sense  
but not any genius,  
persists in going up some infamous back alley  
dying in rags and dirt,  
he is beyond all question a genius.

But above all things,  
to deftly throw the incoherent ravings of insanity into verse  
and then rush off and get booming drunk,  
is the surest of all the different signs  
of genius.

## **“To Jennie” by Mark Twain**

Good-bye! a kind good-bye,  
I bid you now, my friend,  
And though 'tis sad to speak the word,  
To destiny I bend

And though it be decreed by Fate  
That we ne'er meet again,  
Your image, graven on my heart,  
Forever shall remain.

Aye, in my heart thoult have a place,  
Among the friends held dear,-  
Nor shall the hand of Time efface  
The memories written there.  
Goodbye,  
S.L.C.

## “The Slave Mother” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Heard you that shriek? It rose  
So wildly on the air,  
It seem'd as if a burden'd heart  
Was breaking in despair.

Saw you those hands so sadly clasped—  
The bowed and feeble head—  
The shuddering of that fragile form—  
That look of grief and dread?

Saw you the sad, imploring eye?  
Its every glance was pain,  
As if a storm of agony  
Were sweeping through the brain.

She is a mother pale with fear,  
Her boy clings to her side,  
And in her kirtle vainly tries  
His trembling form to hide.

He is not hers, although she bore  
For him a mother's pains;  
He is not hers, although her blood  
Is coursing through his veins!

He is not hers, for cruel hands  
May rudely tear apart  
The only wreath of household love  
That binds her breaking heart.

His love has been a joyous light  
That o'er her pathway smiled,  
A fountain gushing ever new,  
Amid life's desert wild.

His lightest word has been a tone  
Of music round her heart,  
Their lives a streamlet blent in one—  
Oh, Father! must they part?

They tear him from her circling arms,  
Her last and fond embrace.  
Oh! never more may her sad eyes  
Gaze on his mournful face.

No marvel, then, these bitter shrieks  
Disturb the listening air:  
She is a mother, and her heart  
Is breaking in despair.



# “The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg” by Mark Twain

## I.

It was many years ago. Hadleyburg was the most honest and upright town in all the region round about. It had kept that reputation unsmirched during three generations, and was prouder of it than of any other of its possessions. It was so proud of it, and so anxious to insure its perpetuation, that it began to teach the principles of honest dealing to its babies in the cradle, and made the like teachings the staple of their culture thenceforward through all the years devoted to their education. Also, throughout the formative years temptations were kept out of the way of the young people, so that their honesty could have every chance to harden and solidify, and become a part of their very bone. The neighbouring towns were jealous of this honourable supremacy, and affected to sneer at Hadleyburg's pride in it and call it vanity; but all the same they were obliged to acknowledge that Hadleyburg was in reality an incorruptible town; and if pressed they would also acknowledge that the mere fact that a young man hailed from Hadleyburg was all the recommendation he needed when he went forth from his natal town to seek for responsible employment.

But at last, in the drift of time, Hadleyburg had the ill luck to offend a passing stranger—possibly without knowing it, certainly without caring, for Hadleyburg was sufficient unto itself, and cared not a rap for strangers or their opinions. Still, it would have been well to make an exception in this one's case, for he was a bitter man, and revengeful. All through his wanderings during a whole year he kept his injury in mind, and gave all his leisure moments to trying to invent a compensating satisfaction for it. He contrived many plans, and all of them were good, but none of them was quite sweeping enough: the poorest of them would hurt a great many individuals, but what he wanted was a plan which would comprehend the entire town, and not let so much as one person escape unhurt. At last he had a fortunate idea, and when it fell into his brain it lit up his whole head with an evil joy. He began to form a plan at once, saying to himself “That is the thing to do—I will corrupt the town.”

Six months later he went to Hadleyburg, and arrived in a buggy at the house of the old cashier of the bank about ten at night. He got a sack out of the buggy, shouldered it, and staggered with it through the cottage yard, and knocked at the door. A woman's voice said “Come in,” and he entered, and set his sack behind the stove in the parlour, saying politely to the old lady who sat reading the “Missionary Herald” by the lamp:

“Pray keep your seat, madam, I will not disturb you. There—now it is pretty well concealed; one would hardly know it was there. Can I see your husband a moment, madam?”

No, he was gone to Brixton, and might not return before morning.

“Very well, madam, it is no matter. I merely wanted to leave that sack in his care, to be delivered to the rightful owner when he shall be found. I am a stranger; he does not know me; I am merely passing through the town to-night to discharge a matter which has been long in my mind. My errand is now completed, and I go pleased and a little proud, and you will never see me again. There is a paper attached to the sack which will explain everything. Good-night, madam.”

The old lady was afraid of the mysterious big stranger, and was glad to see him go. But her curiosity was roused, and she went straight to the sack and brought away the paper. It began as follows:

“TO BE PUBLISHED, or, the right man sought out by private inquiry—either will answer. This sack contains gold coin weighing a hundred and sixty pounds four ounces—”

“Mercy on us, and the door not locked!”

Mrs. Richards flew to it all in a tremble and locked it, then pulled down the window-shades and stood frightened, worried, and wondering if there was anything else she could do toward making herself and the money more safe. She listened awhile for burglars, then surrendered to curiosity, and went back to the lamp and finished reading the paper:

“I am a foreigner, and am presently going back to my own country, to remain there permanently. I am grateful to America for what I have received at her hands during my long stay under her flag; and to one of her citizens—a citizen of Hadleyburg—I am especially grateful for a great kindness done me a year or two ago. Two great kindnesses in fact. I will

explain. I was a gambler. I say I WAS. I was a ruined gambler. I arrived in this village at night, hungry and without a penny. I asked for help—in the dark; I was ashamed to beg in the light. I begged of the right man. He gave me twenty dollars—that is to say, he gave me life, as I considered it. He also gave me fortune; for out of that money I have made myself rich at the gaming-table. And finally, a remark which he made to me has remained with me to this day, and has at last conquered me; and in conquering has saved the remnant of my morals: I shall gamble no more. Now I have no idea who that man was, but I want him found, and I want him to have this money, to give away, throw away, or keep, as he pleases. It is merely my way of testifying my gratitude to him. If I could stay, I would find him myself; but no matter, he will be found. This is an honest town, an incorruptible town, and I know I can trust it without fear. This man can be identified by the remark which he made to me; I feel persuaded that he will remember it.

“And now my plan is this: If you prefer to conduct the inquiry privately, do so. Tell the contents of this present writing to any one who is likely to be the right man. If he shall answer, ‘I am the man; the remark I made was so-and-so,’ apply the test—to wit: open the sack, and in it you will find a sealed envelope containing that remark. If the remark mentioned by the candidate tallies with it, give him the money, and ask no further questions, for he is certainly the right man.

“But if you shall prefer a public inquiry, then publish this present writing in the local paper—with these instructions added, to wit: Thirty days from now, let the candidate appear at the town-hall at eight in the evening (Friday), and hand his remark, in a sealed envelope, to the Rev. Mr. Burgess (if he will be kind enough to act); and let Mr. Burgess there and then destroy the seals of the sack, open it, and see if the remark is correct: if correct, let the money be delivered, with my sincere gratitude, to my benefactor thus identified.”

Mrs. Richards sat down, gently quivering with excitement, and was soon lost in thinkings—after this pattern: “What a strange thing it is! . . . And what a fortune for that kind man who set his bread afloat upon the waters! . . . If it had only been my husband that did it!—for we are so poor, so old and poor! . . .” Then, with a sigh—“But it was not my Edward; no, it was not he that gave a stranger twenty dollars. It is a pity too; I see it now. . . .” Then, with a shudder—“But it is gamblers’ money! the wages of sin; we couldn’t take it; we couldn’t touch it. I don’t like to be near it; it seems a defilement.” She moved to a farther chair. . . . “I wish Edward would come, and take it to the bank; a burglar might come at any moment; it is dreadful to be here all alone with it.”

At eleven Mr. Richards arrived, and while his wife was saying “I am so glad you’ve come!” he was saying, “I am so tired—tired clear out; it is dreadful to be poor, and have to make these dismal journeys at my time of life. Always at the grind, grind, grind, on a salary—another man’s slave, and he sitting at home in his slippers, rich and comfortable.”

“I am so sorry for you, Edward, you know that; but be comforted; we have our livelihood; we have our good name—”

“Yes, Mary, and that is everything. Don’t mind my talk—it’s just a moment’s irritation and doesn’t mean anything. Kiss me—there, it’s all gone now, and I am not complaining any more. What have you been getting? What’s in the sack?”

Then his wife told him the great secret. It dazed him for a moment; then he said:

“It weighs a hundred and sixty pounds? Why, Mary, it’s for-ty thou-sand dollars—think of it—a whole fortune! Not ten men in this village are worth that much. Give me the paper.”

He skimmed through it and said:

“Isn’t it an adventure! Why, it’s a romance; it’s like the impossible things one reads about in books, and never sees in life.” He was well stirred up now; cheerful, even gleeful. He tapped his old wife on the cheek, and said humorously, “Why, we’re rich, Mary, rich; all we’ve got to do is to bury the money and burn the papers. If the gambler ever comes to inquire, we’ll merely look coldly upon him and say: ‘What is this nonsense you are talking? We have never heard of you and your sack of gold before;’ and then he would look foolish, and—”

“And in the meantime, while you are running on with your jokes, the money is still here, and it is fast getting along toward burglar-time.”

“True. Very well, what shall we do—make the inquiry private? No, not that; it would spoil the romance. The public method is better. Think what a noise it will make! And it will make all the other towns jealous; for no stranger would trust such a thing to any town but Hadleyburg, and they know it. It’s a great card for us. I must get to the printing-office now, or I shall be too late.”

“But stop—stop—don’t leave me here alone with it, Edward!”

But he was gone. For only a little while, however. Not far from his own house he met the editor—proprietor of the paper, and gave him the document, and said “Here is a good thing for you, Cox—put it in.”

“It may be too late, Mr. Richards, but I’ll see.”

At home again, he and his wife sat down to talk the charming mystery over; they were in no condition for sleep. The first question was, Who could the citizen have been who gave the stranger the twenty dollars? It seemed a simple one; both answered it in the same breath—

“Barclay Goodson.”

“Yes,” said Richards, “he could have done it, and it would have been like him, but there’s not another in the town.”

“Everybody will grant that, Edward—grant it privately, anyway. For six months, now, the village has been its own proper self once more—honest, narrow, self-righteous, and stingy.”

“It is what he always called it, to the day of his death—said it right out publicly, too.”

“Yes, and he was hated for it.”

“Oh, of course; but he didn’t care. I reckon he was the best-hated man among us, except the Reverend Burgess.”

“Well, Burgess deserves it—he will never get another congregation here. Mean as the town is, it knows how to estimate him. Edward, doesn’t it seem odd that the stranger should appoint Burgess to deliver the money?”

“Well, yes—it does. That is—that is—”

“Why so much that-is-ing? Would you select him?”

“Mary, maybe the stranger knows him better than this village does.”

“Much that would help Burgess!”

The husband seemed perplexed for an answer; the wife kept a steady eye upon him, and waited. Finally Richards said, with the hesitancy of one who is making a statement which is likely to encounter doubt,

“Mary, Burgess is not a bad man.”

His wife was certainly surprised.

“Nonsense!” she exclaimed.

“He is not a bad man. I know. The whole of his unpopularity had its foundation in that one thing—the thing that made so much noise.”

“That ‘one thing,’ indeed! As if that ‘one thing’ wasn’t enough, all by itself.”

“Plenty. Plenty. Only he wasn’t guilty of it.”

“How you talk! Not guilty of it! Everybody knows he was guilty.”

“Mary, I give you my word—he was innocent.”

“I can’t believe it and I don’t. How do you know?”

“It is a confession. I am ashamed, but I will make it. I was the only man who knew he was innocent. I could have saved him, and—and—well, you know how the town was wrought up—I hadn’t the pluck to do it. It would have turned everybody against me. I felt mean, ever so mean; ut I didn’t dare; I hadn’t the manliness to face that.”

Mary looked troubled, and for a while was silent. Then she said stammeringly:

“I—I don’t think it would have done for you to—to—One mustn’t—er—public opinion—one has to be so careful—so—” It was a difficult road, and she got mired; but after a little she got started again. “It was a great pity, but—Why, we couldn’t afford it, Edward—we couldn’t indeed. Oh, I wouldn’t have had you do it for anything!”

“It would have lost us the good-will of so many people, Mary; and then—and then—”

“What troubles me now is, what he thinks of us, Edward.”

“He? He doesn’t suspect that I could have saved him.”

“Oh,” exclaimed the wife, in a tone of relief, “I am glad of that. As long as he doesn’t know that you could have saved him, he—he—well that makes it a great deal better. Why, I might have known he didn’t know, because he is always trying to be friendly with us, as little encouragement as we give him. More than once people have twitted me with it. There’s the Wilsons, and the Wilcoxes, and the Harknesses, they take a mean pleasure in saying ‘Your friend Burgess,’ because they know it pesters me. I wish he wouldn’t persist in liking us so; I can’t think why he keeps it up.”

“I can explain it. It’s another confession. When the thing was new and hot, and the town made a plan to ride him on a rail, my conscience hurt me so that I couldn’t stand it, and I went privately and gave him notice, and he got out of the town and stayed out till it was safe to come back.”

“Edward! If the town had found it out—”

“Don’t! It scares me yet, to think of it. I repented of it the minute it was done; and I was even afraid to tell you lest your face might betray it to somebody. I didn’t sleep any that night, for worrying. But after a few days I saw that no one was going to suspect me, and after that I got to feeling glad I did it. And I feel glad yet, Mary—glad through and through.”

“So do I, now, for it would have been a dreadful way to treat him. Yes, I’m glad; for really you did owe him that, you know. But, Edward, suppose it should come out yet, some day!”

“It won’t.”

“Why?”

“Because everybody thinks it was Goodson.”

“Of course they would!”

“Certainly. And of course he didn’t care. They persuaded poor old Sawlsberry to go and charge it on him, and he went blustering over there and did it. Goodson looked him over, like as if he was hunting for a place on him that he could despise the most; then he says, ‘So you are the Committee of Inquiry, are you?’ Sawlsberry said that was about what he

was. ‘H’m. Do they require particulars, or do you reckon a kind of a general answer will do?’ ‘If they require particulars, I will come back, Mr. Goodson; I will take the general answer first.’ ‘Very well, then, tell them to go to hell—I reckon that’s general enough. And I’ll give you some advice, Sawlsberry; when you come back for the particulars, fetch a basket to carry what is left of yourself home in.’”

“Just like Goodson; it’s got all the marks. He had only one vanity; he thought he could give advice better than any other person.”

“It settled the business, and saved us, Mary. The subject was dropped.”

“Bless you, I’m not doubting that.”

Then they took up the gold-sack mystery again, with strong interest. Soon the conversation began to suffer breaks—interruptions caused by absorbed thinkings. The breaks grew more and more frequent. At last Richards lost himself wholly in thought. He sat long, gazing vacantly at the floor, and by-and-by he began to punctuate his thoughts with little nervous movements of his hands that seemed to indicate vexation. Meantime his wife too had relapsed into a thoughtful silence, and her movements were beginning to show a troubled discomfort. Finally Richards got up and strode aimlessly about the room, ploughing his hands through his hair, much as a somnambulist might do who was having a bad dream. Then he seemed to arrive at a definite purpose; and without a word he put on his hat and passed quickly out of the house. His wife sat brooding, with a drawn face, and did not seem to be aware that she was alone. Now and then she murmured, “Lead us not into t . . . but—but—we are so poor, so poor! . . . Lead us not into . . . Ah, who would be hurt by it?—and no one would ever know . . . Lead us . . .” The voice died out in mumblings. After a little she glanced up and muttered in a half-frightened, half-glad way—

“He is gone! But, oh dear, he may be too late—too late . . . Maybe not—maybe there is still time.” She rose and stood thinking, nervously clasping and unclasping her hands. A slight shudder shook her frame, and she said, out of a dry throat, “God forgive me—it’s awful to think such things—but . . . Lord, how we are made—how strangely we are made!”

She turned the light low, and slipped stealthily over and knelt down by the sack and felt of its ridgy sides with her hands, and fondled them lovingly; and there was a gloating light in her poor old eyes. She fell into fits of absence; and came half out of them at times to mutter “If we had only waited!—oh, if we had only waited a little, and not been in such a hurry!”

Meantime Cox had gone home from his office and told his wife all about the strange thing that had happened, and they had talked it over eagerly, and guessed that the late Goodson was the only man in the town who could have helped a suffering stranger with so noble a sum as twenty dollars. Then there was a pause, and the two became thoughtful and silent. And by-and-by nervous and fidgety. At last the wife said, as if to herself,

“Nobody knows this secret but the Richardses . . . and us . . . nobody.”

The husband came out of his thinkings with a slight start, and gazed wistfully at his wife, whose face was become very pale; then he hesitatingly rose, and glanced furtively at his hat, then at his wife—a sort of mute inquiry. Mrs. Cox swallowed once or twice, with her hand at her throat, then in place of speech she nodded her head. In a moment she was alone, and mumbling to herself.

And now Richards and Cox were hurrying through the deserted streets, from opposite directions. They met, panting, at the foot of the printing-office stairs; by the night-light there they read each other’s face. Cox whispered:

“Nobody knows about this but us?”

The whispered answer was:

“Not a soul—on honour, not a soul!”

“If it isn’t too late to—”



The men were starting up-stairs; at this moment they were overtaken by a boy, and Cox asked,

“Is that you, Johnny?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You needn’t ship the early mail—nor any mail; wait till I tell you.”

“It’s already gone, sir.”

“Gone?” It had the sound of an unspeakable disappointment in it.

“Yes, sir. Time-table for Brixton and all the towns beyond changed to-day, sir—had to get the papers in twenty minutes earlier than common. I had to rush; if I had been two minutes later—”

The men turned and walked slowly away, not waiting to hear the rest. Neither of them spoke during ten minutes; then Cox said, in a vexed tone,

“What possessed you to be in such a hurry, I can’t make out.”

The answer was humble enough:

“I see it now, but somehow I never thought, you know, until it was too late. But the next time—”

“Next time be hanged! It won’t come in a thousand years.”

Then the friends separated without a good-night, and dragged themselves home with the gait of mortally stricken men. At their homes their wives sprang up with an eager “Well?”—then saw the answer with their eyes and sank down sorrowing, without waiting for it to come in words. In both houses a discussion followed of a heated sort—a new thing; there had been discussions before, but not heated ones, not ungentle ones. The discussions to-night were a sort of seeming plagiarisms of each other. Mrs. Richards said:

“If you had only waited, Edward—if you had only stopped to think; but no, you must run straight to the printing-office and spread it all over the world.”

“It said publish it.”

“That is nothing; it also said do it privately, if you liked. There, now—is that true, or not?”

“Why, yes—yes, it is true; but when I thought what a stir it would make, and what a compliment it was to Hadleyburg that a stranger should trust it so—”

“Oh, certainly, I know all that; but if you had only stopped to think, you would have seen that you couldn’t find the right man, because he is in his grave, and hasn’t left chick nor child nor relation behind him; and as long as the money went to somebody that awfully needed it, and nobody would be hurt by it, and—and—”

She broke down, crying. Her husband tried to think of some comforting thing to say, and presently came out with this:

“But after all, Mary, it must be for the best—it must be; we know that. And we must remember that it was so ordered—”

“Ordered! Oh, everything’s ordered, when a person has to find some way out when he has been stupid. Just the same, it was ordered that the money should come to us in this special way, and it was you that must take it on yourself to go meddling with the designs of Providence—and who gave you the right? It was wicked, that is what it was—just blasphemous

presumption, and no more becoming to a meek and humble professor of—”

“But, Mary, you know how we have been trained all our lives long, like the whole village, till it is absolutely second nature to us to stop not a single moment to think when there’s an honest thing to be done—”

“Oh, I know it, I know it—it’s been one everlasting training and training and training in honesty—honesty shielded, from the very cradle, against every possible temptation, and so it’s artificial honesty, and weak as water when temptation comes, as we have seen this night. God knows I never had shade nor shadow of a doubt of my petrified and indestructible honesty until now—and now, under the very first big and real temptation, I—Edward, it is my belief that this town’s honesty is as rotten as mine is; as rotten as yours. It is a mean town, a hard, stingy town, and hasn’t a virtue in the world but this honesty it is so celebrated for and so conceited about; and so help me, I do believe that if ever the day comes that its honesty falls under great temptation, its grand reputation will go to ruin like a house of cards. There, now, I’ve made confession, and I feel better; I am a humbug, and I’ve been one all my life, without knowing it. Let no man call me honest again—I will not have it.”

“I—Well, Mary, I feel a good deal as you do: I certainly do. It seems strange, too, so strange. I never could have believed it—never.”

A long silence followed; both were sunk in thought. At last the wife looked up and said:

“I know what you are thinking, Edward.”

Richards had the embarrassed look of a person who is caught.

“I am ashamed to confess it, Mary, but—”

“It’s no matter, Edward, I was thinking the same question myself.”

“I hope so. State it.”

“You were thinking, if a body could only guess out what the remark was that Goodson made to the stranger.”

“It’s perfectly true. I feel guilty and ashamed. And you?”

“I’m past it. Let us make a pallet here; we’ve got to stand watch till the bank vault opens in the morning and admits the sack. . . Oh dear, oh dear—if we hadn’t made the mistake!”

The pallet was made, and Mary said:

“The open sesame—what could it have been? I do wonder what that remark could have been. But come; we will get to bed now.”

“And sleep?”

“No; think.”

“Yes; think.”

By this time the Coxes too had completed their spat and their reconciliation, and were turning in—to think, to think, and toss, and fret, and worry over what the remark could possibly have been which Goodson made to the stranded derelict; that golden remark; that remark worth forty thousand dollars, cash.

The reason that the village telegraph-office was open later than usual that night was this: The foreman of Cox’s paper was the local representative of the Associated Press. One might say its honorary representative, for it wasn’t four times a year

that he could furnish thirty words that would be accepted. But this time it was different. His despatch stating what he had caught got an instant answer:

“Send the whole thing—all the details—twelve hundred words.”

A colossal order! The foreman filled the bill; and he was the proudest man in the State. By breakfast-time the next morning the name of Hadleyburg the Incorruptible was on every lip in America, from Montreal to the Gulf, from the glaciers of Alaska to the orange-groves of Florida; and millions and millions of people were discussing the stranger and his money-sack, and wondering if the right man would be found, and hoping some more news about the matter would come soon—right away.

## II.

Hadleyburg village woke up world-celebrated—astonished—happy—vain. Vain beyond imagination. Its nineteen principal citizens and their wives went about shaking hands with each other, and beaming, and smiling, and congratulating, and saying this thing adds a new word to the dictionary—Hadleyburg, synonym for incorruptible—destined to live in dictionaries for ever! And the minor and unimportant citizens and their wives went around acting in much the same way. Everybody ran to the bank to see the gold-sack; and before noon grieved and envious crowds began to flock in from Brixton and all neighbouring towns; and that afternoon and next day reporters began to arrive from everywhere to verify the sack and its history and write the whole thing up anew, and make dashing free-hand pictures of the sack, and of Richards’s house, and the bank, and the Presbyterian church, and the Baptist church, and the public square, and the town-hall where the test would be applied and the money delivered; and damnable portraits of the Richardses, and Pinkerton the banker, and Cox, and the foreman, and Reverend Burgess, and the postmaster—and even of Jack Halliday, who was the loafing, good-natured, no-account, irreverent fisherman, hunter, boys’ friend, stray-dogs’ friend, typical “Sam Lawson” of the town. The little mean, smirking, oily Pinkerton showed the sack to all comers, and rubbed his sleek palms together pleasantly, and enlarged upon the town’s fine old reputation for honesty and upon this wonderful endorsement of it, and hoped and believed that the example would now spread far and wide over the American world, and be epoch-making in the matter of moral regeneration. And so on, and so on.

By the end of a week things had quieted down again; the wild intoxication of pride and joy had sobered to a soft, sweet, silent delight—a sort of deep, nameless, unutterable content. All faces bore a look of peaceful, holy happiness.

Then a change came. It was a gradual change; so gradual that its beginnings were hardly noticed; maybe were not noticed at all, except by Jack Halliday, who always noticed everything; and always made fun of it, too, no matter what it was. He began to throw out chaffing remarks about people not looking quite so happy as they did a day or two ago; and next he claimed that the new aspect was deepening to positive sadness; next, that it was taking on a sick look; and finally he said that everybody was become so moody, thoughtful, and absent-minded that he could rob the meanest man in town of a cent out of the bottom of his breeches pocket and not disturb his reverie.

At this stage—or at about this stage—a saying like this was dropped at bedtime—with a sigh, usually—by the head of each of the nineteen principal households:

“Ah, what could have been the remark that Goodson made?”

And straightway—with a shudder—came this, from the man’s wife:

“Oh, don’t! What horrible thing are you mulling in your mind? Put it away from you, for God’s sake!”

But that question was wrung from those men again the next night—and got the same retort. But weaker.

And the third night the men uttered the question yet again—with anguish, and absently. This time—and the following night—the wives fidgeted feebly, and tried to say something. But didn’t.

And the night after that they found their tongues and responded—longingly:

“Oh, if we could only guess!”

Halliday's comments grew daily more and more sparkingly disagreeable and disparaging. He went diligently about, laughing at the town, individually and in mass. But his laugh was the only one left in the village: it fell upon a hollow and mournful vacancy and emptiness. Not even a smile was findable anywhere. Halliday carried a cigar-box around on a tripod, playing that it was a camera, and halted all passers and aimed the thing and said “Ready!—now look pleasant, please,” but not even this capital joke could surprise the dreary faces into any softening.

So three weeks passed—one week was left. It was Saturday evening after supper. Instead of the aforesaid Saturday-evening flutter and bustle and shopping and larking, the streets were empty and desolate. Richards and his old wife sat apart in their little parlour—miserable and thinking. This was become their evening habit now: the life-long habit which had preceded it, of reading, knitting, and contented chat, or receiving or paying neighbourly calls, was dead and gone and forgotten, ages ago—two or three weeks ago; nobody talked now, nobody read, nobody visited—the whole village sat at home, sighing, worrying, silent. Trying to guess out that remark.

The postman left a letter. Richards glanced listlessly at the superscription and the post-mark—unfamiliar, both—and tossed the letter on the table and resumed his might-have-beens and his hopeless dull miseries where he had left them off. Two or three hours later his wife got wearily up and was going away to bed without a good-night—custom now—but she stopped near the letter and eyed it awhile with a dead interest, then broke it open, and began to skim it over. Richards, sitting there with his chair tilted back against the wall and his chin between his knees, heard something fall. It was his wife. He sprang to her side, but she cried out:

“Leave me alone, I am too happy. Read the letter—read it!”

He did. He devoured it, his brain reeling. The letter was from a distant State, and it said:

“I am a stranger to you, but no matter: I have something to tell. I have just arrived home from Mexico, and learned about that episode. Of course you do not know who made that remark, but I know, and I am the only person living who does know. It was GOODSON. I knew him well, many years ago. I passed through your village that very night, and was his guest till the midnight train came along. I overheard him make that remark to the stranger in the dark—it was in Hale Alley. He and I talked of it the rest of the way home, and while smoking in his house. He mentioned many of your villagers in the course of his talk—most of them in a very uncomplimentary way, but two or three favourably: among these latter yourself. I say ‘favourably’—nothing stronger. I remember his saying he did not actually LIKE any person in the town—not one; but that you—I THINK he said you—am almost sure—had done him a very great service once, possibly without knowing the full value of it, and he wished he had a fortune, he would leave it to you when he died, and a curse apiece for the rest of the citizens. Now, then, if it was you that did him that service, you are his legitimate heir, and entitled to the sack of gold. I know that I can trust to your honour and honesty, for in a citizen of Hadleyburg these virtues are an unfailing inheritance, and so I am going to reveal to you the remark, well satisfied that if you are not the right man you will seek and find the right one and see that poor Goodson's debt of gratitude for the service referred to is paid. This is the remark ‘YOU ARE FAR FROM BEING A BAD MAN: GO, AND REFORM.’

“HOWARD L. STEPHENSON.”

“Oh, Edward, the money is ours, and I am so grateful, oh, so grateful,—kiss me, dear, it's for ever since we kissed—and we needed it so—the money—and now you are free of Pinkerton and his bank, and nobody's slave any more; it seems to me I could fly for joy.”

It was a happy half-hour that the couple spent there on the settee caressing each other; it was the old days come again—days that had begun with their courtship and lasted without a break till the stranger brought the deadly money. By-and-by the wife said:

“Oh, Edward, how lucky it was you did him that grand service, poor Goodson! I never liked him, but I love him now. And it was fine and beautiful of you never to mention it or brag about it.” Then, with a touch of reproach, “But you ought to have told me, Edward, you ought to have told your wife, you know.”

“Well, I—er—well, Mary, you see—”

“Now stop hemming and hawing, and tell me about it, Edward. I always loved you, and now I’m proud of you. Everybody believes there was only one good generous soul in this village, and now it turns out that you—Edward, why don’t you tell me?”

“Well—er—er—Why, Mary, I can’t!”

“You can’t? Why can’t you?”

“You see, he—well, he—he made me promise I wouldn’t.”

The wife looked him over, and said, very slowly:

“Made—you—promise? Edward, what do you tell me that for?”

“Mary, do you think I would lie?”

She was troubled and silent for a moment, then she laid her hand within his and said:

“No . . . no. We have wandered far enough from our bearings—God spare us that! In all your life you have never uttered a lie. But now—now that the foundations of things seem to be crumbling from under us, we—we—” She lost her voice for a moment, then said, brokenly, “Lead us not into temptation. . . I think you made the promise, Edward. Let it rest so. Let us keep away from that ground. Now—that is all gone by; let us be happy again; it is no time for clouds.”

Edward found it something of an effort to comply, for his mind kept wandering—trying to remember what the service was that he had done Goodson.

The couple lay awake the most of the night, Mary happy and busy, Edward busy, but not so happy. Mary was planning what she would do with the money. Edward was trying to recall that service. At first his conscience was sore on account of the lie he had told Mary—if it was a lie. After much reflection—suppose it was a lie? What then? Was it such a great matter? Aren’t we always acting lies? Then why not tell them? Look at Mary—look what she had done. While he was hurrying off on his honest errand, what was she doing? Lamenting because the papers hadn’t been destroyed and the money kept. Is theft better than lying?

That point lost its sting—the lie dropped into the background and left comfort behind it. The next point came to the front: had he rendered that service? Well, here was Goodson’s own evidence as reported in Stephenson’s letter; there could be no better evidence than that—it was even proof that he had rendered it. Of course. So that point was settled. . . No, not quite. He recalled with a wince that this unknown Mr. Stephenson was just a trifle unsure as to whether the performer of it was Richards or some other—and, oh dear, he had put Richards on his honour! He must himself decide whither that money must go—and Mr. Stephenson was not doubting that if he was the wrong man he would go honourably and find the right one. Oh, it was odious to put a man in such a situation—ah, why couldn’t Stephenson have left out that doubt? What did he want to intrude that for?

Further reflection. How did it happen that Richards’s name remained in Stephenson’s mind as indicating the right man, and not some other man’s name? That looked good. Yes, that looked very good. In fact it went on looking better and better, straight along—until by-and-by it grew into positive proof. And then Richards put the matter at once out of his mind, for he had a private instinct that a proof once established is better left so.

He was feeling reasonably comfortable now, but there was still one other detail that kept pushing itself on his notice: of course he had done that service—that was settled; but what was that service? He must recall it—he would not go to sleep till he had recalled it; it would make his peace of mind perfect. And so he thought and thought. He thought of a dozen things—possible services, even probable services—but none of them seemed adequate, none of them seemed large



enough, none of them seemed worth the money—worth the fortune Goodson had wished he could leave in his will. And besides, he couldn't remember having done them, anyway. Now, then—now, then—what kind of a service would it be that would make a man so inordinately grateful? Ah—the saving of his soul! That must be it. Yes, he could remember, now, how he once set himself the task of converting Goodson, and laboured at it as much as—he was going to say three months; but upon closer examination it shrunk to a month, then to a week, then to a day, then to nothing. Yes, he remembered now, and with unwelcome vividness, that Goodson had told him to go to thunder and mind his own business—he wasn't hankering to follow Hadleyburg to heaven!

So that solution was a failure—he hadn't saved Goodson's soul. Richards was discouraged. Then after a little came another idea: had he saved Goodson's property? No, that wouldn't do—he hadn't any. His life? That is it! Of course. Why, he might have thought of it before. This time he was on the right track, sure. His imagination-mill was hard at work in a minute, now.

Thereafter, during a stretch of two exhausting hours, he was busy saving Goodson's life. He saved it in all kinds of difficult and perilous ways. In every case he got it saved satisfactorily up to a certain point; then, just as he was beginning to get well persuaded that it had really happened, a troublesome detail would turn up which made the whole thing impossible. As in the matter of drowning, for instance. In that case he had swum out and tugged Goodson ashore in an unconscious state with a great crowd looking on and applauding, but when he had got it all thought out and was just beginning to remember all about it, a whole swarm of disqualifying details arrived on the ground: the town would have known of the circumstance, Mary would have known of it, it would glare like a limelight in his own memory instead of being an inconspicuous service which he had possibly rendered “without knowing its full value.” And at this point he remembered that he couldn't swim anyway.

Ah—there was a point which he had been overlooking from the start: it had to be a service which he had rendered “possibly without knowing the full value of it.” Why, really, that ought to be an easy hunt—much easier than those others. And sure enough, by-and-by he found it. Goodson, years and years ago, came near marrying a very sweet and pretty girl, named Nancy Hewitt, but in some way or other the match had been broken off; the girl died, Goodson remained a bachelor, and by-and-by became a soured one and a frank despiser of the human species. Soon after the girl's death the village found out, or thought it had found out, that she carried a spoonful of negro blood in her veins. Richards worked at these details a good while, and in the end he thought he remembered things concerning them which must have gotten mislaid in his memory through long neglect. He seemed to dimly remember that it was he that found out about the negro blood; that it was he that told the village; that the village told Goodson where they got it; that he thus saved Goodson from marrying the tainted girl; that he had done him this great service “without knowing the full value of it,” in fact without knowing that he was doing it; but that Goodson knew the value of it, and what a narrow escape he had had, and so went to his grave grateful to his benefactor and wishing he had a fortune to leave him. It was all clear and simple, now, and the more he went over it the more luminous and certain it grew; and at last, when he nestled to sleep, satisfied and happy, he remembered the whole thing just as if it had been yesterday. In fact, he dimly remembered Goodson's telling him his gratitude once. Meantime Mary had spent six thousand dollars on a new house for herself and a pair of slippers for her pastor, and then had fallen peacefully to rest.

That same Saturday evening the postman had delivered a letter to each of the other principal citizens—nineteen letters in all. No two of the envelopes were alike, and no two of the superscriptions were in the same hand, but the letters inside were just like each other in every detail but one. They were exact copies of the letter received by Richards—handwriting and all—and were all signed by Stephenson, but in place of Richards's name each receiver's own name appeared.

All night long eighteen principal citizens did what their caste-brother Richards was doing at the same time—they put in their energies trying to remember what notable service it was that they had unconsciously done Barclay Goodson. In no case was it a holiday job; still they succeeded.

And while they were at this work, which was difficult, their wives put in the night spending the money, which was easy. During that one night the nineteen wives spent an average of seven thousand dollars each out of the forty thousand in the sack—a hundred and thirty-three thousand altogether.

Next day there was a surprise for Jack Halliday. He noticed that the faces of the nineteen chief citizens and their wives

bore that expression of peaceful and holy happiness again. He could not understand it, neither was he able to invent any remarks about it that could damage it or disturb it. And so it was his turn to be dissatisfied with life. His private guesses at the reasons for the happiness failed in all instances, upon examination. When he met Mrs. Wilcox and noticed the placid ecstasy in her face, he said to himself, "Her cat has had kittens"—and went and asked the cook; it was not so, the cook had detected the happiness, but did not know the cause. When Halliday found the duplicate ecstasy in the face of "Shadbelly" Billson (village nickname), he was sure some neighbour of Billson's had broken his leg, but inquiry showed that this had not happened. The subdued ecstasy in Gregory Yates's face could mean but one thing—he was a mother-in-law short; it was another mistake. "And Pinkerton—Pinkerton—he has collected ten cents that he thought he was going to lose." And so on, and so on. In some cases the guesses had to remain in doubt, in the others they proved distinct errors. In the end Halliday said to himself, "Anyway it roots up that there's nineteen Hadleyburg families temporarily in heaven: I don't know how it happened; I only know Providence is off duty to-day."

An architect and builder from the next State had lately ventured to set up a small business in this unpromising village, and his sign had now been hanging out a week. Not a customer yet; he was a discouraged man, and sorry he had come. But his weather changed suddenly now. First one and then another chief citizen's wife said to him privately:

"Come to my house Monday week—but say nothing about it for the present. We think of building."

He got eleven invitations that day. That night he wrote his daughter and broke off her match with her student. He said she could marry a mile higher than that.

Pinkerton the banker and two or three other well-to-do men planned country-seats—but waited. That kind don't count their chickens until they are hatched.

The Wilsons devised a grand new thing—a fancy-dress ball. They made no actual promises, but told all their acquaintanceship in confidence that they were thinking the matter over and thought they should give it—"and if we do, you will be invited, of course." People were surprised, and said, one to another, "Why, they are crazy, those poor Wilsons, they can't afford it." Several among the nineteen said privately to their husbands, "It is a good idea, we will keep still till their cheap thing is over, then we will give one that will make it sick."

The days drifted along, and the bill of future squanderings rose higher and higher, wilder and wilder, more and more foolish and reckless. It began to look as if every member of the nineteen would not only spend his whole forty thousand dollars before receiving-day, but be actually in debt by the time he got the money. In some cases light-headed people did not stop with planning to spend, they really spent—on credit. They bought land, mortgages, farms, speculative stocks, fine clothes, horses, and various other things, paid down the bonus, and made themselves liable for the rest—at ten days. Presently the sober second thought came, and Halliday noticed that a ghastly anxiety was beginning to show up in a good many faces. Again he was puzzled, and didn't know what to make of it. "The Wilcox kittens aren't dead, for they weren't born; nobody's broken a leg; there's no shrinkage in mother-in-laws; nothing has happened—it is an insolvable mystery."

There was another puzzled man, too—the Rev. Mr. Burgess. For days, wherever he went, people seemed to follow him or to be watching out for him; and if he ever found himself in a retired spot, a member of the nineteen would be sure to appear, thrust an envelope privately into his hand, whisper "To be opened at the town-hall Friday evening," then vanish away like a guilty thing. He was expecting that there might be one claimant for the sack—doubtful, however, Goodson being dead—but it never occurred to him that all this crowd might be claimants. When the great Friday came at last, he found that he had nineteen envelopes.

### III.

The town-hall had never looked finer. The platform at the end of it was backed by a showy draping of flags; at intervals along the walls were festoons of flags; the gallery fronts were clothed in flags; the supporting columns were swathed in flags; all this was to impress the stranger, for he would be there in considerable force, and in a large degree he would be connected with the press. The house was full. The 412 fixed seats were occupied; also the 68 extra chairs which had been packed into the aisles; the steps of the platform were occupied; some distinguished strangers were given seats on the platform; at the horseshoe of tables which fenced the front and sides of the platform sat a strong force of special correspondents who had come from everywhere. It was the best-dressed house the town had ever produced. There were some

tolerably expensive toilets there, and in several cases the ladies who wore them had the look of being unfamiliar with that kind of clothes. At least the town thought they had that look, but the notion could have arisen from the town's knowledge of the fact that these ladies had never inhabited such clothes before.

The gold-sack stood on a little table at the front of the platform where all the house could see it. The bulk of the house gazed at it with a burning interest, a mouth-watering interest, a wistful and pathetic interest; a minority of nineteen couples gazed at it tenderly, lovingly, proprietarily, and the male half of this minority kept saying over to themselves the moving little impromptu speeches of thankfulness for the audience's applause and congratulations which they were presently going to get up and deliver. Every now and then one of these got a piece of paper out of his vest pocket and privately glanced at it to refresh his memory.

Of course there was a buzz of conversation going on—there always is; but at last, when the Rev. Mr. Burgess rose and laid his hand on the sack, he could hear his microbes gnaw, the place was so still. He related the curious history of the sack, then went on to speak in warm terms of Hadleyburg's old and well-earned reputation for spotless honesty, and of the town's just pride in this reputation. He said that this reputation was a treasure of priceless value; that under Providence its value had now become inestimably enhanced, for the recent episode had spread this fame far and wide, and thus had focussed the eyes of the American world upon this village, and made its name for all time, as he hoped and believed, a synonym for commercial incorruptibility. [Applause.] "And who is to be the guardian of this noble fame—the community as a whole? No! The responsibility is individual, not communal. From this day forth each and every one of you is in his own person its special guardian, and individually responsible that no harm shall come to it. Do you—does each of you—accept this great trust? [Tumultuous assent.] Then all is well. Transmit it to your children and to your children's children. To-day your purity is beyond reproach—see to it that it shall remain so. To-day there is not a person in your community who could be beguiled to touch a penny not his own—see to it that you abide in this grace. ["We will! we will!"] This is not the place to make comparisons between ourselves and other communities—some of them ungracious towards us; they have their ways, we have ours; let us be content. [Applause.] I am done. Under my hand, my friends, rests a stranger's eloquent recognition of what we are; through him the world will always henceforth know what we are. We do not know who he is, but in your name I utter your gratitude, and ask you to raise your voices in indorsement."

The house rose in a body and made the walls quake with the thunders of its thankfulness for the space of a long minute. Then it sat down, and Mr. Burgess took an envelope out of his pocket. The house held its breath while he slit the envelope open and took from it a slip of paper. He read its contents—slowly and impressively—the audience listening with tranced attention to this magic document, each of whose words stood for an ingot of gold:

"The remark which I made to the distressed stranger was this: 'You are very far from being a bad man; go, and reform.'"" Then he continued:—"We shall know in a moment now whether the remark here quoted corresponds with the one concealed in the sack; and if that shall prove to be so—and it undoubtedly will—this sack of gold belongs to a fellow-citizen who will henceforth stand before the nation as the symbol of the special virtue which has made our town famous throughout the land—Mr. Billson!"

The house had gotten itself all ready to burst into the proper tornado of applause; but instead of doing it, it seemed stricken with a paralysis; there was a deep hush for a moment or two, then a wave of whispered murmurs swept the place—of about this tenor: "Billson! oh, come, this is too thin! Twenty dollars to a stranger—or anybody—Billson! Tell it to the marines!" And now at this point the house caught its breath all of a sudden in a new access of astonishment, for it discovered that whereas in one part of the hall Deacon Billson was standing up with his head weekly bowed, in another part of it Lawyer Wilson was doing the same. There was a wondering silence now for a while. Everybody was puzzled, and nineteen couples were surprised and indignant.

Billson and Wilson turned and stared at each other. Billson asked, bitinglly:

"Why do you rise, Mr. Wilson?"

"Because I have a right to. Perhaps you will be good enough to explain to the house why you rise."

"With great pleasure. Because I wrote that paper."

“It is an impudent falsity! I wrote it myself.”

It was Burgess’s turn to be paralysed. He stood looking vacantly at first one of the men and then the other, and did not seem to know what to do. The house was stupefied. Lawyer Wilson spoke up now, and said:

“I ask the Chair to read the name signed to that paper.”

That brought the Chair to itself, and it read out the name:

“John Wharton Billson.”

“There!” shouted Billson, “what have you got to say for yourself now? And what kind of apology are you going to make to me and to this insulted house for the imposture which you have attempted to play here?”

“No apologies are due, sir; and as for the rest of it, I publicly charge you with pilfering my note from Mr. Burgess and substituting a copy of it signed with your own name. There is no other way by which you could have gotten hold of the test-remark; I alone, of living men, possessed the secret of its wording.”

There was likely to be a scandalous state of things if this went on; everybody noticed with distress that the shorthand scribes were scribbling like mad; many people were crying “Chair, chair! Order! order!” Burgess rapped with his gavel, and said:

“Let us not forget the proprieties due. There has evidently been a mistake somewhere, but surely that is all. If Mr. Wilson gave me an envelope—and I remember now that he did—I still have it.”

He took one out of his pocket, opened it, glanced at it, looked surprised and worried, and stood silent a few moments. Then he waved his hand in a wandering and mechanical way, and made an effort or two to say something, then gave it up, despondently. Several voices cried out:

“Read it! read it! What is it?”

So he began, in a dazed and sleep-walker fashion:

“‘The remark which I made to the unhappy stranger was this: “You are far from being a bad man. [The house gazed at him marvelling.] Go, and reform.”’ [Murmurs: “Amazing! what can this mean?”] This one,” said the Chair, “is signed Thurlow G. Wilson.”

“There!” cried Wilson, “I reckon that settles it! I knew perfectly well my note was purloined.”

“Purloined!” retorted Billson. “I’ll let you know that neither you nor any man of your kidney must venture to—”

The Chair: “Order, gentlemen, order! Take your seats, both of you, please.”

They obeyed, shaking their heads and grumbling angrily. The house was profoundly puzzled; it did not know what to do with this curious emergency. Presently Thompson got up. Thompson was the hatter. He would have liked to be a Nineteener; but such was not for him; his stock of hats was not considerable enough for the position. He said:

“Mr. Chairman, if I may be permitted to make a suggestion, can both of these gentlemen be right? I put it to you, sir, can both have happened to say the very same words to the stranger? It seems to me—”

The tanner got up and interrupted him. The tanner was a disgruntled man; he believed himself entitled to be a Nineteener, but he couldn’t get recognition. It made him a little unpleasant in his ways and speech. Said he:

“Sho, that’s not the point! That could happen—twice in a hundred years—but not the other thing. Neither of them gave the twenty dollars!” [A ripple of applause.]

Billson. “I did!”

Wilson. “I did!”

Then each accused the other of pilfering.

The Chair. “Order! Sit down, if you please—both of you. Neither of the notes has been out of my possession at any moment.”

A Voice. “Good—that settles that!”

The Tanner. “Mr. Chairman, one thing is now plain: one of these men has been eavesdropping under the other one’s bed, and filching family secrets. If it is not unparliamentary to suggest it, I will remark that both are equal to it. [The Chair. “Order! order!”] I withdraw the remark, sir, and will confine myself to suggesting that if one of them has overheard the other reveal the test-remark to his wife, we shall catch him now.”

A Voice. “How?”

The Tanner. “Easily. The two have not quoted the remark in exactly the same words. You would have noticed that, if there hadn’t been a considerable stretch of time and an exciting quarrel inserted between the two readings.”

A Voice. “Name the difference.”

The Tanner. “The word very is in Billson’s note, and not in the other.”

Many Voices. “That’s so—he’s right!”

The Tanner. “And so, if the Chair will examine the test-remark in the sack, we shall know which of these two frauds—[The Chair. “Order!”]—which of these two adventurers—[The Chair. “Order! order!”]—which of these two gentlemen—[laughter and applause]—is entitled to wear the belt as being the first dishonest blatherskite ever bred in this town—which he has dishonoured, and which will be a sultry place for him from now out!” [Vigorous applause.]

Many Voices. “Open it!—open the sack!”

Mr. Burgess made a slit in the sack, slid his hand in, and brought out an envelope. In it were a couple of folded notes. He said:

“One of these is marked, ‘Not to be examined until all written communications which have been addressed to the Chair—if any—shall have been read.’ The other is marked ‘The Test.’ Allow me. It is worded—to wit:

“‘I do not require that the first half of the remark which was made to me by my benefactor shall be quoted with exactness, for it was not striking, and could be forgotten; but its closing fifteen words are quite striking, and I think easily rememberable; unless these shall be accurately reproduced, let the applicant be regarded as an impostor. My benefactor began by saying he seldom gave advice to anyone, but that it always bore the hall-mark of high value when he did give it. Then he said this—and it has never faded from my memory: ‘You are far from being a bad man—’”

Fifty Voices. “That settles it—the money’s Wilson’s! Wilson! Wilson! Speech! Speech!”

People jumped up and crowded around Wilson, wringing his hand and congratulating fervently—meantime the Chair was hammering with the gavel and shouting:



“Order, gentlemen! Order! Order! Let me finish reading, please.” When quiet was restored, the reading was resumed—as follows:

““Go, and reform—or, mark my words—some day, for your sins you will die and go to hell or Hadleyburg—TRY AND MAKE IT THE FORMER.””

A ghastly silence followed. First an angry cloud began to settle darkly upon the faces of the citizenship; after a pause the cloud began to rise, and a tickled expression tried to take its place; tried so hard that it was only kept under with great and painful difficulty; the reporters, the Brixtonites, and other strangers bent their heads down and shielded their faces with their hands, and managed to hold in by main strength and heroic courtesy. At this most inopportune time burst upon the stillness the roar of a solitary voice—Jack Halliday’s:

“That’s got the hall-mark on it!”

Then the house let go, strangers and all. Even Mr. Burgess’s gravity broke down presently, then the audience considered itself officially absolved from all restraint, and it made the most of its privilege. It was a good long laugh, and a tempestuously wholehearted one, but it ceased at last—long enough for Mr. Burgess to try to resume, and for the people to get their eyes partially wiped; then it broke out again, and afterward yet again; then at last Burgess was able to get out these serious words:

“It is useless to try to disguise the fact—we find ourselves in the presence of a matter of grave import. It involves the honour of your town—it strikes at the town’s good name. The difference of a single word between the test-remarks offered by Mr. Wilson and Mr. Billson was itself a serious thing, since it indicated that one or the other of these gentlemen had committed a theft—”

The two men were sitting limp, nerveless, crushed; but at these words both were electrified into movement, and started to get up.

“Sit down!” said the Chair, sharply, and they obeyed. “That, as I have said, was a serious thing. And it was—but for only one of them. But the matter has become graver; for the honour of both is now in formidable peril. Shall I go even further, and say in inextricable peril? Both left out the crucial fifteen words.” He paused. During several moments he allowed the pervading stillness to gather and deepen its impressive effects, then added: “There would seem to be but one way whereby this could happen. I ask these gentlemen—Was there collusion?—agreement?”

A low murmur sifted through the house; its import was, “He’s got them both.”

Billson was not used to emergencies; he sat in a helpless collapse. But Wilson was a lawyer. He struggled to his feet, pale and worried, and said:

“I ask the indulgence of the house while I explain this most painful matter. I am sorry to say what I am about to say, since it must inflict irreparable injury upon Mr. Billson, whom I have always esteemed and respected until now, and in whose invulnerability to temptation I entirely believed—as did you all. But for the preservation of my own honour I must speak—and with frankness. I confess with shame—and I now beseech your pardon for it—that I said to the ruined stranger all of the words contained in the test-remark, including the disparaging fifteen. [Sensation.] When the late publication was made I recalled them, and I resolved to claim the sack of coin, for by every right I was entitled to it. Now I will ask you to consider this point, and weigh it well; that stranger’s gratitude to me that night knew no bounds; he said himself that he could find no words for it that were adequate, and that if he should ever be able he would repay me a thousandfold. Now, then, I ask you this; could I expect—could I believe—could I even remotely imagine—that, feeling as he did, he would do so ungrateful a thing as to add those quite unnecessary fifteen words to his test?—set a trap for me?—expose me as a slanderer of my own town before my own people assembled in a public hall? It was preposterous; it was impossible. His test would contain only the kindly opening clause of my remark. Of that I had no shadow of doubt. You would have thought as I did. You would not have expected a base betrayal from one whom you had befriended and against whom you had committed no offence. And so with perfect confidence, perfect trust, I wrote on a piece of paper the opening words—ending with “Go, and reform,”—and signed it. When I was about to put it in an envelope I was called into my back office,

and without thinking I left the paper lying open on my desk.” He stopped, turned his head slowly toward Billson, waited a moment, then added: “I ask you to note this; when I returned, a little latter, Mr. Billson was retiring by my street door.” [Sensation.]

In a moment Billson was on his feet and shouting:

“It’s a lie! It’s an infamous lie!”

The Chair. “Be seated, sir! Mr. Wilson has the floor.”

Billson’s friends pulled him into his seat and quieted him, and Wilson went on:

“Those are the simple facts. My note was now lying in a different place on the table from where I had left it. I noticed that, but attached no importance to it, thinking a draught had blown it there. That Mr. Billson would read a private paper was a thing which could not occur to me; he was an honourable man, and he would be above that. If you will allow me to say it, I think his extra word ‘very’ stands explained: it is attributable to a defect of memory. I was the only man in the world who could furnish here any detail of the test-mark—by honourable means. I have finished.”

There is nothing in the world like a persuasive speech to fuddle the mental apparatus and upset the convictions and debauch the emotions of an audience not practised in the tricks and delusions of oratory. Wilson sat down victorious. The house submerged him in tides of approving applause; friends swarmed to him and shook him by the hand and congratulated him, and Billson was shouted down and not allowed to say a word. The Chair hammered and hammered with its gavel, and kept shouting:

“But let us proceed, gentlemen, let us proceed!”

At last there was a measurable degree of quiet, and the hatter said:

“But what is there to proceed with, sir, but to deliver the money?”

Voices. “That’s it! That’s it! Come forward, Wilson!”

The Hatter. “I move three cheers for Mr. Wilson, Symbol of the special virtue which—”

The cheers burst forth before he could finish; and in the midst of them—and in the midst of the clamour of the gavel also—some enthusiasts mounted Wilson on a big friend’s shoulder and were going to fetch him in triumph to the platform. The Chair’s voice now rose above the noise:

“Order! To your places! You forget that there is still a document to be read.” When quiet had been restored he took up the document, and was going to read it, but laid it down again saying “I forgot; this is not to be read until all written communications received by me have first been read.” He took an envelope out of his pocket, removed its enclosure, glanced at it—seemed astonished—held it out and gazed at it—stared at it.

Twenty or thirty voices cried out

“What is it? Read it! read it!”

And he did—slowly, and wondering:

“‘The remark which I made to the stranger—[Voices. “Hello! how’s this?”]—was this: ‘You are far from being a bad man. [Voices. “Great Scott!”] Go, and reform.’” [Voice. “Oh, saw my leg off!”] Signed by Mr. Pinkerton the banker.”

The pandemonium of delight which turned itself loose now was of a sort to make the judicious weep. Those whose withers were unwrung laughed till the tears ran down; the reporters, in throes of laughter, set down disordered pot-hooks

which would never in the world be decipherable; and a sleeping dog jumped up scared out of its wits, and barked itself crazy at the turmoil. All manner of cries were scattered through the din: "We're getting rich—two Symbols of Incorruptibility!—without counting Billson!" "Three!—count Shadbelly in—we can't have too many!" "All right—Billson's elected!" "Alas, poor Wilson! victim of two thieves!"

A Powerful Voice. "Silence! The Chair's fished up something more out of its pocket."

Voices. "Hurrah! Is it something fresh? Read it! read! read!"

The Chair [reading]. "'The remark which I made,' etc. 'You are far from being a bad man. Go,' etc. Signed, 'Gregory Yates.'"

Tornado of Voices. "Four Symbols!" "'Rah for Yates!" "Fish again!"

The house was in a roaring humour now, and ready to get all the fun out of the occasion that might be in it. Several Nineteeners, looking pale and distressed, got up and began to work their way towards the aisles, but a score of shouts went up:

"The doors, the doors—close the doors; no Incorruptible shall leave this place! Sit down, everybody!" The mandate was obeyed.

"Fish again! Read! read!"

The Chair fished again, and once more the familiar words began to fall from its lips—"You are far from being a bad man—"

"Name! name! What's his name?"

"'L. Ingoldsby Sargent.'"

"Five elected! Pile up the Symbols! Go on, go on!"

"'You are far from being a bad—'"

"Name! name!"

"'Nicholas Whitworth.'"

"Hooray! hooray! it's a symbolical day!"

Somebody wailed in, and began to sing this rhyme (leaving out "it's") to the lovely "Mikado" tune of "When a man's afraid of a beautiful maid;" the audience joined in, with joy; then, just in time, somebody contributed another line—

"And don't you this forget—"

The house roared it out. A third line was at once furnished—

"Corruptibles far from Hadleyburg are—"

The house roared that one too. As the last note died, Jack Halliday's voice rose high and clear, freighted with a final line—

"But the Symbols are here, you bet!"

That was sung, with booming enthusiasm. Then the happy house started in at the beginning and sang the four lines

through twice, with immense swing and dash, and finished up with a crashing three-times-three and a tiger for “Hadley-burg the Incorruptible and all Symbols of it which we shall find worthy to receive the hall-mark to-night.”

Then the shoutings at the Chair began again, all over the place:

“Go on! go on! Read! read some more! Read all you’ve got!”

“That’s it—go on! We are winning eternal celebrity!”

A dozen men got up now and began to protest. They said that this farce was the work of some abandoned joker, and was an insult to the whole community. Without a doubt these signatures were all forgeries—

“Sit down! sit down! Shut up! You are confessing. We’ll find your names in the lot.”

“Mr. Chairman, how many of those envelopes have you got?”

The Chair counted.

“Together with those that have been already examined, there are nineteen.”

A storm of derisive applause broke out.

“Perhaps they all contain the secret. I move that you open them all and read every signature that is attached to a note of that sort—and read also the first eight words of the note.”

“Second the motion!”

It was put and carried—uproariously. Then poor old Richards got up, and his wife rose and stood at his side. Her head was bent down, so that none might see that she was crying. Her husband gave her his arm, and so supporting her, he began to speak in a quavering voice:

“My friends, you have known us two—Mary and me—all our lives, and I think you have liked us and respected us—”

The Chair interrupted him:

“Allow me. It is quite true—that which you are saying, Mr. Richards; this town does know you two; it does like you; it does respect you; more—it honours you and loves you—”

Halliday’s voice rang out:

“That’s the hall-marked truth, too! If the Chair is right, let the house speak up and say it. Rise! Now, then—hip! hip! hip!—all together!”

The house rose in mass, faced toward the old couple eagerly, filled the air with a snow-storm of waving handkerchiefs, and delivered the cheers with all its affectionate heart.

The Chair then continued:

“What I was going to say is this: We know your good heart, Mr. Richards, but this is not a time for the exercise of charity toward offenders. [Shouts of “Right! right!”] I see your generous purpose in your face, but I cannot allow you to plead for these men—”

“But I was going to—”

“Please take your seat, Mr. Richards. We must examine the rest of these notes—simple fairness to the men who have already been exposed requires this. As soon as that has been done—I give you my word for this—you shall be heard.”

Many voices. “Right!—the Chair is right—no interruption can be permitted at this stage! Go on!—the names! the names!—according to the terms of the motion!”

The old couple sat reluctantly down, and the husband whispered to the wife, “It is pitifully hard to have to wait; the shame will be greater than ever when they find we were only going to plead for ourselves.”

Straightway the jollity broke loose again with the reading of the names.

“‘You are far from being a bad man—’ Signature, ‘Robert J. Titmarsh.’”

“‘You are far from being a bad man—’ Signature, ‘Eliphalet Weeks.’”

“‘You are far from being a bad man—’ Signature, ‘Oscar B. Wilder.’”

At this point the house lit upon the idea of taking the eight words out of the Chairman’s hands. He was not unthankful for that. Thenceforward he held up each note in its turn and waited. The house droned out the eight words in a massed and measured and musical deep volume of sound (with a daringly close resemblance to a well-known church chant)—“You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-a-d man.” Then the Chair said, “Signature, ‘Archibald Wilcox.’” And so on, and so on, name after name, and everybody had an increasingly and gloriously good time except the wretched Nineteen. Now and then, when a particularly shining name was called, the house made the Chair wait while it chanted the whole of the test-remark from the beginning to the closing words, “And go to hell or Hadleyburg—try and make it the for-or-m-e-r!” and in these special cases they added a grand and agonised and imposing “A-a-a-a-men!”

The list dwindled, dwindled, dwindled, poor old Richards keeping tally of the count, wincing when a name resembling his own was pronounced, and waiting in miserable suspense for the time to come when it would be his humiliating privilege to rise with Mary and finish his plea, which he was intending to word thus: “. . . for until now we have never done any wrong thing, but have gone our humble way unreprieved. We are very poor, we are old, and, have no chick nor child to help us; we were sorely tempted, and we fell. It was my purpose when I got up before to make confession and beg that my name might not be read out in this public place, for it seemed to us that we could not bear it; but I was prevented. It was just; it was our place to suffer with the rest. It has been hard for us. It is the first time we have ever heard our name fall from any one’s lips—sullied. Be merciful—for the sake of the better days; make our shame as light to bear as in your charity you can.” At this point in his reverie Mary nudged him, perceiving that his mind was absent. The house was chanting, “You are f-a-r,” etc.

“Be ready,” Mary whispered. “Your name comes now; he has read eighteen.”

The chant ended.

“Next! next! next!” came volleying from all over the house.

Burgess put his hand into his pocket. The old couple, trembling, began to rise. Burgess fumbled a moment, then said:

“I find I have read them all.”

Faint with joy and surprise, the couple sank into their seats, and Mary whispered:

“Oh, bless God, we are saved!—he has lost ours—I wouldn’t give this for a hundred of those sacks!”

The house burst out with its “Mikado” travesty, and sang it three times with ever-increasing enthusiasm, rising to its feet when it reached for the third time the closing line—

“But the Symbols are here, you bet!”

and finishing up with cheers and a tiger for “Hadleyburg purity and our eighteen immortal representatives of it.”

Then Wingate, the saddler, got up and proposed cheers “for the cleanest man in town, the one solitary important citizen in it who didn’t try to steal that money—Edward Richards.”

They were given with great and moving heartiness; then somebody proposed that “Richards be elected sole Guardian and Symbol of the now Sacred Hadleyburg Tradition, with power and right to stand up and look the whole sarcastic world in the face.”

Passed, by acclamation; then they sang the “Mikado” again, and ended it with—

“And there’s one Symbol left, you bet!”

There was a pause; then—

A Voice. “Now, then, who’s to get the sack?”

The Tanner (with bitter sarcasm). “That’s easy. The money has to be divided among the eighteen Incorruptibles. They gave the suffering stranger twenty dollars apiece—and that remark—each in his turn—it took twenty-two minutes for the procession to move past. Staked the stranger—total contribution, \$360. All they want is just the loan back—and interest—forty thousand dollars altogether.”

Many Voices [derisively.] “That’s it! Divvy! divvy! Be kind to the poor—don’t keep them waiting!”

The Chair. “Order! I now offer the stranger’s remaining document. It says: ‘If no claimant shall appear [grand chorus of groans], I desire that you open the sack and count out the money to the principal citizens of your town, they to take it in trust [Cries of “Oh! Oh! Oh!”], and use it in such ways as to them shall seem best for the propagation and preservation of your community’s noble reputation for incorruptible honesty [more cries]—a reputation to which their names and their efforts will add a new and far-reaching lustre.” [Enthusiastic outburst of sarcastic applause.] That seems to be all. No—here is a postscript:

“P.S.—CITIZENS OF HADLEYBURG: There is no test-remark—nobody made one. [Great sensation.] There wasn’t any pauper stranger, nor any twenty-dollar contribution, nor any accompanying benediction and compliment—these are all inventions. [General buzz and hum of astonishment and delight.] Allow me to tell my story—it will take but a word or two. I passed through your town at a certain time, and received a deep offence which I had not earned. Any other man would have been content to kill one or two of you and call it square, but to me that would have been a trivial revenge, and inadequate; for the dead do not suffer. Besides I could not kill you all—and, anyway, made as I am, even that would not have satisfied me. I wanted to damage every man in the place, and every woman—and not in their bodies or in their estate, but in their vanity—the place where feeble and foolish people are most vulnerable. So I disguised myself and came back and studied you. You were easy game. You had an old and lofty reputation for honesty, and naturally you were proud of it—it was your treasure of treasures, the very apple of your eye. As soon as I found out that you carefully and vigilantly kept yourselves and your children out of temptation, I knew how to proceed. Why, you simple creatures, the weakest of all weak things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire. I laid a plan, and gathered a list of names. My project was to corrupt Hadleyburg the Incorruptible. My idea was to make liars and thieves of nearly half a hundred smirchless men and women who had never in their lives uttered a lie or stolen a penny. I was afraid of Goodson. He was neither born nor reared in Hadleyburg. I was afraid that if I started to operate my scheme by getting my letter laid before you, you would say to yourselves, ‘Goodson is the only man among us who would give away twenty dollars to a poor devil’—and then you might not bite at my bait. But heaven took Goodson; then I knew I was safe, and I set my trap and baited it. It may be that I shall not catch all the men to whom I mailed the pretended test-secret, but I shall catch the most of them, if I know Hadleyburg nature. [Voices. “Right—he got every last one of them.”] I believe they will even steal ostensible gamble-money, rather than miss, poor, tempted, and mistreated fellows. I am hoping to eternally and everlastingly squelch your vanity and give Hadleyburg a new renown—one that will stick—and spread far. If I have succeeded,



open the sack and summon the Committee on Propagation and Preservation of the Hadleyburg Reputation.””

A Cyclone of Voices. “Open it! Open it! The Eighteen to the front! Committee on Propagation of the Tradition! Forward—the Incorruptibles!”

The Chair ripped the sack wide, and gathered up a handful of bright, broad, yellow coins, shook them together, then examined them.

“Friends, they are only gilded disks of lead!”

There was a crashing outbreak of delight over this news, and when the noise had subsided, the tanner called out:

“By right of apparent seniority in this business, Mr. Wilson is Chairman of the Committee on Propagation of the Tradition. I suggest that he step forward on behalf of his pals, and receive in trust the money.”

A Hundred Voices. “Wilson! Wilson! Wilson! Speech! Speech!”

Wilson [in a voice trembling with anger]. “You will allow me to say, and without apologies for my language, damn the money!”

A Voice. “Oh, and him a Baptist!”

A Voice. “Seventeen Symbols left! Step up, gentlemen, and assume your trust!”

There was a pause—no response.

The Saddler. “Mr. Chairman, we’ve got one clean man left, anyway, out of the late aristocracy; and he needs money, and deserves it. I move that you appoint Jack Halliday to get up there and auction off that sack of gilt twenty-dollar pieces, and give the result to the right man—the man whom Hadleyburg delights to honour—Edward Richards.”

This was received with great enthusiasm, the dog taking a hand again; the saddler started the bids at a dollar, the Brixton folk and Barnum’s representative fought hard for it, the people cheered every jump that the bids made, the excitement climbed moment by moment higher and higher, the bidders got on their mettle and grew steadily more and more daring, more and more determined, the jumps went from a dollar up to five, then to ten, then to twenty, then fifty, then to a hundred, then—

At the beginning of the auction Richards whispered in distress to his wife: “Oh, Mary, can we allow it? It—it—you see, it is an honour—reward, a testimonial to purity of character, and—and—can we allow it? Hadn’t I better get up and—Oh, Mary, what ought we to do?—what do you think we—” [Halliday’s voice. “Fifteen I’m bid!—fifteen for the sack!—twenty!—ah, thanks!—thirty—thanks again! Thirty, thirty, thirty!—do I hear forty?—forty it is! Keep the ball rolling, gentlemen, keep it rolling!—fifty!—thanks, noble Roman!—going at fifty, fifty, fifty!—seventy!—ninety!—splendid!—a hundred!—pile it up, pile it up!—hundred and twenty—forty!—just in time!—hundred and fifty!—Two hundred!—superb! Do I hear two h—thanks!—two hundred and fifty!—”]

“It is another temptation, Edward—I’m all in a tremble—but, oh, we’ve escaped one temptation, and that ought to warn us, to—[“Six did I hear?—thanks!—six fifty, six f—SEVEN hundred!”] And yet, Edward, when you think—nobody susp—[“Eight hundred dollars!—hurrah!—make it nine!—Mr. Parsons, did I hear you say—thanks!—nine!—this noble sack of virgin lead going at only nine hundred dollars, gilding and all—come! do I hear—a thousand!—gratefully yours!—did some one say eleven?—a sack which is going to be the most celebrated in the whole Uni—”] “Oh, Edward” (beginning to sob), “we are so poor!—but—but—do as you think best—do as you think best.”

Edward fell—that is, he sat still; sat with a conscience which was not satisfied, but which was overpowered by circumstances.

Meantime a stranger, who looked like an amateur detective gotten up as an impossible English earl, had been watching the evening's proceedings with manifest interest, and with a contented expression in his face; and he had been privately commenting to himself. He was now soliloquising somewhat like this: "None of the Eighteen are bidding; that is not satisfactory; I must change that—the dramatic unities require it; they must buy the sack they tried to steal; they must pay a heavy price, too—some of them are rich. And another thing, when I make a mistake in Hadleyburg nature the man that puts that error upon me is entitled to a high honorarium, and some one must pay. This poor old Richards has brought my judgment to shame; he is an honest man:—I don't understand it, but I acknowledge it. Yes, he saw my deuces—and with a straight flush, and by rights the pot is his. And it shall be a jack-pot, too, if I can manage it. He disappointed me, but let that pass."

He was watching the bidding. At a thousand, the market broke: the prices tumbled swiftly. He waited—and still watched. One competitor dropped out; then another, and another. He put in a bid or two now. When the bids had sunk to ten dollars, he added a five; some one raised him a three; he waited a moment, then flung in a fifty-dollar jump, and the sack was his—at \$1,282. The house broke out in cheers—then stopped; for he was on his feet, and had lifted his hand. He began to speak.

"I desire to say a word, and ask a favour. I am a speculator in rarities, and I have dealings with persons interested in numismatics all over the world. I can make a profit on this purchase, just as it stands; but there is a way, if I can get your approval, whereby I can make every one of these leaden twenty-dollar pieces worth its face in gold, and perhaps more. Grant me that approval, and I will give part of my gains to your Mr. Richards, whose invulnerable probity you have so justly and so cordially recognised to-night; his share shall be ten thousand dollars, and I will hand him the money to-morrow. [Great applause from the house. But the "invulnerable probity" made the Richardses blush prettily; however, it went for modesty, and did no harm.] If you will pass my proposition by a good majority—I would like a two-thirds vote—I will regard that as the town's consent, and that is all I ask. Rarities are always helped by any device which will rouse curiosity and compel remark. Now if I may have your permission to stamp upon the faces of each of these ostensible coins the names of the eighteen gentlemen who—"

Nine-tenths of the audience were on their feet in a moment—dog and all—and the proposition was carried with a whirlwind of approving applause and laughter.

They sat down, and all the Symbols except "Dr." Clay Harkness got up, violently protesting against the proposed outrage, and threatening to—

"I beg you not to threaten me," said the stranger calmly. "I know my legal rights, and am not accustomed to being frightened at bluster." [Applause.] He sat down. "Dr." Harkness saw an opportunity here. He was one of the two very rich men of the place, and Pinkerton was the other. Harkness was proprietor of a mint; that is to say, a popular patent medicine. He was running for the Legislature on one ticket, and Pinkerton on the other. It was a close race and a hot one, and getting hotter every day. Both had strong appetites for money; each had bought a great tract of land, with a purpose; there was going to be a new railway, and each wanted to be in the Legislature and help locate the route to his own advantage; a single vote might make the decision, and with it two or three fortunes. The stake was large, and Harkness was a daring speculator. He was sitting close to the stranger. He leaned over while one or another of the other Symbols was entertaining the house with protests and appeals, and asked, in a whisper,

"What is your price for the sack?"

"Forty thousand dollars."

"I'll give you twenty."

"No."

"Twenty-five."

"No."

“Say thirty.”

“The price is forty thousand dollars; not a penny less.”

“All right, I’ll give it. I will come to the hotel at ten in the morning. I don’t want it known; will see you privately.”

“Very good.” Then the stranger got up and said to the house:

“I find it late. The speeches of these gentlemen are not without merit, not without interest, not without grace; yet if I may be excused I will take my leave. I thank you for the great favour which you have shown me in granting my petition. I ask the Chair to keep the sack for me until to-morrow, and to hand these three five-hundred-dollar notes to Mr. Richards.” They were passed up to the Chair.

“At nine I will call for the sack, and at eleven will deliver the rest of the ten thousand to Mr. Richards in person at his home. Good-night.”

Then he slipped out, and left the audience making a vast noise, which was composed of a mixture of cheers, the “Mikado” song, dog-disapproval, and the chant, “You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-d man—a-a-a a-men!”

#### IV.

At home the Richardses had to endure congratulations and compliments until midnight. Then they were left to themselves. They looked a little sad, and they sat silent and thinking. Finally Mary sighed and said:

“Do you think we are to blame, Edward—much to blame?” and her eyes wandered to the accusing triplet of big bank-notes lying on the table, where the congratulators had been gloating over them and reverently fingering them. Edward did not answer at once; then he brought out a sigh and said, hesitatingly:

“We—we couldn’t help it, Mary. It—well it was ordered. All things are.”

Mary glanced up and looked at him steadily, but he didn’t return the look. Presently she said:

“I thought congratulations and praises always tasted good. But—it seems to me, now—Edward?”

“Well?”

“Are you going to stay in the bank?”

“N—no.”

“Resign?”

“In the morning—by note.”

“It does seem best.”

Richards bowed his head in his hands and muttered:

“Before I was not afraid to let oceans of people’s money pour through my hands, but—Mary, I am so tired, so tired—”

“We will go to bed.”

At nine in the morning the stranger called for the sack and took it to the hotel in a cab. At ten Harkness had a talk with him privately. The stranger asked for and got five cheques on a metropolitan bank—drawn to “Bearer,”—four for \$1,500

each, and one for \$34,000. He put one of the former in his pocket-book, and the remainder, representing \$38,500, he put in an envelope, and with these he added a note which he wrote after Harkness was gone. At eleven he called at the Richards' house and knocked. Mrs. Richards peeped through the shutters, then went and received the envelope, and the stranger disappeared without a word. She came back flushed and a little unsteady on her legs, and gasped out:

"I am sure I recognised him! Last night it seemed to me that maybe I had seen him somewhere before."

"He is the man that brought the sack here?"

"I am almost sure of it."

"Then he is the ostensible Stephenson too, and sold every important citizen in this town with his bogus secret. Now if he has sent cheques instead of money, we are sold too, after we thought we had escaped. I was beginning to feel fairly comfortable once more, after my night's rest, but the look of that envelope makes me sick. It isn't fat enough; \$8,500 in even the largest bank-notes makes more bulk than that."

"Edward, why do you object to cheques?"

"Cheques signed by Stephenson! I am resigned to take the \$8,500 if it could come in bank-notes—for it does seem that it was so ordered, Mary—but I have never had much courage, and I have not the pluck to try to market a cheque signed with that disastrous name. It would be a trap. That man tried to catch me; we escaped somehow or other; and now he is trying a new way. If it is cheques—"

"Oh, Edward, it is too bad!" And she held up the cheques and began to cry.

"Put them in the fire! quick! we mustn't be tempted. It is a trick to make the world laugh at us, along with the rest, and—Give them to me, since you can't do it!" He snatched them and tried to hold his grip till he could get to the stove; but he was human, he was a cashier, and he stopped a moment to make sure of the signature. Then he came near to fainting.

"Fan me, Mary, fan me! They are the same as gold!"

"Oh, how lovely, Edward! Why?"

"Signed by Harkness. What can the mystery of that be, Mary?"

"Edward, do you think—"

"Look here—look at this! Fifteen—fifteen—fifteen—thirty-four. Thirty-eight thousand five hundred! Mary, the sack isn't worth twelve dollars, and Harkness—apparently—has paid about par for it."

"And does it all come to us, do you think—instead of the ten thousand?"

"Why, it looks like it. And the cheques are made to 'Bearer,' too."

"Is that good, Edward? What is it for?"

"A hint to collect them at some distant bank, I reckon. Perhaps Harkness doesn't want the matter known. What is that—a note?"

"Yes. It was with the cheques."

It was in the "Stephenson" handwriting, but there was no signature. It said:

"I am a disappointed man. Your honesty is beyond the reach of temptation. I had a different idea about it, but I wronged

you in that, and I beg pardon, and do it sincerely. I honour you—and that is sincere too. This town is not worthy to kiss the hem of your garment. Dear sir, I made a square bet with myself that there were nineteen debauchable men in your self-righteous community. I have lost. Take the whole pot, you are entitled to it.”

Richards drew a deep sigh, and said:

“It seems written with fire—it burns so. Mary—I am miserable again.”

“I, too. Ah, dear, I wish—”

“To think, Mary—he believes in me.”

“Oh, don’t, Edward—I can’t bear it.”

“If those beautiful words were deserved, Mary—and God knows I believed I deserved them once—I think I could give the forty thousand dollars for them. And I would put that paper away, as representing more than gold and jewels, and keep it always. But now—We could not live in the shadow of its accusing presence, Mary.”

He put it in the fire.

A messenger arrived and delivered an envelope. Richards took from it a note and read it; it was from Burgess:

“You saved me, in a difficult time. I saved you last night. It was at cost of a lie, but I made the sacrifice freely, and out of a grateful heart. None in this village knows so well as I know how brave and good and noble you are. At bottom you cannot respect me, knowing as you do of that matter of which I am accused, and by the general voice condemned; but I beg that you will at least believe that I am a grateful man; it will help me to bear my burden. [Signed] ‘BURGESS.’”

“Saved, once more. And on such terms!” He put the note in the fire. “I—I wish I were dead, Mary, I wish I were out of it all!”

“Oh, these are bitter, bitter days, Edward. The stabs, through their very generosity, are so deep—and they come so fast!”

Three days before the election each of two thousand voters suddenly found himself in possession of a prized memento—one of the renowned bogus double-eagles. Around one of its faces was stamped these words: “THE REMARK I MADE TO THE POOR STRANGER WAS—” Around the other face was stamped these: “GO, AND REFORM. [SIGNED] PINKERTON.” Thus the entire remaining refuse of the renowned joke was emptied upon a single head, and with calamitous effect. It revived the recent vast laugh and concentrated it upon Pinkerton; and Harkness’s election was a walk-over.

Within twenty-four hours after the Richardses had received their cheques their consciences were quieting down, discouraged; the old couple were learning to reconcile themselves to the sin which they had committed. But they were to learn, now, that a sin takes on new and real terrors when there seems a chance that it is going to be found out. This gives it a fresh and most substantial and important aspect. At church the morning sermon was of the usual pattern; it was the same old things said in the same old way; they had heard them a thousand times and found them innocuous, next to meaningless, and easy to sleep under; but now it was different: the sermon seemed to bristle with accusations; it seemed aimed straight and specially at people who were concealing deadly sins. After church they got away from the mob of congratulators as soon as they could, and hurried homeward, chilled to the bone at they did not know what—vague, shadowy, indefinite fears. And by chance they caught a glimpse of Mr. Burgess as he turned a corner. He paid no attention to their nod of recognition! He hadn’t seen it; but they did not know that. What could his conduct mean? It might mean—it might—mean—oh, a dozen dreadful things. Was it possible that he knew that Richards could have cleared him of guilt in that bygone time, and had been silently waiting for a chance to even up accounts? At home, in their distress they got to imagining that their servant might have been in the next room listening when Richards revealed the secret to his wife that he knew of Burgess’s innocence; next Richards began to imagine that he had heard the swish of a gown in there at that time; next, he was sure he had heard it. They would call Sarah in, on a pretext, and watch her face; if she had been betraying them to Mr. Burgess, it would show in her manner. They asked her some questions—questions which were so random and incoherent and seemingly purposeless that the girl felt sure that the old people’s minds had been affected by

their sudden good fortune; the sharp and watchful gaze which they bent upon her frightened her, and that completed the business. She blushed, she became nervous and confused, and to the old people these were plain signs of guilt—guilt of some fearful sort or other—without doubt she was a spy and a traitor. When they were alone again they began to piece many unrelated things together and get horrible results out of the combination. When things had got about to the worst Richards was delivered of a sudden gasp and his wife asked:

“Oh, what is it?—what is it?”

“The note—Burgess’s note! Its language was sarcastic, I see it now.” He quoted: “‘At bottom you cannot respect me, knowing, as you do, of that matter of which I am accused’—oh, it is perfectly plain, now, God help me! He knows that I know! You see the ingenuity of the phrasing. It was a trap—and like a fool, I walked into it. And Mary—!”

“Oh, it is dreadful—I know what you are going to say—he didn’t return your transcript of the pretended test-remark.”

“No—kept it to destroy us with. Mary, he has exposed us to some already. I know it—I know it well. I saw it in a dozen faces after church. Ah, he wouldn’t answer our nod of recognition—he knew what he had been doing!”

In the night the doctor was called. The news went around in the morning that the old couple were rather seriously ill—prostrated by the exhausting excitement growing out of their great windfall, the congratulations, and the late hours, the doctor said. The town was sincerely distressed; for these old people were about all it had left to be proud of, now.

Two days later the news was worse. The old couple were delirious, and were doing strange things. By witness of the nurses, Richards had exhibited cheques—for \$8,500? No—for an amazing sum—\$38,500! What could be the explanation of this gigantic piece of luck?

The following day the nurses had more news—and wonderful. They had concluded to hide the cheques, lest harm come to them; but when they searched they were gone from under the patient’s pillow—vanished away. The patient said:

“Let the pillow alone; what do you want?”

“We thought it best that the cheques—”

“You will never see them again—they are destroyed. They came from Satan. I saw the hell-brand on them, and I knew they were sent to betray me to sin.” Then he fell to gabbling strange and dreadful things which were not clearly understandable, and which the doctor admonished them to keep to themselves.

Richards was right; the cheques were never seen again.

A nurse must have talked in her sleep, for within two days the forbidden gabblings were the property of the town; and they were of a surprising sort. They seemed to indicate that Richards had been a claimant for the sack himself, and that Burgess had concealed that fact and then maliciously betrayed it.

Burgess was taxed with this and stoutly denied it. And he said it was not fair to attach weight to the chatter of a sick old man who was out of his mind. Still, suspicion was in the air, and there was much talk.

After a day or two it was reported that Mrs. Richards’s delirious deliveries were getting to be duplicates of her husband’s. Suspicion flamed up into conviction, now, and the town’s pride in the purity of its one undiscredited important citizen began to dim down and flicker toward extinction.

Six days passed, then came more news. The old couple were dying. Richards’s mind cleared in his latest hour, and he sent for Burgess. Burgess said:

“Let the room be cleared. I think he wishes to say something in privacy.”



“No!” said Richards; “I want witnesses. I want you all to hear my confession, so that I may die a man, and not a dog. I was clean—artificially—like the rest; and like the rest I fell when temptation came. I signed a lie, and claimed the miserable sack. Mr. Burgess remembered that I had done him a service, and in gratitude (and ignorance) he suppressed my claim and saved me. You know the thing that was charged against Burgess years ago. My testimony, and mine alone, could have cleared him, and I was a coward and left him to suffer disgrace—”

“No—no—Mr. Richards, you—”

“My servant betrayed my secret to him—”

“No one has betrayed anything to me—”

—“And then he did a natural and justifiable thing; he repented of the saving kindness which he had done me, and he exposed me—as I deserved—”

“Never!—I make oath—”

“Out of my heart I forgive him.”

Burgess’s impassioned protestations fell upon deaf ears; the dying man passed away without knowing that once more he had done poor Burgess a wrong. The old wife died that night.

The last of the sacred Nineteen had fallen a prey to the fiendish sack; the town was stripped of the last rag of its ancient glory. Its mourning was not showy, but it was deep.

By act of the Legislature—upon prayer and petition—Hadleyburg was allowed to change its name to (never mind what—I will not give it away), and leave one word out of the motto that for many generations had graced the town’s official seal.

It is an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again.

## “A True Story, Word for Word As I Heard It” by Mark Twain

It was summer time, and twilight. We were sitting on the porch of the farm-house, on the summit of the hill, and “Aunt Rachel” was sitting respectfully below our level, on the steps,—for she was our servant, and colored. She was of mighty frame and stature; she was sixty years old, but her eye was undimmed and her strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, and it was no more trouble for her to laugh than it is for a bird to sing. She was under fire, now, as usual when the day was done. That is to say, she was being chaffed without mercy, and was enjoying it. She would let off peal after peal of laughter, and then sit with her face in her hands and shake with throes of enjoyment which she could no longer get breath enough to express. At such a moment as this a thought occurred to me, and I said:—

“Aunt Rachel, how is it that you ’ve lived sixty years and never had any trouble?”

She stopped quaking. She paused, and there was a moment of silence. She turned her face over her shoulder toward me, and said, without even a smile in her voice:—

“Misto C , is you in ’arnest?”

It surprised me a good deal; and it sobered my manner and my speech, too. I said:—

“Why, I thought—that is, I meant—why, you can’t have had any trouble. I’ve never heard you sigh, and never seen your eye when there wasn’t a laugh in it.”

She faced fairly around, now, and was full of earnestness.

“Has I had any trouble? Misto C , I’s gwyne to tell you, den I leave it to you. I was bawn down ’mongst de slaves; I knows all ’bout slavery, ’case I ben one of ’em my own se’f. Well, sah, my ole man—dat’s my hus-ban’—he was lovin’ an’ kind to me, jist as kind as you is to yo’ own wife. An’ we had chil’en—seven chil’en—an’ we loved dem chil’en jist de same as you loves yo’ chil’en. Dey was black, but de Lord can’t make no chil’en so black but what dey mother loves ’em an’ wouldn’t give ’em up, no, not for anything dat’s in dis whole world.

“Well, sah, I was raised in Ole Fo’-ginny, but my mother she was raised in Maryland; an’ my souls! she was turrible when she’d git started! My lan’! but she’d make de fur fly! When she’d git into dem tantrums, she always had one word dat she said. She’d straighten herse’f up an’ put her fists in her hips an’ say, ‘I want you to understan’ dat I wa’ n’t bawn in de mash to be fool’ by trash! I’s one o’ de ole Blue Hen’s Chickens, I is!’ ’Ca’s’e, you see, dat’s what folks dat’s bawn in Maryland calls deyselves, an’ dey’s proud of it. Well, dat was her word. I don’t ever forgit it, beca’s’e she said it so much, an’ beca’s’e she said it one day when my little Henry tore his wris’ awful, an’ most busted his head, right up at de top of his forehead, an’ de niggers did n’t fly aroun’ fas’ enough to ’tend to him. An’ when dey talk’ back at her, she up an’ she says, ‘Look-a-heah!’ she says, ‘I want you niggers to understan’ dat I wa’ n’t bawn in de mash to be fool’ by trash! I’s one o’ de ole Blue Hen’s Chickens, I is!’ an’ den she clar’ dat kitchen an’ bandage’ up de chile herse’f. So I says dat word, too, when I’s riled.

“Well, bymeby my ole mistis say she’s broke, an’ she got to sell all de niggers on de place. An’ when I heah dat dey gwyne to sell us all off at oction in Richmon’, oh de good gracious! I know what dat mean!”

Aunt Rachel had gradually risen, while she warmed to her subject, and now she towered above us, black against the stars.

“Dey put chains on us an’ put us on a stan’ as high as dis po’ch,—twenty foot high,—an’ all de people stood

aroun', crowds an' crowds. An' dey'd come up dah an' look at us all roun', an' squeeze our arm, an' make us git up an' walk, an' den say, 'Dis one too ole,' or 'Dis one lame,' or 'Dis one don't 'mount to much.' An' dey sole my ole man, an' took him away, an' dey begin to sell my chil'en an' take dem away, an' I begin to cry; an' de man say, 'Shet up yo' dam blubberin',' an' hit me on de mouf wid his han'. An' when de las' one was gone but my little Henry, I grab' him clost up to my breas' so, an' I ris up an' says, 'You shan't take him away,' I says; 'I'll kill de man dat tetches him!' I says. But my little Henry whisper an' say, 'I gwyne to run away, an' den I work an' buy yo' freedom.' Oh, bless de chile, he always so good! But dey got him—dey got him, de men did; but I took and tear de clo'es mos' off of 'em, an' beat 'em over de head wid my chain; an' dey give it to me, too, but I did n't mine dat.

"Well, dah was my ole man gone, an' all my chil'en, all my seven chil'en—an' six of 'em I hain't set eyes on ag'in to dis day, an' dat's twenty-two year ago las' Easter. De man dat bought me b'long' in Newbern, an' he took me dah. Well, bymeby de years roll on an' de waw come. My marster he was a Confedrit colonel, an' I was his family's cook. So when de Unions took dat town, dey all run away an' lef' me all by myse'f wid de other niggers in dat mons'us big house. So de big Union officers move in dah, an' dey ask would I cook for dem. 'Lord bless you,' says I, 'dat's what I's for.'

"Dey wa' n't no small-fry officers, mine you, dey was de biggest dey is; an' de way dey made dem sojers mosey roun'! De Gen'l he tole me to boss dat kitchen; an' he say, 'If anybody come meddlin' wid you, you jist make 'em walk chalk; don't you be afeard,' he say; 'you's 'mong frens, now.'

"Well, I thinks to myse'f, if my little Henry ever got a chance to run away, he 'd make to de Norf, o' course. So one day I comes in dah whah de big officers was, in de parlor, an' I drops a kurtchy, so, an' I up an' tole 'em 'bout my Henry, dey a-listenin' to my troubles jist de same as if I was white folks; an' I says, 'What I come for is beca'se if he got away and got up Norf whah you gemmen comes from, you might 'a' seen him, maybe, an' could tell me so as I could fine him ag'in; he was very little, an' he had a sk-yar on his lef' wris', an' at de top of his forehead.' Den dey mournful, an' de Gen'l say, 'How long sence you los' him?' an' I say, 'Thirteen year.' Den de Gen'l say, 'He would n't be little no mo', now—he's a man!'

"I never thought o' dat befo'! He was only dat little feller to me, yit. I never thought 'bout him growin' up an' bein' big. But I see it den. None o' de gemmen had run acrost him, so dey could n't do nothin' for me. But all dat time, do' I did n't know it, my Henry was run off to de Norf, years an' years, an' he was a barber, too, an' worked for hisse'f. An' bymeby, when de waw come, he ups an' he says, 'I's done barberin',' he says; 'I's gwyne to fine my ole mammy, less'n she's dead.' So he sole out an' went to whah dey was recruitin', an' hired hisse'f out to de colonel for his servant; an' den he went all froo de battles everywhah, huntin' for his ole mammy; yes indeedy, he'd hire to fust one officer an' den another, tell he 'd ransacked de whole Souf; but you see I did n't know nuffin 'bout dis. How was I gwyne to know it?

"Well, one night we had a big sojer ball; de sojers dah at Newbern was always havin' balls an' carryin' on. Dey had 'em in my kitchen, heaps o' times, 'ca'se it was so big. Mine you, I was down on sich doin's; beca'se my place was wid de officers, an' it rasp' me to have dem common sojers cavortin' roun' my kitchen like dat. But I alway' stood aroun' an' kep' things straight, I did; an' sometimes dey'd git my dander up, an' den I'd make 'em clar dat kitchen, mine I tell you!

"Well, one night—it was a Friday night—dey comes a whole platoon f'm a nigger ridgment dat was on guard at de house,—de house was head-quarters, you know,—an' den I was jist a-bilin'! Mad? I was jist a-boomin'! I swelled aroun', an' swelled aroun'; I jist was a-itchin' for 'em to do somefin for to start me. An' dey was a-waltzin' an a-dancin'! my! but dey was havin' a time! an' I jist a-swellin' an' a-swellin' up! Pooty soon, 'long comes sich a spruce young nigger a-sailin' down de room wid a yaller wench roun' de wais'; an' roun' an' roun' an' roun' dey went, enough to make a body drunk to look at 'em; an' when dey got abreas' o' me, dey went to

kin' o' balancin' aroun', fust on one leg, an' den on t'other, an' smilin' at my big red turban, an' makin' fun, an' I ups an' says, 'Git along wid you!—rubbage!' De young man's face kin' o' changed, all of a sudden, for 'bout a second, but den he went to smilin' ag'in, same as he was befo'. Well, 'bout dis time, in comes some niggers dat played music an' b'long' to de ban', an' dey never could git along widout puttin' on airs. An' de very fust air dey put on dat night, I lit into 'em! Dey laughed, an' dat made me wuss. De res' o' de niggers got to laughin', an' den my soul alive but I was hot! My eye was jist a-blazin'! I jist straightened myself up, so,—jist as I is now, plum to de ceilin', mos',—an' I digs my fists into my hips, an' I says, 'Look-a-heah!' I says, 'I want you niggers to understan' dat I wa' n't bawn in de mash to be fool' by trash! I's one o' de ole Blue Hen's Chickens, I is!' an' den I see dat young man stan' a-starin' an' stiff, lookin' kin' o' up at de ceilin' like he fo'got somefin, an' could n't 'member it no mo'. Well, I jist march' on dem niggers,—so, lookin' like a gen'l,—an' dey jist cave' away befo' me an' out at de do'. An' as dis young man was a-goin' out, I heah him say to another nigger, 'Jim,' he says, 'you go 'long an' tell de cap'n I be on han' 'bout eight o'clock in de mawnin'; dey's somefin on my mine,' he says; 'I don't sleep no mo' dis night. You go 'long,' he says, 'an' leave me by my own se'f.'

"Dis was 'bout one o'clock in de mawnin'. Well, 'bout seven, I was up an' on han', gittin' de officers' breakfast. I was a-stoopin' down by de stove,—jist so, same as if yo' foot was de stove,—an' I'd opened de stove do wid my right han',—so, pushin' it back, jist as I pushes yo' foot,—an' I'd jist got de pan o' hot biscuits in my han' an' was 'bout to raise up, when I see a black face come aroun' under mine, an' de eyes a-lookin' up into mine, jist as I's a-lookin' up clost under yo' face now; an' I jist stopped right dah, an' never budged! jist gazed, an' gazed, so; an' de pan begin to tremble, an' all of a sudden I knowed! De pan drop' on de flo' an' I grab his lef' han' an' shove back his sleeve,—jist so, as I's doin' to you,—an' den I goes for his forehead an' push de hair back, so, an' 'Boy!' I says, 'if you an't my Henry, what is you doin' wid dis welt on yo' wris' an' dat sk-yar on yo' forehead? De Lord God ob heaven be praise', I got my own ag'in!"

"Oh, no, Misto C, I hain't had no trouble. An' no joy!"

# Excerpt from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

## Chapter 35

Judge Thatcher hoped to see Tom a great lawyer or a great soldier some day. He said he meant to look to it that Tom should be admitted to the National Military Academy and afterward trained in the best law school in the country, in order that he might be ready for either career or both.

Huck Finn's wealth and the fact that he was now under the Widow Douglas' protection introduced him into society—no, dragged him into it, hurled him into it—and his sufferings were almost more than he could bear. The widow's servants kept him clean and neat, combed and brushed, and they bedded him nightly in unsympathetic sheets that had not one little spot or stain which he could press to his heart and know for a friend. He had to eat with a knife and fork; he had to use napkin, cup, and plate; he had to learn his book, he had to go to church; he had to talk so properly that speech was become insipid in his mouth; whithersoever he turned, the bars and shackles of civilization shut him in and bound him hand and foot. He bravely bore his miseries three weeks, and then one day turned up missing. For forty-eight hours the widow hunted for him everywhere in great distress. The public were profoundly concerned; they searched high and low, they dragged the river for his body. Early the third morning Tom Sawyer wisely went poking among some old empty hogsheads down behind the abandoned slaughter-house, and in one of them he found the refugee. Huck had slept there; he had just breakfasted upon some stolen odds and ends of food, and was lying off, now, in comfort, with his pipe. He was unkempt, uncombed, and clad in the same old ruin of rags that had made him picturesque in the days when he was free and happy. Tom routed him out, told him the trouble he had been causing, and urged him to go home. Huck's face lost its tranquil content, and took a melancholy cast. He said:

“Don't talk about it, Tom. I've tried it, and it don't work; it don't work, Tom. It ain't for me; I ain't used to it. The widder's good to me, and friendly; but I can't stand them ways. She makes me get up just at the same time every morning; she makes me wash, they comb me all to thunder; she won't let me sleep in the woodshed; I got to wear them blamed clothes that just smothers me, Tom; they don't seem to any air git through 'em, somehow; and they're so rotten nice that I can't set down, nor lay down, nor roll around anywhers; I hain't slid on a cellar-door for—well, it 'pears to be years; I got to go to church and sweat and sweat—I hate them ornery sermons! I can't ketch a fly in there, I can't chew. I got to wear shoes all Sunday. The widder eats by a bell; she goes to bed by a bell; she gits up by a bell—everything's so awful reg'lar a body can't stand it.”

“Well, everybody does that way, Huck.”

“Tom, it don't make no difference. I ain't everybody, and I can't stand it. It's awful to be tied up so. And grub comes too easy—I don't take no interest in vittles, that way. I got to ask to go a-fishing; I got to ask to go in a-swimming—dern'd if I hain't got to ask to do everything. Well, I'd got to talk so nice it wasn't no comfort—I'd got to go up in the attic and rip out awhile, every day, to git a taste in my mouth, or I'd a died, Tom. The widder wouldn't let me smoke; she wouldn't let me yell, she wouldn't let me gape, nor stretch, nor scratch, before folks—” [Then with a spasm of special irritation and injury]—“And dad fetch it, she prayed all the time! I never see such a woman! I had to shove, Tom—I just had to. And besides, that school's going to open, and I'd a had to go to it—well, I wouldn't stand that, Tom. Looky-here, Tom, being rich ain't what it's cracked up to be. It's just worry and worry, and sweat and sweat, and a-wishing you was dead all the time. Now these clothes suits me, and this bar'l suits me, and I ain't ever going to shake 'em any more. Tom, I wouldn't ever got into all this trouble if it hadn't 'a' ben for that money; now you just take my sheer of it along with your'n, and gimme a ten-center sometimes—not many times, becuz I don't give a dern for a thing 'thout it's tollable hard to git—and you go and beg off for me with the widder.”

“Oh, Huck, you know I can't do that. 'Tain't fair; and besides if you'll try this thing just a while longer you'll

come to like it.”

“Like it! Yes—the way I’d like a hot stove if I was to set on it long enough. No, Tom, I won’t be rich, and I won’t live in them cussed smothery houses. I like the woods, and the river, and hogsheads, and I’ll stick to ‘em, too. Blame it all! just as we’d got guns, and a cave, and all just fixed to rob, here this dern foolishness has got to come up and spile it all!”

Tom saw his opportunity—



# Excerpts from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

## Chapter 16

I was sorry to hear Jim say that, it was such a lowering of him. My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it, "Let up on me—it ain't too late yet—I'll paddle ashore at the first light and tell." I felt easy and happy and light as a feather right off. All my troubles was gone. I went to looking out sharp for a light, and sort of singing to myself. By and by one showed. Jim sings out: "We's safe, Huck, we's safe! Jump up and crack yo' heels! Dat's de good ole Cairo at las', I jis knows it!" I says: "I'll take the canoe and go and see, Jim. It mightn't be, you know." He jumped and got the canoe ready, and put his old coat in the bottom for me to set on, and give me the paddle; and as I shoved off, he says: "Pooty soon I'll be a-shout'n' for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck; I's a free man, en I couldn't ever ben free ef it hadn' ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had; en you's de only fren' ole Jim's got now." I was paddling off, all in a sweat to tell on him; but when he says this, it seemed to kind of take the tuck all out of me. I went along slow then, and I warn't right down certain whether I was glad I started or whether I warn't. When I was fifty yards off, Jim says: "Dah you goes, de ole true Huck; de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim." Well, I just felt sick. But I says, I got to do it—I can't get out of it.

## Chapter 18

"Mars Jawge, if you'll come down into de swamp I'll show you a whole stack o' water-moccasins." Thinks I, that's mighty curious; he said that yesterday. He oughter know a body don't love water-moccasins enough to go around hunting for them. What is he up to, anyway? So I says: "All right; trot ahead." I followed a half a mile; then he struck out over the swamp, and waded ankle deep as much as another half-mile. We come to a little flat piece of land which was dry and very thick with trees and bushes and vines, and he says: "You shove right in dah jist a few steps, Mars Jawge; dah's whah dey is. I's seed 'm befo'; I don't k'yer to see 'em no mo'." Then he slopped right along and went away, and pretty soon the trees hid him. I poked into the place a-ways and come to a little open patch as big as a bedroom all hung around with vines, and found a man laying there asleep—and, by jings, it was my old Jim! I waked him up, and I reckoned it was going to be a grand surprise to him to see me again, but it warn't. He nearly cried he was so glad, but he warn't surprised. Said he swum along behind me that night, and heard me yell every time, but dasn't answer, because he didn't want nobody to pick him up and take him into slavery again. Says he: "I got hurt a little, en couldn't swim fas', so I wuz a considerable ways behine you towards de las'; when you landed I reck'ned I could ketch up wid you on de lan' 'dout havin' to shout at you, but when I see dat house I begin to go slow. I 'uz off too fur to hear what dey say to you—I wuz 'fraid o' de dogs; but when it 'uz all quiet agin I knowed you's in de house, so I struck out for de woods to wait for day. Early in de mawnin' some er de niggers come along, gwyne to de fields, en dey tuk me en showed me dis place, whah de dogs can't track me on accounts o' de water, en dey brings me truck to eat every night, en tells me how you's a-gitt'n along." "Why didn't you tell my Jack to fetch me here sooner, Jim?" "Well, 'twarn't no use to 'sturb you, Huck, tell we could do sumfn—but we's all right now. I ben a-buyin' pots en pans en vittles, as I got a chanst, en a-patchin' up de raf' nights when—" "What raft, Jim?" "Our ole raf'." "You mean to say our old raft warn't smashed all to flinders?" "No, she warn't. She was tore up a good deal—one en' of her was; but dey warn't no great harm done, on'y our traps was mos' all los'. Ef we hadn' dive' so deep en swum so fur under water, en de night hadn' ben so dark, en we warn't so sk'yerd, en ben sich punkin-heads, as de sayin' is, we'd a seed de raf'. But it's jis' as well we didn't, 'kase now she's all fixed up agin mos' as good as new, en we's got a new lot o' stuff, in de place o' what 'uz los'."

## Excerpt from *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Mark Twain

Yes, she was satisfied now, and quite happy and sentimental over it. She kept coming daily, and at last she was told that Tom had come home. She began to tremble with emotion, and straightway sent to beg him to let his “po’ ole nigger Mammy have jes one sight of him en die for joy.”

Tom was stretched at his lazy ease on a sofa when Chambers brought the petition. Time had not modified his ancient detestation of the humble drudge and protector of his boyhood; it was still bitter and uncompromising. He sat up and bent a severe gaze upon the face of the young fellow whose name he was unconsciously using and whose family rights he was enjoying. He maintained the gaze until the victim of it had become satisfactorily pallid with terror, then he said:

“What does the old rip want with me?”

The petition was meekly repeated.

“Who gave you permission to come and disturb me with the social attentions of niggers?”

Tom had risen. The other young man was trembling now, visibly. He saw what was coming, and bent his head sideways, and put up his left arm to shield it. Tom rained cuffs upon the head and its shield, saying no word: the victim received each blow with a beseeching, “Please, Marse Tom!—oh, please, Marse Tom!” Seven blows—then Tom said, “Face the door—march!” He followed behind with one, two, three solid kicks. The last one helped the pure-white slave over the door-sill, and he limped away mopping his eyes with his old, ragged sleeve. Tom shouted after him, “Send her in!”

Then he flung himself panting on the sofa again, and rasped out the remark, “He arrived just at the right moment; I was full to the brim with bitter thinkings, and nobody to take it out of. How refreshing it was! I feel better.”

Tom’s mother entered now, closing the door behind her, and approached her son with all the wheedling and supplication servilities that fear and interest can impart to the words and attitudes of the born slave. She stopped a yard from her boy and made two or three admiring exclamations over his manly stature and general handsomeness, and Tom put an arm under his head and hoisted a leg over the sofa back in order to look properly indifferent.

“My lan’, how you is growed, honey! ‘Clah to goodness, I wouldn’t a-knowed you, Marse Tom! ‘Deed I wouldn’t! Look at me good; does you ‘member old Roxy? Does you know yo’ old nigger mammy, honey? Well now, I kin lay down en die in peace, ‘ca’s’e I’s’e seed—”

“Cut it short, Goddamn it, cut it short! What is it you want?”

“You heah dat? Jes the same old Marse Tom, al’ays so gay and funnin’ wid de ole mammy. I’uz jes as shore—”

“Cut it short, I tell you, and get along! What do you want?”

This was a bitter disappointment. Roxy had for so many days nourished and fondled and petted her notion that Tom would be glad to see his old nurse, and would make her proud and happy to the marrow with a cordial word or two, that it took two rebuffs to convince her that he was not funning, and that her beautiful dream was a fond and foolish variety, a shabby and pitiful mistake. She was hurt to the heart, and so ashamed that for a moment she did not quite know what to do or how to act. Then her breast began to heave, the tears came, and in her forlornness she was moved to try that other dream of hers—an appeal to her boy’s charity; and so, upon the impulse, and without reflection, she offered her supplication:

“Oh, Marse Tom, de po’ ole mammy is in sich hard luck dese days; en she’s kinder crippled in de arms and can’t work, en if you could gimme a dollah—on’y jes one little dol—”

Tom was on his feet so suddenly that the supplicant was startled into a jump herself. . . .

Oh, Roxy, you wouldn’t require your young master to do such a horrible thing. You can’t mean it.”

“I’ll let you know mighty quick whether I means it or not! You call me names, en as good as spit on me when I comes here, po’ en ornery en ‘umble, to praise you for bein’ growed up so fine and handsome, en tell you how I used to nuss you en tend you en watch you when you ‘uz sick en hadn’t no mother but me in de whole worl’, en beg you to give de po’ ole nigger a dollah for to get her som’n’ to eat, en you call me names—names, dad blame you! Yassir, I gives you jes one chance mo’, and dat’s now, en it las’ on’y half a second—you hear?”

Tom slumped to his knees and began to beg, saying:

“You see I’m begging, and it’s honest begging, too! Now tell me, Roxy, tell me.”

The heir of two centuries of unatoned insult and outrage looked down on him and seemed to drink in deep draughts of satisfaction. Then she said:

“Fine nice young white gen’l’man kneelin’ down to a nigger wench! I’s wanted to see dat jes once befo’ I’s called. Now, Gabr’el, blow de hawn, I’s ready... Git up!”

Tom did it. He said, humbly:

“Now, Roxy, don’t punish me any more. I deserved what I’ve got, but be good and let me off with that. Don’t go to uncle. Tell me—I’ll give you the five dollars.”

“Yes, I bet you will; en you won’t stop dah, nuther. But I ain’t gwine to tell you heah—”

## “Votes for Women” by Mark Twain

*At the Annual Meeting of the Hebrew Technical School for Girls, Held in the Temple Emmanuel, January 20, 1901. Mr. Clemens was introduced by President Meyer, who said: “In one of Mr. Clemens’s works he expressed his opinion of men, saying he had no choice between Hebrew and Gentile, black men or white; to him all men were alike. But I never could find that he expressed his opinion of women; perhaps that opinion was so exalted that he could not express it. We shall now be called to hear what he thinks of women.”*

Ladies and Gentlemen, -- It is a small help that I can afford, but it is just such help that one can give as coming from the heart through the mouth. The report of Mr. Meyer was admirable, and I was as interested in it as you have been. Why, I’m twice as old as he, and I’ve had so much experience that I would say to him, when he makes his appeal for help: “Don’t make it for today or tomorrow, but collect the money on the spot.”

We are all creatures of sudden impulse. We must be worked up by steam, as it were. Get them to write their wills now, or it may be too late by-and-by. Fifteen or twenty years ago I had an experience I shall never forget. I got into a church which was crowded by a sweltering and panting multitude. The city missionary of our town -- Hartford -- made a telling appeal for help. He told of personal experiences among the poor in cellars and top lofts requiring instances of devotion and help. The poor are always good to the poor. When a person with his millions gives a hundred thousand dollars it makes a great noise in the world, but he does not miss it; it’s the widow’s mite that makes no noise but does the best work.

I remember on that occasion in the Hartford church the collection was being taken up. The appeal had so stirred me that I could hardly wait for the hat or plate to come my way. I had four hundred dollars in my pocket, and I was anxious to drop it in the plate and wanted to borrow more. But the plate was so long in coming my way that the fever-heat of beneficence was going down lower and lower -- going down at the rate of a hundred dollars a minute. The plate was passed too late. When it finally came to me, my enthusiasm had gone down so much that I kept my four hundred dollars -- and stole a dime from the plate. So, you see, time sometimes leads to crime. Oh, many a time have I thought of that and regretted it, and I adjure you all to give while the fever is on you.

Referring to woman’s sphere in life, I’ll say that woman is always right. For twenty-five years I’ve been a woman’s rights man. I have always believed, long before my mother died, that, with her gray hairs and admirable intellect, perhaps she knew as much as I did. Perhaps she knew as much about voting as I.

I should like to see the time come when women shall help to make the laws. I should like to see that whiplash, the ballot, in the hands of women. As for this city’s government, I don’t want to say much, except that it is a shame -- a shame; but if I should live twenty-five years longer -- and there is no reason why I shouldn’t -- I think I’ll see women handle the ballot. If women had the ballot to-day, the state of things in this town would not exist.

If all the women in this town had a vote today they would elect a mayor at the next election, and they would rise in their might and change the awful state of things now existing here.

## “Education and Citizenship” by Mark Twain

*On the evening of May 14, 1908, the alumni of the College of the City of New York celebrated the opening of the new college buildings at a banquet in the Waldorf Astoria. Mr. Clemens followed Mayor McClellan.*

I agreed when the Mayor said that there was not a man within hearing who did not agree that citizenship should be placed above everything else, even learning.

Have you ever thought about this? Is there a college in the whole country where there is a chair of good citizenship? There is a kind of bad citizenship which is taught in the schools, but no real good citizenship taught. There are some which teach insane citizenship, bastard citizenship, but that is all. Patriotism! Yes; but patriotism is usually the refuge of the scoundrel. He is the man who talks the loudest.

You can begin that chair of citizenship in the College of the City of New York. You can place it above mathematics and literature, and that is where it belongs.

We used to trust in God. I think it was in 1863 that some genius suggested that it be put upon the gold and silver coins which circulated among the rich. They didn't put it on the nickels and coppers because they didn't think the poor folks had any trust in God.

Good citizenship would teach accuracy of thinking and accuracy of statement. Now, that motto on the coin is an overstatement. Those Congressmen had no right to commit this whole country to a theological doctrine. But since they did, Congress ought to state what our creed should be.

There was never a nation in the world that put its whole trust in God. It is a statement made on insufficient evidence. Leaving out the gamblers, the burglars, and the plumbers, perhaps we do put our trust in God after a fashion. But, after all, it is an overstatement.

If the cholera or black plague should come to these shores, perhaps the bulk of the nation would pray to be delivered from it, but the rest would put their trust in the Health Board of the City of New York.

I read in the papers within the last day or two of a poor young girl who they said was a leper. Did the people in that populous section of the country where she was—did they put their trust in God? The girl was afflicted with the leprosy, a disease which cannot be communicated from one person to another.

Yet, instead of putting their trust in God, they harried that poor creature, shelterless and friendless, from place to place, exactly as they did in the Middle Ages, when they made lepers wear bells, so that people could be warned of their approach and avoid them. Perhaps those people in the Middle Ages thought they were putting their trust in God.

The President ordered the removal of that motto from the coin, and I thought that it was well. I thought that overstatement should not stay there. But I think it would better read, “Within certain judicious limitations we trust in God,” and if there isn't enough room on the coin for this, why, enlarge the coin.

Now I want to tell a story about jumping at conclusions. It was told to me by Bram Stoker, and it concerns a christening. There was a little clergyman who was prone to jump at conclusions sometimes. One day he was invited to officiate at a christening. He went. There sat the relatives—intelligent-looking relatives they were. The little clergyman's instinct came to him to make a great speech. He was given to flights of oratory that way—a very dangerous thing, for often the wings which take one into clouds of oratorical enthusiasm are wax and melt up there, and down you come.

But the little clergyman couldn't resist. He took the child in his arms, and, holding it, looked at it a moment. It wasn't much of a child. It was little, like a sweet-potato. Then the little clergyman waited impressively, and then: "I see in your countenances," he said, "disappointment of him. I see you are disappointed with this baby. Why? Because he is so little. My friends, if you had but the power of looking into the future you might see that great things may come of little things. There is the great ocean, holding the navies of the world, which comes from little drops of water no larger than a woman's tears. There are the great constellations in the sky, made up of little bits of stars. Oh, if you could consider his future you might see that he might become the greatest poet of the universe, the greatest warrior the world has ever known, greater than Caesar, than Hannibal, than—er—er" (turning to the father)—"what's his name?"

The father hesitated, then whispered back: "His name? Well, his name is Mary Ann."



## “Independence Day” by Mark Twain

*The American Society in London gave a banquet, July 4, 1907, at the Hotel Cecil. Ambassador Choate called on Mr. Clemens to respond to the toast “The Day We Celebrate.”*

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY LORD, AND GENTLEMEN,—Once more it happens, as it has happened so often since I arrived in England a week or two ago, that instead of celebrating the Fourth of July properly as has been indicated, I have to first take care of my personal character. Sir Mortimer Durand still remains unconvinced. Well, I tried to convince these people from the beginning that I did not take the Ascot Cup; and as I have failed to convince anybody that I did not take the cup, I might as well confess I did take it and be done with it. I don’t see why this uncharitable feeling should follow me everywhere, and why I should have that crime thrown up to me on all occasions. The tears that I have wept over it ought to have created a different feeling than this—and, besides, I don’t think it is very right or fair that, considering England has been trying to take a cup of ours for forty years—I don’t see why they should take so much trouble when I tried to go into the business myself.

Sir Mortimer Durand, too, has had trouble from going to a dinner here, and he has told you what he suffered in consequence. But what did he suffer? He only missed his train, and one night of discomfort, and he remembers it to this day. Oh! if you could only think what I have suffered from a similar circumstance. Two or three years ago, in New York, with that Society there which is made up of people from all British Colonies, and from Great Britain generally, who were educated in British colleges and British schools, I was there to respond to a toast of some kind or other, and I did then what I have been in the habit of doing, from a selfish motive, for a long time, and that is, I got myself placed No. 3 in the list of speakers—then you get home early.

I had to go five miles up-river, and had to catch a particular train or not get there. But see the magnanimity which is born in me, which I have cultivated all my life. A very famous and very great British clergyman came to me presently, and he said: “I am away down in the list; I have got to catch a certain train this Saturday night; if I don’t catch that train I shall be carried beyond midnight and break the Sabbath. Won’t you change places with me?” I said: “Certainly I will.” I did it at once. Now, see what happened.

Talk about Sir Mortimer Durand’s sufferings for a single night! I have suffered ever since because I saved that gentleman from breaking the Sabbath—yes, saved him. I took his place, but I lost my train, and it was I who broke the Sabbath. Up to that time I never had broken the Sabbath in my life, and from that day to this I never have kept it.

Oh! I am learning much here to-night. I find I didn’t know anything about the American Society—that is, I didn’t know its chief virtue. I didn’t know its chief virtue until his Excellency our Ambassador revealed it—I may say, exposed it. I was intending to go home on the 13th of this month, but I look upon that in a different light now. I am going to stay here until the American Society pays my passage.

Our Ambassador has spoken of our Fourth of July and the noise it makes. We have got a double Fourth of July—a daylight Fourth and a midnight Fourth. During the day in America, as our Ambassador has indicated, we keep the Fourth of July properly in a reverent spirit. We devote it to teaching our children patriotic things—reverence for the Declaration of Independence. We honor the day all through the daylight hours, and when night comes we dishonor it. Presently—before long—they are getting nearly ready to begin now—on the Atlantic coast, when night shuts down, that pandemonium will begin, and there will be noise, and noise, and noise—all night long—and there will be more than noise there will be people crippled, there will be people killed, there will be people who will lose their eyes, and all through that permission which we give to irresponsible boys to play with firearms and fire-crackers, and all sorts of dangerous things: We turn that Fourth of July, alas! over to rowdies to drink and get drunk and make the night hideous, and we cripple and kill more people than you would imagine.

We probably began to celebrate our Fourth-of-July night in that way one hundred and twenty-five years ago, and on every Fourth-of-July night since these horrors have grown and grown, until now, in our five thousand towns of America, somebody gets killed or crippled on every Fourth-of-July night, besides those cases of sick persons whom we never hear of, who die as the result of the noise or the shock. They cripple and kill more people on the Fourth of July in America than they kill and cripple in our wars nowadays, and there are no pensions for these folk. And, too, we burn houses. Really we destroy more property on every Fourth-of-July night than the whole of the United States was worth one hundred and twenty-five years ago. Really our Fourth of July is our day of mourning, our day of sorrow. Fifty thousand people who have lost friends, or who have had friends crippled, receive that Fourth of July, when it comes, as a day of mourning for the losses they have sustained in their families.

I have suffered in that way myself. I have had relatives killed in that way. One was in Chicago years ago—an uncle of mine, just as good an uncle as I have ever had, and I had lots of them—yes, uncles to burn, uncles to spare. This poor uncle, full of patriotism, opened his mouth to hurrah, and a rocket went down his throat. Before that man could ask for a drink of water to quench that thing, it blew up and scattered him all over the forty-five States, and—really, now, this is true—I know about it myself—twenty-four hours after that it was raining buttons, recognizable as his, on the Atlantic seaboard. A person cannot have a disaster like that and be entirely cheerful the rest of his life. I had another uncle, on an entirely different Fourth of July, who was blown up that way, and really it trimmed him as it would a tree. He had hardly a limb left on him anywhere. All we have left now is an expurgated edition of that uncle. But never mind about these things; they are merely passing matters. Don't let me make you sad.

Sir Mortimer Durand said that you, the English people, gave up your colonies over there—got tired of them—and did it with reluctance. Now I wish you just to consider that he was right about that, and that he had his reasons for saying that England did not look upon our Revolution as a foreign war, but as a civil war fought by Englishmen.

Our Fourth of July which we honor so much, and which we love so much, and which we take so much pride in, is an English institution, not an American one, and it comes of a great ancestry. The first Fourth of July in that noble genealogy dates back seven centuries lacking eight years. That is the day of the Great Charter—the Magna Charta—which was born at Runnymede in the next to the last year of King John, and portions of the liberties secured thus by those hardy Barons from that reluctant King John are a part of our Declaration of Independence, of our Fourth of July, of our American liberties. And the second of those Fourths of July was not born until four centuries later, in, Charles the First's time, in the Bill of Rights, and that is ours, that is part of our liberties. The next one was still English, in New England, where they established that principle which remains with us to this day, and will continue to remain with us—no taxation without representation. That is always going to stand, and that the English Colonies in New England gave us.

The Fourth of July, and the one which you are celebrating now, born, in Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776—that is English, too. It is not American. Those were English colonists, subjects of King George III., Englishmen at heart, who protested against the oppressions of the Home Government. Though they proposed to cure those oppressions and remove them, still remaining under the Crown, they were not intending a revolution. The revolution was brought about by circumstances which they could not control. The Declaration of Independence was written by a British subject, every name signed to it was the name of a British subject. There was not the name of a single American attached to the Declaration of Independence—in fact, there was not an American in the country in that day except the Indians out on the plains. They were Englishmen, all Englishmen—Americans did not begin until seven years later, when that Fourth of July had become seven years old, and then, the American Republic was established. Since then, there have been Americans. So you see what we owe to England in the matter of liberties.

We have, however, one Fourth of July which is absolutely our own, and that is that great proclamation issued forty years ago by that great American to whom Sir Mortimer Durand paid that just and beautiful tribute—Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's proclamation, which not only set the black slaves free, but set the white man free also. The owner was set free from the burden and offence, that sad condition of things where he was in so many instances a master and owner of slaves when he did not want to be. That proclamation set them all free. But even in this matter England suggested it, for England had set her slaves free thirty years before, and we followed her example. We always followed her example, whether it was good or bad.

And it was an English judge that issued that other great proclamation, and established that great principle that, when a slave, let him belong to whom he may, and let him come whence he may, sets his foot upon English soil, his fetters by that act fall away and he is a free man before the world. We followed the example of 1833, and we freed our slaves as I have said.

It is true, then, that all our Fourths of July, and we have five of them, England gave to us, except that one that I have mentioned—the Emancipation Proclamation, and, lest we forget, let us all remember that we owe these things to England. Let us be able to say to Old England, this great-hearted, venerable old mother of the race, you gave us our Fourths of July that we love and that we honor and revere, you gave us the Declaration of Independence, which is the Charter of our rights, you, the venerable Mother of Liberties, the Protector of Anglo-Saxon Freedom—you gave us these things, and we do most honestly thank you for them.

# **“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” by Frederick Douglass**

July 5, 1852

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow Citizens:

... This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life; and reminds you that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Seventy-six years, though a good old age for a man, is but a mere speck in the life of a nation. Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now, only in the beginning of your national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon....

Fellow-citizens, I shall not presume to dwell at length on the associations that cluster about this day. The simple story of it is that, 76 years ago, the people of this country were British subjects. The style and title of your “sovereign people” (in which you now glory) was not then born. You were under the British Crown. Your fathers esteemed the English Government as the home government; and England as the fatherland. This home government, you know, although a considerable distance from your home, did, in the exercise of its parental prerogatives, impose upon its colonial children, such restraints, burdens and limitations, as, in its mature judgment, it deemed wise, right and proper. But, your fathers, who had not adopted the fashionable idea of this day, of the infallibility of government, and the absolute character of its acts, presumed to differ from the home government in respect to the wisdom and the justice of some of those burdens and restraints. They went so far in their excitement as to pronounce the measures of government unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive, and altogether such as ought not to be quietly submitted to. I scarcely need say, fellow-citizens, that my opinion of those measures fully accords with that of your fathers... Feeling themselves harshly and unjustly treated by the home government, your fathers, like men of honesty, and men of spirit, earnestly sought redress. They petitioned and remonstrated; they did so in a decorous, respectful, and loyal manner. Their conduct was wholly unexceptionable. This, however, did not answer the purpose. They saw themselves treated with sovereign indifference, coldness and scorn. Yet they persevered. They were not the men to look back. As the sheet anchor takes a firmer hold, when the ship is tossed by the storm, so did the cause of your fathers grow stronger, as it breasted the chilling blasts of kingly displeasure. The greatest and best of British statesmen admitted its justice, and the loftiest eloquence of the British Senate came to its support. But, with that blindness which seems to be the unvarying characteristic of tyrants, since Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea, the British Government persisted in the exactions complained of.

The madness of this course, we believe, is admitted now, even by England; but we fear the lesson is wholly lost on our present ruler.

Oppression makes a wise man mad. Your fathers were wise men, and if they did not go mad, they became restive under this treatment. They felt themselves the victims of grievous wrongs, wholly incurable in their colonial capacity. With brave men there is always a remedy for oppression. Just here, the idea of a total separation of the colonies from the crown was born! It was a startling idea, much more so, than we, at this distance of time, regard it. The timid and the prudent (as has been intimated) of that day, were, of course, shocked and alarmed by it.

Such people lived then, had lived before, and will, probably, ever have a place on this planet; and their course, in

respect to any great change, (no matter how great the good to be attained, or the wrong to be redressed by it), may be calculated with as much precision as can be the course of the stars. They hate all changes, but silver, gold and copper change! Of this sort of change they are always strongly in favor.

These people were called Tories in the days of your fathers; and the appellation, probably, conveyed the same idea that is meant by a more modern, though a somewhat less euphonious term, which we often find in our papers, applied to some of our old politicians.

Their opposition to the then dangerous thought was earnest and powerful; but, amid all their terror and affrighted vociferations against it, the alarming and revolutionary idea moved on, and the country with it.

On the 2nd of July, 1776, the old Continental Congress, to the dismay of the lovers of ease, and the worshipers of property, clothed that dreadful idea with all the authority of national sanction. They did so in the form of a resolution; and as we seldom hit upon resolutions, drawn up in our day whose transparency is at all equal to this, it may refresh your minds and help my story if I read it.

*“Resolved, That these united colonies are, and of right, ought to be free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, dissolved.”*

Citizens, your fathers made good that resolution. They succeeded; and to-day you reap the fruits of their success. The freedom gained is yours; and you, therefore, may properly celebrate this anniversary. The 4th of July is the first great fact in your nation’s history -the very ring-bolt in the chain of your yet undeveloped destiny.

Pride and patriotism, not less than gratitude, prompt you to celebrate and to hold it in perpetual remembrance. I have said that the Declaration of Independence is the ring-bolt to the chain of your nation’s destiny; so, indeed, I regard it. The principles contained in that instrument are saving principles. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost....

Fellow Citizens, I am not wanting in respect for the fathers of this republic. The signers of the Declaration of Independence were brave men. They were great men too—great enough to give fame to a great age. It does not often happen to a nation to raise, at one time, such a number of truly great men. The point from which I am compelled to view them is not, certainly, the most favorable; and yet I cannot contemplate their great deeds with less than admiration. They were statesmen, patriots and heroes, and for the good they did, and the principles they contended for, I will unite with you to honor their memory.

They loved their country better than their own private interests; and, though this is not the highest form of human excellence, all will concede that it is a rare virtue, and that when it is exhibited, it ought to command respect. He who will, intelligently, lay down his life for his country, is a man whom it is not in human nature to despise. Your fathers staked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, on the cause of their country. In their admiration of liberty, they lost sight of all other interests. They were peace men; but they preferred revolution to peaceful submission to bondage. They were quiet men; but they did not shrink from agitating against oppression. They showed forbearance; but that they knew its limits. They believed in order; but not in the order of tyranny. With them, nothing was “settled” that was not right. With them, justice, liberty and humanity were “final;” not slavery and oppression. You may well cherish the memory of such men. They were great in their day and generation. Their solid manhood stands out the more as we contrast it with these degenerate times...

## **THE PRESENT**

My business, if I have any here to-day, is with the present. The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now.



*“Trust no future, however pleasant,  
Let the dead past bury its dead;  
Act, act in the living present,  
Heart within, and God overhead.”*

We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future. To all inspiring motives, to noble deeds which can be gained from the past, we are welcome. But now is the time, the important time. Your fathers have lived, died, and have done their work, and have done much of it well. You live and must die, and you must do your work. You have no right to enjoy a child's share in the labor of your fathers, unless your children are to be blest by your labors. You have no right to wear out and waste the hard-earned fame of your fathers to cover your indolence... Washington could not die till he had broken the chains of his slaves. Yet his monument is built up by the price of human blood, and the traders in the bodies and souls of men, shout - “We have Washington to our father.” Alas! that it should be so; yet so it is.

*“The evil that men do, lives after them,  
The good is oft' interred with their bones.”*

What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions! Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful...

But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me.

The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day? ...

...Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, “may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!” To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then fellow-citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future.

Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are



disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery-the great sin and shame of America! "I will not equivocate; I will not excuse;" I will use the severest language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just.

But I fancy I hear some one of my audience say, it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more, and denounce less, would you persuade more, and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed. But, I submit, where all is plain there is nothing to be argued. What point in the anti-slavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slaveholders themselves acknowledge it in the enactment of laws for their government. They acknowledge it when they punish disobedience on the part of the slave. There are seventy-two crimes in the State of Virginia, which, if committed by a black man, (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death; while only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment. What is this but the acknowledgment that the slave is a moral, intellectual and responsible being? The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or to write. When you can point to any such laws, in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. ...

For the present, it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the Negro race. Is it not astonishing that, while we are ploughing, planting and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver and gold; that, while we are reading, writing and cyphering, acting as clerks, merchants and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators and teachers; that, while we are engaged in all manner of enterprises common to other men, digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hill-side, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives and children, and, above all, confessing and worshipping the Christian's God, and looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave, we are called upon to prove that we are men!

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? that he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for Republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to be understood? ... There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven, that does not know that slavery is wrong for him.

What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to bum their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is wrong? No! I will not. I have better employments for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.

What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman, cannot be divine! Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would, to-day, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and

stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

### **INTERNAL SLAVE TRADE**

Take the American slave-trade, which, we are told by the papers, is especially prosperous just now. Ex-Senator Benton tells us that the price of men was never higher than now. He mentions the fact to show that slavery is in no danger. This trade is one of the peculiarities of American institutions. It is carried on in all the large towns and cities in one-half of this confederacy; and millions are pocketed every year, by dealers in this horrid traffic. In several states, this trade is a chief source of wealth. It is called (in contradistinction to the foreign slave-trade) "the internal slave trade." It is, probably, called so, too, in order to divert from it the horror with which the foreign slave-trade is contemplated. That trade has long since been denounced by this government, as piracy. It has been denounced with burning words, from the high places of the nation, as an execrable traffic. To arrest it, to put an end to it, this nation keeps a squadron, at immense cost, on the coast of Africa. Everywhere, in this country, it is safe to speak of this foreign slave-trade, as a most inhuman traffic, opposed alike to the laws of God and of man. The duty to extirpate and destroy it, is admitted even by our DOCTORS OF DIVINITY. In order to put an end to it, some of these last have consented that their colored brethren (nominally free) should leave this country, and establish themselves on the western coast of Africa! It is, however, a notable fact that, while so much execration is poured out by Americans upon those engaged in the foreign slave-trade, the men engaged in the slave-trade between the states pass without condemnation, and their business is deemed honorable.

Behold the practical operation of this internal slave-trade, the American slave-trade, sustained by American politics and America religion. Here you will see men and women reared like swine for the market. You know what is a swine-drover? I will show you a man-drover. They inhabit all our Southern States. They perambulate the country, and crowd the highways of the nation, with droves of human stock. You will see one of these human flesh-jobbers, armed with pistol, whip and bowie-knife, driving a company of a hundred men, women, and children, from the Potomac to the slave market at New Orleans. These wretched people are to be sold singly, or in lots, to suit purchasers. They are food for the cotton-field, and the deadly sugar-mill. Mark the sad procession, as it moves wearily along, and the inhuman wretch who drives them. Hear his savage yells and his blood-chilling oaths, as he hurries on his affrighted captives! There, see the old man, with locks thinned and gray. Cast one glance, if you please, upon that young mother, whose shoulders are bare to the scorching sun, her briny tears falling on the brow of the babe in her arms. See, too, that girl of thirteen, weeping, yes! weeping, as she thinks of the mother from whom she has been torn! The drove moves tardily. Heat and sorrow have nearly consumed their strength; suddenly you hear a quick snap, like the discharge of a rifle; the fetters clank, and the chain rattles simultaneously; your ears are saluted with a scream, that seems to have torn its way to the center of your soul! The crack you heard,

was the sound of the slave-whip; the scream you heard, was from the woman you saw with the babe. Her speed had faltered under the weight of her child and her chains! that gash on her shoulder tells her to move on. Follow the drove to New Orleans. Attend the auction; see men examined like horses; see the forms of women rudely and brutally exposed to the shocking gaze of American slave-buyers. See this drove sold and separated forever; and never forget the deep, sad sobs that arose from that scattered multitude. Tell me citizens, WHERE, under the sun, you can witness a spectacle more fiendish and shocking. Yet this is but a glance at the American slave-trade, as it exists, at this moment, in the ruling part of the United States.

I was born amid such sights and scenes. To me the American slave-trade is a terrible reality. When a child, my soul was often pierced with a sense of its horrors. I lived on Philpot Street, Fell's Point, Baltimore, and have watched from the wharves, the slave ships in the Basin, anchored from the shore, with their cargoes of human flesh, waiting for favorable winds to waft them down the Chesapeake. There was, at that time, a grand slave mart kept at the head of Pratt Street, by Austin Woldfolk. His agents were sent into every town and county in Maryland, announcing their arrival, through the papers, and on flaming "hand-bills," headed CASH FOR NEGROES. These men were generally well dressed men, and very captivating in their manners. Ever ready to drink, to treat, and to gamble. The fate of many a slave has depended upon the turn of a single card; and many a child has been snatched from the arms of its mother by bargains arranged in a state of brutal drunkenness.

The flesh-mongers gather up their victims by dozens, and drive them, chained, to the general depot at Baltimore. When a sufficient number have been collected here, a ship is chartered, for the purpose of conveying the forlorn crew to Mobile, or to New Orleans. From the slave prison to the ship, they are usually driven in the darkness of night; for since the antislavery agitation, a certain caution is observed.

In the deep still darkness of midnight, I have been often aroused by the dead heavy footsteps, and the piteous cries of the chained gangs that passed our door. The anguish of my boyish heart was intense; and I was often consoled, when speaking to my mistress in the morning, to hear her say that the custom was very wicked; that she hated to hear the rattle of the chains, and the heart-rending cries. I was glad to find one who sympathized with me in my horror.

Fellow-citizens, this murderous traffic is, to-day, in active operation in this boasted republic. In the solitude of my spirit, I see clouds of dust raised on the highways of the South; I see the bleeding footsteps; I hear the doleful wail of fettered humanity, on the way to the slave-markets, where the victims are to be sold like horses, sheep, and swine, knocked off to the highest bidder. There I see the tenderest ties ruthlessly broken, to gratify the lust, caprice and rapacity of the buyers and sellers of men. My soul sickens at the sight.

*"Is this the land your Fathers loved,  
The freedom which they toiled to win?  
Is this the earth whereon they moved?  
Are these the graves they slumber in?"*

But a still more inhuman, disgraceful, and scandalous state of things remains to be presented. By an act of the American Congress, not yet two years old, slavery has been nationalized in its most horrible and revolting form. By that act, Mason & Dixon's line has been obliterated; New York has become as Virginia; and the power to hold, hunt, and sell men, women, and children as slaves remains no longer a mere state institution, but is now an institution of the whole United States. The power is co-extensive with the StarSpangled Banner and American Christianity. Where these go, may also go the merciless slave-hunter. Where these are, man is not sacred. He is a bird for the sportsman's gun. By that most foul and fiendish of all human decrees, the liberty and person of every man are put in peril. Your broad republican domain is hunting ground for men. Not for thieves and robbers, enemies of society, merely, but for men guilty of no crime. Your lawmakers have commanded all good citizens to engage in this hellish sport. Your President, your Secretary of State, your lords, nobles, and eccle-

siastics, enforce, as a duty you owe to your free and glorious country, and to your God, that you do this accursed thing. Not fewer than forty Americans have, within the past two years, been hunted down and, without a moment's warning, hurried away in chains, and consigned to slavery and excruciating torture. Some of these have had wives and children, dependent on them for bread; but of this, no account was made. The right of the hunter to his prey stands superior to the right of marriage, and to all rights in this republic, the rights of God included! For black men there are neither law, justice, humanity, not religion. The Fugitive Slave Law makes MERCY TO THEM, A CRIME; and bribes the judge who tries them. An American JUDGE GETS TEN DOLLARS FOR EVERY VICTIM HE CONSIGNS to slavery, and five, when he fails to do so. The oath of any two villains is sufficient, under this hell-black enactment, to send the most pious and exemplary black man into the remorseless jaws of slavery! His own testimony is nothing. He can bring no witnesses for himself. The minister of American justice is bound by the law to hear but one side; and that side, is the side of the oppressor. Let this damning fact be perpetually told. Let it be thundered around the world, that, in tyrant-killing, king-hating, people-loving, democratic, Christian America, the seats of justice are filled with judges, who hold their offices under an open and palpable bribe, and are bound, in deciding in the case of a man's liberty, hear only his accusers!

In glaring violation of justice, in shameless disregard of the forms of administering law, in cunning arrangement to entrap the defenseless, and in diabolical intent, this Fugitive Slave Law stands alone in the annals of tyrannical legislation. I doubt if there be another nation on the globe, having the brass and the baseness to put such a law on the statute-book. If any man in this assembly thinks differently from me in this matter, and feels able to disprove my statements, I will gladly confront him at any suitable time and place he may select.

### **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

I take this law to be one of the grossest infringements of Christian Liberty, and, if the churches and ministers of our country were not stupidly blind, or most wickedly indifferent, they, too, would so regard it.

At the very moment that they are thanking God for the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, and for the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, they are utterly silent in respect to a law which robs religion of its chief significance, and makes it utterly worthless to a world lying in wickedness... The fact that the church of our country, (with fractional exceptions), does not esteem "the Fugitive Slave Law" as a declaration of war against religious liberty, implies that that church regards religion simply as a form of worship, an empty ceremony, and not a vital principle, requiring active benevolence, justice, love and good will towards man. It esteems sacrifice above mercy; psalm-singing above right doing; solemn meetings above practical righteousness. A worship that can be conducted by persons who refuse to give shelter to the houseless, to give bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and who enjoin obedience to a law forbidding these acts of mercy, is a curse, not a blessing to mankind. The Bible addresses all such persons as "scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, who pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith."

### **THE CHURCH RESPONSIBLE**

But the church of this country is not only indifferent to the wrongs of the slave, it actually takes sides with the oppressors. It has made itself the bulwark of American slavery, and the shield of American slave-hunters. Many of its most eloquent Divines. who stand as the very lights of the church, have shamelessly given the sanction of religion and the Bible to the whole slave system. They have taught that man may, properly, be a slave; that the relation of master and slave is ordained of God; that to send back an escaped bondman to his master is clearly the duty of all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this horrible blasphemy is palmed off upon the world for Christianity.

For my part, I would say, welcome infidelity! welcome atheism! welcome anything! in preference to the gospel, as preached by those Divines! They convert the very name of religion into an engine of tyranny, and barbarous cruelty, and serve to confirm more infidels, in this age, than all the infidel writings of Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and Bolingbroke, put together, have done! These ministers make religion a cold and flintyhearted thing, having neither



principles of right action, nor bowels of compassion. They strip the love of God of its beauty, and leave the throng of religion a huge, horrible, repulsive form. It is a religion for oppressors, tyrants, man-stealers, and thugs. It is not that "pure and undefiled religion" which is from above, and which is "first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." But a religion which favors the rich against the poor; which exalts the proud above the humble; which divides mankind into two classes, tyrants and slaves; which says to the man in chains, stay there; and to the oppressor, oppress on; it is a religion which may be professed and enjoyed by all the robbers and enslavers of mankind; it makes God a respecter of persons, denies his fatherhood of the race, and tramples in the dust the great truth of the brotherhood of man. All this we affirm to be true of the popular church, and the popular worship of our land and nation - a religion, a church, and a worship which, on the authority of inspired wisdom, we pronounce to be an abomination in the sight of God. In the language of Isaiah, the American church might be well addressed, "Bring no more vain ablations; incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity even the solemn meeting.... Yea! when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. YOUR HANDS ARE FULL OF BLOOD; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge for the fatherless; plead for the widow."

The American church is guilty, when viewed in connection with what it is doing to uphold slavery; but it is superlatively guilty when viewed in connection with its ability to abolish slavery.

The sin of which it is guilty is one of omission as well as of commission. Albert Barnes but uttered what the common sense of every man at all observant of the actual state of the case will receive as truth, when he declared that "There is no power out of the church that could sustain slavery an hour, if it were not sustained in it."

Let the religious press, the pulpit, the Sunday school, the conference meeting, the great ecclesiastical, missionary, Bible and tract associations of the land array their immense powers against slavery and slave-holding; and the whole system of crime and blood would be scattered to the winds; and that they do not do this involves them in the most awful responsibility of which the mind can conceive.

In prosecuting the anti-slavery enterprise, we have been asked to spare the church, to spare the ministry; but how, we ask, could such a thing be done? We are met on the threshold of our efforts for the redemption of the slave, by the church and ministry of the country, in battle arrayed against us; and we are compelled to fight or flee. From what quarter, I beg to know, has proceeded a fire so deadly upon our ranks, during the last two years, as from the Northern pulpit? As the champions of oppressors, the chosen men of American theology have appeared-men, honored for their so-called piety, and their real learning. The LORDS of Buffalo, the SPRINGS of New York, the LATHROPS of Auburn, the COXES and SPENCERS of Brooklyn, the GANNETS and SHARPS of Boston, the DEWEYS of Washington, and other great religious lights of the land, have, in utter denial of the authority of Him, by whom they professed to be called to the ministry, deliberately taught us, against the example of the Hebrews and against the remonstrance of the Apostles they teach, "that we ought to obey man's law before the law of God."

My spirit wearies of such blasphemy; and how such men can be supported, as the "standing types and representatives of Jesus Christ," is a mystery which I leave others to penetrate. In speaking of the American church, however, let it be distinctly understood that I mean the great mass of the religious organizations of our land. There are exceptions, and I thank God that there are. Noble men may be found, scattered all over these Northern States, of whom Henry Ward Beecher of Brooklyn, Samuel J. May of Syracuse, and my esteemed friend on the platform, are shining examples; and let me say further, that upon these men lies the duty to inspire our ranks with high religious faith and zeal, and to cheer us on in the great mission of the slave's redemption from his chains.

## RELIGION IN ENGLAND AND RELIGION IN AMERICA

One is struck with the difference between the attitude of the American church towards the anti-slavery movement, and that occupied by the churches in England towards a similar movement in that country. There, the church, true to its mission of ameliorating, elevating, and improving the condition of mankind, came forward promptly, bound up the wounds of the West Indian slave, and restored him to his liberty. There, the question of emancipation was a high[ly] religious question. It was demanded, in the name of humanity, and according to the law of the living God.... The anti-slavery movement there was not an anti-church movement, for the reason that the church took its full share in prosecuting that movement: and the anti-slavery movement in this country will cease to be an anti-church movement, when the church of this country shall assume a favorable, instead of a hostile position towards that movement.

Americans! your republican politics, not less than your republican religion, are flagrantly inconsistent. You boast of your love of liberty, your superior civilization, and your pure Christianity, while the whole political power of the nation (as embodied in the two great political parties), is solemnly pledged to support and perpetuate the enslavement of three millions of your countrymen. You hurl your anathemas at the crowned headed tyrants of Russia and Austria, and pride yourselves on your Democratic institutions, while you yourselves consent to be the mere tools and bodyguards of the tyrants of Virginia and Carolina. You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitives from your own land you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot and kill. You glory in your refinement and your universal education yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever stained the character of a nation - a system begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty. You shed tears over fallen Hungary, and make the sad story of her wrongs the theme of your poets, statesmen and orators, till your gallant sons are ready to fly to arms to vindicate her cause against her oppressors; but, in regard to the ten thousand wrongs of the American slave, you would enforce the strictest silence, and would hail him as an enemy of the nation who dares to make those wrongs the subject of public discourse! You are all on fire at the mention of liberty for France or for Ireland; but are as cold as an iceberg at the thought of liberty for the enslaved of America. You discourse eloquently on the dignity of labor; yet, you sustain a system which, in its very essence, casts a stigma upon labor. You can bare your bosom to the storm of British artillery to throw off a threepenny tax on tea; and yet wring the last hard-earned farthing from the grasp of the black laborers of your country. You profess to believe "that, of one blood, God made all nations of men to dwell on the face of all the earth," and hath commanded all men, everywhere to love one another; yet you notoriously hate, (and glory in your hatred), all men whose skins are not colored like your own. You declare, before the world, and are understood by the world to declare, that you "hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; and that, among these are, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and yet, you hold securely, in a bondage which, according to your own Thomas Jefferson, "is worse than ages of that which your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose," a seventh part of the inhabitants of your country.

Fellow-citizens! I will not enlarge further on your national inconsistencies. The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretence, and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad; it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing, and a by word to a mocking earth. It is the antagonistic force in your government, the only thing that seriously disturbs and endangers your Union. It fetters your progress; it is the enemy of improvement, the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride; it breeds insolence; it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse to the earth that supports it; and yet, you cling to it, as if it were the sheet anchor of all your hopes. Oh! be warned! be warned! a horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; for the love of God, tear away, and fling from you the hideous monster, and let the weight of twenty millions crush and destroy it forever!



## THE CONSTITUTION

But it is answered in reply to all this, that precisely what I have now denounced is, in fact, guaranteed and sanctioned by the Constitution of the United States; that the right to hold and to hunt slaves is a part of that Constitution framed by the illustrious Fathers of this Republic.

Then, I dare to affirm, notwithstanding all I have said before, your fathers stooped, basely stooped

*“To palter with us in a double sense: And keep the word of promise to the ear, But break it to the heart.”*

And instead of being the honest men I have before declared them to be, they were the veriest imposters that ever practiced on mankind. This is the inevitable conclusion, and from it there is no escape. But I differ from those who charge this baseness on the framers of the Constitution of the United States. It is a slander upon their memory, at least, so I believe...In (the Constitution) I hold there is neither warrant, license, nor sanction of the hateful thing; but, interpreted as it ought to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? or is it in the temple? It is neither. While I do not intend to argue this question on the present occasion, let me ask, if it be not somewhat singular that, if the Constitution were intended to be, by its framers and adopters, a slaveholding instrument, why neither slavery, slaveholding, nor slave can anywhere be found in it? Now, there are certain rules of interpretation, for the proper understanding of all legal instruments. These rules are well established. They are plain, common-sense rules, such as you and I, and all of us, can understand and apply, without having passed years in the study of law. I scout the idea that the question of the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of slavery is not a question for the people. I hold that every American citizen has a right to form an opinion of the constitution, and to propagate that opinion, and to use all honorable means to make his opinion the prevailing one....

Now, take the constitution according to its plain reading, and I defy the presentation of a single pro-slavery clause in it. On the other hand it will be found to contain principles and purposes, entirely hostile to the existence of slavery...

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery.

“The arm of the Lord is not shortened,” and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. While drawing encouragement from the Declaration of Independence, the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age. Nations do not now stand in the same relation to each other that they did ages ago. No nation can now shut itself up from the surrounding world, and trot round in the same old path of its fathers without interference. The time was when such could be done. Long established customs of hurtful character could formerly fence themselves in, and do their evil work with social impunity. Knowledge was then confined and enjoyed by the privileged few, and the multitude walked on in mental darkness. But a change has now come over the affairs of mankind.

Walled cities and empires have become unfashionable. The arm of commerce has borne away the gates of the strong city. Intelligence is penetrating the darkest corners of the globe. It makes its pathway over and under the sea, as well as on the earth. Wind, steam, and lightning are its chartered agents. Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated. Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic are, distinctly heard on the other.

The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, “Let there be Light,” has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot

of China must be seen, in contrast with nature. Africa must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God." In the fervent aspirations of William Lloyd Garrison, I say, and let every heart join in saying it:

*God speed the year of jubilee  
The wide world o'er!  
When from their galling chains set free,  
Th' oppress'd shall vilely bend the knee,*

*And wear the yoke of tyranny  
Like brutes no more.  
That year will come, and freedom's reign.  
To man his plundered rights again  
Restore.*

*God speed the day when human blood  
Shall cease to flow!  
In every clime be understood,  
The claims of human brotherhood,  
And each return for evil, good,  
Not blow for blow;*

*That day will come all feuds to end,  
And change into a faithful friend  
Each foe.*

## “Mark Twain’s Pictures” *Ladies Home Journal*, 20 Nov 1903, 1.

Reprinted without pictures in *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*, edited by Gary Scharnhorst, (Univ. of Alabama Press, 2006) p. 491. #176

With regard to two of the photographs of Mark Twain...a word of explanation is given here for which proper space could not be found in connection with the photographs.

The cat in Mark Twain’s lap in one of the pictures is apparently a wonderful animal. Mark Twain says: “It is a porcelain cat, from a work by a great French sculptor, and is perhaps the only handmade cat in existence that is perfect in form, in attitude, and carries in its face and eyes the right and true charm and spirituality of its race. This is the most satisfactory workroom cat I have ever had, because it does not fuss with the manuscripts not try to help do the writing. [1]

The colored man in another picture is John T. Lewis, “a friend of mind,” says Mark Twain, “these many years - thirty-four in fact. he was my father-in-law’s coachman forty years ago; was many years [a] farmer of Quarry Farm, and is still a neighbor. I have not known an honest man nor a more respect-worthy one. Twenty-seven years ago, by a prompt and intelligent exercise of his courage, presence of mind, and extraordinary strength, he saved the loves of relatives of mine whom a runaway horse was hurrying to destruction. Naturally I hold him in high and grateful regard. [2]

[1] Mark Twain refers to one of the porcelain cats mass-produced around the turn of the century by Camille Naudor and Co. of Paris.

[2] John T. Lewis (835-1906). Lewis saved Mark Twain’s niece Ida, her daughter, and her daughter’s nurse.



## **“Mark Twain’s Position”** *New York Times*, 15 April 1906, 3.

Reprinted in *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*, edited by Gary Scharnhorst, (Univ. of Alabama Press, 2006) p. 543. #194

Much adverse criticism has arisen here through the formation of the committee to purchase arms to aid Maxim Gorky in his revolutionary movement. Many prominent men are on the committee. Mark Twain, one of the members, was questioned on the matter yesterday at his Fifth Avenue home.

“Why,” he was asked, “should this country assist in any way the Russian people in their revolutionary movement?”

“Because we were quite willing,” he replied, “to accept France’s assistance when we were in the throes of our Revolution, and we have always been grateful for that assistance. It is our turn now to pay that debt of gratitude by helping another oppressed people in its struggle for liberty, and we must either do it or confess that our gratitude to France was only eloquent words, with no sincerity back of them.”

“But do you think it consistent that Americans, with their so-called love of peace, should aid in a movement to throw Russia into a bloody revolution, particularly in view of the fact that America was chiefly instrumental in bringing to an end the Russo-Japanese war?” [1]

To this Mr. Twain replied: “Inasmuch as we conducted our own Revolution with guns and the sword, our mouths are closed against preaching gentler methods to other oppressed nations. Revolutions are achieved by blood and courage alone. So far as I know there has been but one revolution which was carried to a successful issue without bloodshed.”

“In lending, then, our assistance to the Russian people for the overthrow of their despotic form of government, why should we not also start active propaganda seeking the abolition of all similar forms of government?”

“Simply because,” replied Mr. Clemens, “we have not been invited to do it. Should the invitation come, as in the present case, we will put our shoulder to the wheel.”

[1] Russo-Japanese War (1904-5); the Treaty of Portsmouth ending the war was signed on 5 September 1905.

## **“Mark Twain Is Going to Be a Buccaneer” *New York American*, 23 April 1907, 5.**

Reprinted in *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*, edited by Gary Scharnhorst, (Univ. of Alabama Press, 2006) p. 583-4. #212

Mark Twain is going to be a buccaneer!

That is the startling act he made known down on old West Eight street yesterday morning, between determined puffs at one of his celebrated cheroots. He emphasized his deceleration by laying stress on the fact that the peace Conference had ended. [1]

“Yes, I’m going to be buccaneer,” said the humorists, with only the faintest twinkle in his eye. “No pirate of finance, but just a carefree ocean searcher for havens of pleasure aboard a yacht of a friend of mine.”

“And I’m a young buck, too,” Mr. Clemens continued. “i never felt better in my life, and I’d have you know that I’m over seventy-one years young at that.”

“The bucks and buccaneers on the cruise of the Spanish Main will be the guest of Henry H. Rogers, aboard the yacht *Kanawha*. [2] We expect to have a bully time, and our first port of entry will be Jamestown, where we go to see the naval review.” [3]

Mr. Clemens became grave a moment after this last remark when he was asked if attending a naval review immediately after the termination of the Peace Conference did not smack of warlike leanings.

“You see, it’s this way,” he said solemnly. “I don’t know a thing about peace, so how can I attempt to either extol or decry the efforts of those estimable persons who fought their way into the convention at Carnegie Hall.

Of course, people always love to get up and shout about things they don’t really know anything about. That’s human nature, and as long as there are people on the earth there are always going to be esoteric discussions about the beauties of peace.

“But I’m afraid that I will have to attend that naval review. There’s something inspiring about seeing a lot of big warships that seem to say: “Now, be good and there won’t be any trouble, but if you aren’t good and peaceful, then look out.”

“And I tell you,” said Mr. Clemens, as he paused and lifted his right arm, “human nature hasn’t changed in the past five thousand years. Mankind hasn’t changed a whole lot, and the millennium of universal peace isn’t very much nearer than a year or so ago, when the Russians and Japs were at each other’s throats. [4] Every opera-bouffe revolutions, where a few hundreds are shot down in Central America, give an intimation of what all this talk about peace really amounts to. I guess the people that attend the peace conventions haven’t been in such positions yet.

“It seems to me the nations are good deal like the little boy who knocked the chip off the other little boy’s shoulder - somebody was very apt to get hurt. Of course, it all depends, though, upon whether the little boy with the chip on his shoulder really wants to fight. But he doesn’t do it for matters of policy.

“As far as I’m concerned, I don’t know whether I’m a man of peace or not. Certainly I could get up and shout for peace, whatever that means, just as well as any of the rest of us. Then I might get mad afterwards and do just what I had been declaring, with the utmost positiveness, that I wouldn’t and oughtn’t to do.

“But peace conventions are a good thing for the world. They set a shining example of what people think they will do before the occasion arises that might precipitate the unleashing of the martial canines.

“Meanwhile, I guess it’s a mighty good thing to have a whacking big navy. In times of peace prepare to have peace continued. Anyway, this old buccaneer is going down to Jamestown to see the naval review and I wouldn’t be bit surprised if some of the peace delegates are there, too, thinking after all that Uncle Sam can lick all creation.

“I shall never forget the great naval review I attended at Portsmouth, England, several years ago. [5] We were aboard one of the inspection boats, and most of the war vessels were of the old-fashioned square-rigged variety. We passed through a long lane of water flanked on either side by England’s former fighting ships, with the sailors ranged along the yardarms. It was an example of a great fighting race, which has survived by being able to fight for its rights and its own.”

[1] The National Arbitration and Peace Conference was held at Carnegie Hall in New York 14-17 April 1907.

[2] Henry H. Rogers (1840-1909), vice-president of Standard Oil Co. and one of Mark Twain’s best friends since 1893, helped to sort out Mark Twain’s finances after his bankruptcy.

[3] The naval review at Jamestown on 2 May 1907, part of the Jamestown Exposition to make the three hundredth anniversary of the settlement, featured sixteen U.S. battleships.

[4] The Russo-Japanese War (1904-5).

[5] Mark Twain described the naval review t Portsmouth in “Mark Twain Hooks the Persian out of the English Channel,” written on 26 June 1873 during the visit to the England of the Shah of Persia and published in the *New York Herald* on 11 July 1873.





## Toni Morrison, *The Art of Fiction* No. 134

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Interviewed by Elissa Schappell, with additional material from Claudia Brodsky  
Lacour

**ISSUE 128, FALL 1993**

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TONI MORRISON, CA. 2008. PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGELA RADULESCU

Toni Morrison detests being called a “poetic writer.” She seems to think that the attention that has been paid to the lyricism of her work marginalizes her talent and denies her stories their power and resonance. As one of the few novelists whose work is both popular and critically acclaimed, she can afford the luxury of choosing what praise to accept. But she does not reject all classifications, and, in fact, embraces the title “black woman writer.” Her ability to transform individuals into forces and idiosyncrasies into inevitabilities has led some critics to call her the “D. H. Lawrence of the black psyche.” She is also a master of the public novel, examining the relationships between the races and

sexes and the struggle between civilization and nature, while at the same time combining myth and the fantastic with a deep political sensitivity.

We talked with Morrison one summer Sunday afternoon on the lush campus of Princeton University. The interview took place in her office, which is decorated with a large Helen Frankenthaler print, pen-and-ink drawings an architect did of all the houses that appear in her work, photographs, a few framed book-jacket covers, and an apology note to her from Hemingway—a forgery meant as a joke. On her desk is a blue glass teacup emblazoned with the likeness of Shirley Temple filled with the number two pencils that she uses to write her first drafts. Jade plants sit in a window and a few more potted plants hang above. A coffeemaker and cups are at the ready. Despite the high ceilings, the big desk, and the high-backed black rocking chairs, the room had the warm feeling of a kitchen, maybe because talking to Morrison about writing is the intimate kind of conversation that often seems to happen in kitchens; or perhaps it was the fact that as our energy started flagging she magically produced mugs of cranberry juice. We felt that she had allowed us to enter into a sanctuary, and that, however subtly, she was completely in control of the situation.

Outside, high canopies of oak leaves filtered the sunlight, dappling her white office with pools of yellowy light. Morrison sat behind her big desk, which despite her apologies for the “disorder” appeared well organized. Stacks of books and piles of paper resided on a painted bench set against the wall. She is smaller than one might imagine, and her hair, gray and silver, is woven into thin steel-colored braids that hang just at shoulder length. Occasionally during the interview Morrison let her sonorous, deep voice break into rumbling laughter and punctuated certain statements with a flat smack of her hand on the desktop. At a moment’s notice she can switch from raging about violence in the United States to gleefully skewering the hosts of the trash TV talk shows through which she confesses to channel surfing sometimes late in the afternoon if her work is done.

## INTERVIEWER

You have said that you begin to write before dawn. Did this habit begin for practical reasons, or was the early morning an especially fruitful time for you?

## TONI MORRISON

Writing before dawn began as a necessity—I had small children when I first began to write and I needed to use the time before they said, Mama—and that was always around five in the morning. Many years later, after I stopped working

at Random House, I just stayed at home for a couple of years. I discovered things about myself I had never thought about before. At first I didn't know when I wanted to eat, because I had always eaten when it was lunchtime or dinnertime or breakfast time. Work and the children had driven all of my habits . . . I didn't know the weekday sounds of my own house; it all made me feel a little giddy.

I was involved in writing *Beloved* at that time—this was in 1983—and eventually I realized that I was clearer-headed, more confident and generally more intelligent in the morning. The habit of getting up early, which I had formed when the children were young, now became my choice. I am not very bright or very witty or very inventive after the sun goes down.

Recently I was talking to a writer who described something she did whenever she moved to her writing table. I don't remember exactly what the gesture was—there is something on her desk that she touches before she hits the computer keyboard—but we began to talk about little rituals that one goes through before beginning to write. I, at first, thought I didn't have a ritual, but then I remembered that I always get up and make a cup of coffee while it is still dark—it must be dark—and then I drink the coffee and watch the light come. And she said, Well, that's a ritual. And I realized that for me this ritual comprises my preparation to enter a space that I can only call nonsecular . . . Writers all devise ways to approach that place where they expect to make the contact, where they become the conduit, or where they engage in this mysterious process. For me, light is the signal in the transition. It's not being *in* the light, it's being there *before it arrives*. It enables me, in some sense.

I tell my students one of the most important things they need to know is when they are their best, creatively. They need to ask themselves, What does the ideal room look like? Is there music? Is there silence? Is there chaos outside or is there serenity outside? What do I need in order to release my imagination?

#### INTERVIEWER

What about your writing routine?

#### MORRISON

I have an ideal writing routine that I've never experienced, which is to have, say, nine uninterrupted days when I wouldn't have to leave the house or take phone calls. And to have the space—a space where I have huge tables. I end up with this much space [*she indicates a small square spot on her desk*] everywhere I am, and I can't beat my way out of it. I am reminded of that tiny desk that Emily Dickinson wrote on and I chuckle when I think, Sweet thing, there she was. But that is all any of us have: just this small space and no matter what the filing system or how

often you clear it out—life, documents, letters, requests, invitations, invoices just keep going back in. I am not able to write regularly. I have never been able to do that—mostly because I have always had a nine-to-five job. I had to write either in between those hours, hurriedly, or spend a lot of weekend and predawn time.

INTERVIEWER

Could you write after work?

MORRISON

That was difficult. I've tried to overcome not having orderly spaces by substituting compulsion for discipline, so that when something is urgently there, urgently seen or understood, or the metaphor was powerful enough, then I would move everything aside and write for sustained periods of time. I'm talking to you about getting the first draft.

INTERVIEWER

You have to do it straight through?

MORRISON

*I* do. I don't think it's a law.

INTERVIEWER

Could you write on the bottom of a shoe while riding on a train like Robert Frost? Could you write on an airplane?

MORRISON

Sometimes something that I was having some trouble with falls into place, a word sequence, say, so I've written on scraps of paper, in hotels on hotel stationery, in automobiles. *If* it arrives you *know*. If you know it *really* has come, then you *have* to put it down.

INTERVIEWER

What is the physical act of writing like for you?

MORRISON

I write with a pencil.

INTERVIEWER

Would you ever work on a word processor?

MORRISON

Oh, I do that also, but that is much later when everything is put together. I type that into a computer and then I begin to revise. But everything I write for the first time is written with a pencil, maybe a ballpoint if I don't have a pencil. I'm not picky, but my preference is for yellow legal pads and a nice number two pencil.

INTERVIEWER

Dixon Ticonderoga number two soft?

MORRISON

Exactly. I remember once trying to use a tape recorder, but it doesn't work.

INTERVIEWER

Did you actually dictate a story into the machine?

MORRISON

Not the whole thing, but just a bit. For instance, when two or three sentences seemed to fall into place, I thought I would carry a tape recorder in the car, particularly when I was working at Random House going back and forth every day. It occurred to me that I could just record it. It was a disaster. I don't trust my writing that is not written, although I work very hard in subsequent revisions to remove the writerly-ness from it, to give it a combination of lyrical, standard, and colloquial language. To pull all these things together into something that I think is much more alive and representative. But I don't trust something that occurs to me and then is spoken and transferred immediately to the page.

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever read your work out loud while you are working on it?

MORRISON

Not until it's published. I don't trust a performance. I could get a response that might make me think it was successful when it wasn't at all. The difficulty for me in writing—*among* the difficulties—is to write language that can work quietly on a page for a reader who doesn't hear anything. Now for that, one has to work very carefully with what is *in between* the words. What is not said. Which is measure, which is rhythm, and so on. So, it is what you don't write that frequently gives what you do write its power.

INTERVIEWER

How many times would you say you have to write a paragraph over to reach this standard?

MORRISON

Well, those that need reworking I do as long as I can. I mean I've revised six times, seven times, thirteen times. But there's a line between revision and fretting, just working it to death. It is important to know when you are fretting it; when you are fretting it because it is not working, it needs to be scrapped.

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever go back over what has been published and wish you had fretted more over something?

MORRISON

A lot. Everything.

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever rework passages that have already been published before reading them to an audience?

MORRISON

I don't change it for the audience, but I know what it ought to be and isn't. After twenty-some years you can figure it out; I know more about it now than I did then. It is not so much that it would have been different or even better; it is just that, taken into context with what I was trying to effect, or what consequence I wanted it to have on the reader, years later the picture is clearer to me.



INTERVIEWER

How do you think being an editor for twenty years affected you as a writer?

MORRISON

I am not sure. It lessened my awe of the publishing industry. I understood the adversarial relationship that sometimes exists between writers and publishers, but I learned how important, how critical an editor was, which I don't think I would have known before.

INTERVIEWER

Are there editors who are helpful critically?

MORRISON

Oh yes. The good ones make all the difference. It is like a priest or a psychiatrist; if you get the wrong one, then you are better off alone. But there are editors so rare and so important that they are worth searching for, and you always know when you have one.

INTERVIEWER

Who was the most instrumental editor you've ever worked with?

MORRISON

I had a very good editor, superlative for me—Bob Gottlieb. What made him good for me was a number of things—knowing what not to touch; asking all the questions you probably would have asked yourself had there been the time. Good editors are really the third eye. Cool. Dispassionate. They don't love you or your work; for me that is what is valuable—not compliments. Sometimes it's uncanny; the editor puts his or her finger on exactly the place the writer knows is weak but just couldn't do any better at the time. Or perhaps the writer thought it might fly, but wasn't sure. Good editors identify that place and sometimes make suggestions. Some suggestions are not useful because you can't explain everything to an editor about what you are trying to do. I couldn't possibly explain all of those things to an editor, because what I do has to work on so many levels. But within the relationship if there is some trust, some willingness to listen, remarkable things can happen. I read books all the time that I know would have profited from not a copy editor but somebody just talking through it. And it is important to get a great editor at a certain time, because if you don't have one in

the beginning, you almost can't have one later. If you work well without an editor, and your books are well received for five or ten years, and then you write another one—which is successful but not very good—why should you then listen to an editor?

INTERVIEWER

You have told students that they should think of the process of revision as one of the major satisfactions of writing. Do you get more pleasure out of writing the first draft, or in the actual revision of the work?

MORRISON

They are different. I am profoundly excited by thinking up or having the idea in the first place . . . before I begin to write.

INTERVIEWER

Does it come in a flash?

MORRISON

No, it's a sustained thing I have to play with. I always start out with an idea, even a boring idea, that becomes a question I don't have any answers to. Specifically, since I began the *Beloved* trilogy, the last part of which I'm working on now, I have been wondering why women who are twenty, thirty years younger than I am are no happier than women who are my age and older. What on earth is that about, when there are so many more things that they can do, so many more choices? *All right*, so this is an embarrassment of riches, but so what. Why is everybody so miserable?

INTERVIEWER

Do you write to figure out exactly how you feel about a subject?

MORRISON

No, I know how I *feel*. My feelings are the result of prejudices and convictions like everybody else's. But I am interested in the complexity, the vulnerability of an idea. It is not "this is what I believe," because that would not be a book, just a tract. A book is "this may be what I believe, but suppose I am wrong . . . what could it be?" Or, "I don't know what it is, but I am interested in finding out what

it might mean to me, as well as to other people.”

INTERVIEWER

Did you know as a child you wanted to be a writer?

MORRISON

No. I wanted to be a reader. I thought everything that needed to be written had already been written or would be. I only wrote the first book because I thought it wasn't there, and I wanted to read it when I got through. I am a pretty good reader. I love it. It is what I do, really. So, if I can read it, that is the highest compliment I can think of. People say, I write for myself, and it sounds so awful and so narcissistic, but in a sense if you know how to read your own work— that is, with the necessary critical distance—it makes you a better writer and editor. When I teach creative writing, I always speak about how you have to learn how to read your work; I don't mean enjoy it because you wrote it. I mean, go away from it, and read it as though it is the first time you've ever seen it. Critique it that way. Don't get all involved in your thrilling sentences and all that . . .

INTERVIEWER

Do you have your audience in mind when you sit down to write?

MORRISON

Only me. If I come to a place where I am unsure, I have the characters to go to for reassurance. By that time they are friendly enough to tell me if the rendition of their lives is authentic or not. But there are so many things only I can tell. After all, this is my work. I have to take full responsibility for doing it right as well as doing it wrong. Doing it wrong isn't bad, but doing it wrong and thinking you've done it right is. I remember spending a whole summer writing something I was very impressed with, but couldn't get back to until winter. I went back confident that those fifty pages were really first-rate, but when I read them each page of the fifty was terrible. It was really ill-conceived. I knew that I could do it over, but I just couldn't get over the fact that I thought it was so good at the time. And that is scary because then you think it means you don't know.

INTERVIEWER

What about it was so bad?

MORRISON

It was pompous. Pompous and unappetizing.

INTERVIEWER

I read that you started writing after your divorce as a way of beating back the loneliness. Was that true, and do you write for different reasons now?

MORRISON

Sort of. Sounds simpler than it was. I don't know if I was writing for that reason or some other reason—or one that I don't even suspect. I do know that I don't like it here if I don't have something to write.

INTERVIEWER

Here, meaning where?

MORRISON

Meaning out in the world. It is not possible for me to be unaware of the incredible violence, the willful ignorance, the hunger for other people's pain. I'm always conscious of that though I am less aware of it under certain circumstances—good friends at dinner, other books. Teaching makes a big difference, but that is not enough. Teaching could make me into someone who is complacent, unaware, rather than part of the solution. So what makes me feel as though I belong here out in this world is not the teacher, not the mother, not the lover, but what goes on in my mind when I am writing. Then I belong here and then all of the things that are disparate and irreconcilable can be useful. I can do the traditional things that writers always say they do, which is to make order out of chaos. Even if you are reproducing the disorder, you are sovereign at that point. Struggling through the work is extremely important—more important to me than publishing it.

INTERVIEWER

If you didn't do this. Then the chaos would—

MORRISON

Then I would be part of the chaos.

INTERVIEWER

Wouldn't the answer to that be either to lecture about the chaos or to be in politics?

MORRISON

If I had a gift for it. All I can do is read books and write books and edit books and critique books. I don't think that I could show up on a regular basis as a politician. I would lose interest. I don't have the resources for it, the gift. There are people who can organize other people and I cannot. I'd just get bored.

INTERVIEWER

When did it become clear to you that your gift was to be a writer?

MORRISON

It was very late. I always thought I was probably adept, because people used to say so, but their criteria might not have been mine. So, I wasn't interested in what they said. It meant nothing. It was by the time I was writing *Song of Solomon*, the third book, that I began to think that this was the central part of my life. Not to say that other women haven't said it all along, but for a woman to say, I am a writer, is difficult.

INTERVIEWER

Why?

MORRISON

Well, it isn't so difficult *anymore*, but it certainly was for me and for women of my generation or my class or my race. I don't know that all those things are folded into it, but the point is you're moving yourself out of the gender role. You are not saying, I am a mother, I am a wife. Or if you're in the labor market, I am a teacher, I am an editor. But when you move to *writer*, what is that supposed to mean? Is that a job? Is this the way you make your living? It's an intervention into terrain that you are not familiar with—where you have no provenance. At the time I certainly didn't personally know any other women writers who were successful; it looked very much like a male preserve. So you sort of hope you're going to be a little minor person around the edges. It's almost as if you needed permission to write. When I read women's biographies and autobiographies, even accounts of how they got started writing, almost every one of them had a

INTERVIEWER

Did the fact that you were a woman have anything to do with it?

MORRISON

That I didn't think about too much. I was so busy. I only know that I will never again trust my life, my future, to the whims of men, in companies or out. Never again will their judgment have anything to do with what I think I can do. That was the wonderful liberation of being divorced and having children. I did not mind failure, ever, but I minded thinking that someone male knew better. Before that, all the men I knew *did* know better, they really did. My father and teachers were smart people who knew better. Then I came across a smart person who was very important to me who *didn't* know better.

INTERVIEWER

Was this your husband?

MORRISON

Yes. He knew better about his life, but not about mine. I had to stop and say, Let me start again and see what it is like to be a grown-up. I decided to leave home, to take my children with me, to go into publishing and see what I could do. I was prepared for that not to work either, but I wanted to see what it was like to be a grown-up.

INTERVIEWER

Can you talk about that moment at Random House when they suddenly realized that they had a writer in their midst?

MORRISON

I published a book called *The Bluest Eye*. I didn't tell them about it. They didn't know until they read the review in *The New York Times*. It was published by Holt. Somebody had told this young guy there that I was writing something and he had said in a very offhand way, If you ever complete something send it to me. So I did. A lot of black men were writing in 1968, 1969, and he bought it, thinking that there was a growing interest in what black people were writing and that this book of mine would also sell. He was wrong. What was selling was: Let me tell you how powerful I am and how horrible you are, or some version of that. For whatever reasons, he took a small risk. He didn't pay me much, so it didn't



matter if the book sold or not. It got a really horrible review in *The New York Times Book Review* on Sunday and then got a very good daily review.

#### INTERVIEWER

You mentioned getting permission to write. Who gave it to you?

#### MORRISON

No one. What I needed permission to do was to succeed at it. I never signed a contract until the book was finished because I didn't want it to be homework. A contract meant somebody was waiting for it, that I *had* to do it, and they could ask me about it. They could get up in my face and I don't like that. By not signing a contract, I do it, and if I want you to see it, I'll let you see it. It has to do with self-esteem. I am sure for years you have heard writers constructing illusions of freedom, anything in order to have the illusion that it is all mine and only I can do it. I remember introducing Eudora Welty and saying that nobody could have written those stories but her, meaning that I have a feeling about most books that at some point somebody would have written them *anyway*. But then there are some writers without whom certain stories would never have been written. I don't mean the subject matter or the narrative but just the way in which they did it—their slant on it is truly unique.

#### INTERVIEWER

Who are some of them?

#### MORRISON

Hemingway is in that category, Flannery O'Connor. Faulkner, Fitzgerald . . .

#### INTERVIEWER

Haven't you been critical of the way these authors depicted blacks?

#### MORRISON

No! Me, critical? I have been revealing how white writers imagine black people, and some of them are brilliant at it. Faulkner was brilliant at it. Hemingway did it poorly in places and brilliantly elsewhere.

#### INTERVIEWER

How so?

## MORRISON

In not using black characters, but using the aesthetic of blacks as anarchy, as sexual license, as deviance. In his last book, *The Garden of Eden*, Hemingway's heroine is getting blacker and blacker. The woman who is going mad tells her husband, I want to be your little African queen. The novel gets its charge that way: Her white white hair and her black, black skin . . . almost like a Man Ray photograph. Mark Twain talked about racial ideology in the most powerful, eloquent, and instructive way I have ever read. Edgar Allan Poe did not. He loved white supremacy and the planter class, and he wanted to be a gentleman, and he endorsed all of that. He didn't contest it or critique it. What is exciting about American literature is that business of how writers say things under, beneath, and around their stories. Think of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and all these inversions of what race is, how sometimes nobody can tell, or the thrill of discovery? Faulkner in *Absalom, Absalom!* spends the entire book tracing race and you can't find it. No one can see it, even the character who *is* black can't see it. I did this lecture for my students that took me forever, which was tracking all the moments of withheld, partial, or disinformation, when a racial fact or clue *sort of* comes out but doesn't quite arrive. I just wanted to chart it. I listed its appearance, disguise, and disappearance on every page—I mean every phrase! Everything, and I delivered this thing to my class. They all fell asleep! But I was so fascinated, technically. Do you know how hard it is to withhold that kind of information but hinting, pointing all of the time? And then to reveal it in order to say that it is *not* the point anyway? It is technically just astonishing. As a reader you have been forced to hunt for a drop of black blood that means everything and nothing. The insanity of racism. So the structure is the argument. Not what this one says or that one says . . . it is the *structure* of the book, and you are there hunting this black thing that is nowhere to be found and yet makes all the difference. No one has done anything quite like that ever. So, when I critique, what I am saying is, I don't care if Faulkner is a racist or not; I don't personally care but I am fascinated by what it means to write like this.

## INTERVIEWER

What about black writers . . . how do they write in a world dominated by and informed by their relationship to a white culture?

## MORRISON

By trying to alter language, simply to free it up, not to repress it or confine it, but to open it up. Tease it. Blast its racist straitjacket. I wrote a story entitled “Recitatif,” in which there are two little girls in an orphanage, one white and one black. But the reader doesn’t know which is white and which is black. I use class codes, but no racial codes.

INTERVIEWER

Is this meant to confuse the reader?

MORRISON

Well, yes. But to provoke and enlighten. I did that as a lark. What was exciting was to be forced as a writer not to be lazy and rely on obvious codes. Soon as I say, Black woman . . . I can rest on or provoke predictable responses, but if I leave it out then I have to talk about her in a complicated way—as a person.

INTERVIEWER

Why wouldn’t you want to say, The black woman came out of the store?

MORRISON

Well, you can, but it has to be important that she is black.

INTERVIEWER

What about *The Confessions of Nat Turner*?

MORRISON

Well, here we have a very self-conscious character who says things like, I looked at my black hand. Or, I woke up and I felt black. It is very much on Bill Styron’s mind. He feels charged in Nat Turner’s skin . . . in this place that feels exotic to him. So it reads exotically to us, that’s all.

INTERVIEWER

There was a tremendous outcry at that time from people who felt that Styron didn’t have a right to write about Nat Turner.

MORRISON

He has a right to write about whatever he wants. To suggest otherwise is outrageous. What they should have criticized, and some of them did, was Styron's suggestion that Nat Turner hated black people. In the book Turner expresses his revulsion over and over again . . . he's so distant from blacks, so superior. So the fundamental question is why would anybody follow him? What kind of leader is this who has a fundamentally racist contempt that seems unreal to any black person reading it? Any white leader would have some interest and identification with the people he was asking to die. That was what these critics meant when they said Nat Turner speaks like a white man. That racial distance is strong and clear in that book.

#### INTERVIEWER

You must have read a lot of slave narratives for *Beloved*.

#### MORRISON

I wouldn't read them for information because I knew that they had to be authenticated by white patrons, that they couldn't say everything they wanted to say because they couldn't alienate their audience; they had to be quiet about certain things. They were going to be as good as they could be under the circumstances and as revelatory, but they never say how terrible it was. They would just say, Well, you know, it was really awful, but let's abolish slavery so life can go on. Their narratives had to be very understated. So while I looked at the documents and felt *familiar* with slavery and overwhelmed by it, I wanted it to be truly *felt*. I wanted to translate the historical into the personal. I spent a long time trying to figure out what it was about slavery that made it so repugnant, so personal, so indifferent, so intimate, and yet so public.

In reading some of the documents I noticed frequent references to something that was never properly described—*the bit*. This thing was put into the mouth of slaves to punish them and shut them up without preventing them from working. I spent a long time trying to find out what it looked like. I kept reading statements like, I put the bit on Jenny, or, as Equiano says, "I went into a kitchen" and I saw a woman standing at the stove, and she had a brake (*b-r-a-k-e*, he spells it) "in her mouth," and I said, What is that? and somebody told me what it was, and then I said, I never saw anything so awful in all my life. But I really couldn't image the thing—did it look like a horse's bit or what?

Eventually I did find some sketches in one book in this country, which was the record of a man's torture of his wife. In South America, Brazil, places like that, they kept such mementos. But while I was searching, something else occurred to me—namely, that this bit, this item, this personalized type of

torture, was a direct descendant of the inquisition. And I realized that of course you can't buy this stuff. You can't send away for a mail-order bit for your slave. Sears doesn't carry them. So you have to make it. You have to go out in the backyard and put some stuff together and construct it and then affix it to a person. So the whole process had a very personal quality for the person who made it, as well as for the person who wore it. Then I realized that describing it would never be helpful; that the reader didn't need to *see* it so much as *feel* what it was like. I realized that it was important to imagine the bit as an active instrument, rather than simply as a curio or an historical fact. And in the same way I wanted to show the reader what slavery *felt* like, rather than how it looked.

There's a passage in which Paul D. says to Sethe, "I've never told anybody about it, I've sung about it sometimes." He tries to tell her what wearing the bit was like, but he ends up talking about a rooster that he swears smiled at him when he wore it—he felt cheapened and lessened and that he would never be worth as much as a rooster sitting on a tub in the sunlight. I make other references to the desire to spit, to sucking iron, and so on; but it seemed to me that describing what it *looked* like would distract the reader from what I wanted him or her to experience, which was what it *felt* like. The kind of information you can find between the lines of history. It sort of falls off the page, or it's a glance and a reference. It's right there in the intersection where an institution becomes personal, where the historical becomes people with names.

#### INTERVIEWER

When you create a character is it completely created out of your own imagination?

#### MORRISON

I never use anyone I know. In *The Bluest Eye* I think I used some gestures and dialogue of my mother in certain places, and a little geography. I've never done that since. I really am very conscientious about that. It's never based on anyone. I don't do what many writers do.

#### INTERVIEWER

Why is that?

#### MORRISON

There is this feeling that artists have—photographers, more than other people, and writers—that they are acting like a succubus . . . this process of taking from

something that's alive and using it for one's own purposes. You can do it with trees, butterflies, or human beings. Making a little life for oneself by scavenging other people's lives is a big question, and it does have moral and ethical implications.

In fiction, I feel the most intelligent, and the most free, and the most excited, when my characters are fully invented people. That's part of the excitement. If they're based on somebody else, in a funny way it's an infringement of a copyright. That person *owns* his life, has a patent on it. It shouldn't be available for fiction.

#### INTERVIEWER

Do you ever feel like your characters are getting away from you, out of your control?

#### MORRISON

I take control of them. They are very carefully imagined. I feel as though I know all there is to know about them, even things I don't write—like how they part their hair. They are like ghosts. They have nothing on their minds but themselves and aren't interested in anything but themselves. So you can't let them write your book for you. I have read books in which I know that has happened—when a novelist has been totally taken over by a character. I want to say, You can't do that. If those people could write books they would, but they can't. *You* can. So, you have to say, Shut up. Leave me alone. I am doing this.

#### INTERVIEWER

Have you ever had to tell any of your characters to shut up?

#### MORRISON

Pilate, I did. Therefore she doesn't speak very much. She has this long conversation with the two boys and every now and then she'll say something, but she doesn't have the dialogue the other people have. I had to do that, otherwise she was going to overwhelm everybody. She got terribly interesting; characters can do that for a little bit. I had to take it back. It's *my* book; it's not called "Pilate."

#### INTERVIEWER

Pilate is such a strong character. It seems to me that the women in your books are



almost always stronger and braver than the men. Why is that?

MORRISON

That isn't true, but I hear that a lot. I think that our expectations of women are very low. If women just stand up straight for thirty days, everybody goes, Oh! How brave! As a matter of fact, somebody wrote about Sethe, and said she was this powerful, statuesque woman who wasn't even human. But at the end of the book, she can barely turn her head. She has been zonked; she can't even feed herself. Is that tough?

INTERVIEWER

Maybe people read it that way because they thought Sethe made such a hard choice slashing Beloved's throat. Maybe they think that's being strong. Some would say that's just bad manners.

MORRISON

Well, Beloved surely didn't think it was all that tough. She thought it was lunacy. Or, more importantly, How do you know death is better for me? You've never died. How could you know? But I think Paul D., Son, Stamp Paid, even Guitar, make equally difficult choices; they are principled. I do think we are too accustomed to women who don't talk back or who use the weapons of the weak.

INTERVIEWER

What are the weapons of the weak?

MORRISON

Nagging. Poison. Gossip. Sneaking around instead of confrontation.

INTERVIEWER

There have been so few novels about women who have intense friendships with other women. Why do you think that is?

MORRISON

It has been a discredited relationship. When I was writing *Sula*, I was under the impression that for a large part of the female population a woman friend was considered a secondary relationship. A man and a woman's relationship was

primary. Women, your own friends, were always secondary relationships when the man was not there. Because of this, there's that whole cadre of women who don't like women and prefer men. We had to be taught to like one another. *Ms.* magazine was founded on the premise that we really have to stop complaining about one another, hating, fighting one another and joining men in their condemnation of ourselves—a typical example of what dominated people do. That is a big education. When much of the literature was like that—when you read about women together (not lesbians or those who have formed long relationships that are covertly lesbian, like in Virginia Woolf's work), it is an overtly male view of females together. They are usually male-dominated—like some of Henry James's characters—or the women are talking about men, like Jane Austen's girlfriends . . . talking about who got married, and how to get married, and are you going to lose him, and I think she wants him and so on. To have heterosexual women who are friends, who are talking only about themselves to each other, seemed to me a very radical thing when *Sula* was published in 1971 . . . but it is hardly radical now.

#### INTERVIEWER

It is becoming acceptable.

#### MORRISON

Yes, and it's going to get boring. It will be overdone and as usual it will all run amok.

#### INTERVIEWER

Why do writers have such a hard time writing about sex?

#### MORRISON

Sex is difficult to write about because it's just not sexy enough. The only way to write about it is not to write much. Let the reader bring his own sexuality into the text. A writer I usually admire has written about sex in the most off-putting way. There is just too much information. If you start saying "the curve of . . ." you soon sound like a gynecologist. Only Joyce could get away with that. He said all those forbidden words. He said *cunt*, and that was shocking. The forbidden word can be provocative. But after a while it becomes monotonous rather than arousing. Less is always better. Some writers think that if they use dirty words they've done it. It can work for a short period and for a very young imagination, but after a while it doesn't deliver. When Sethe and Paul D. first see each other, in

about half a page they get the sex out of the way, which isn't any good anyway—it's fast and they're embarrassed about it—and then they're lying there trying to pretend they're not in that bed, that they haven't met, and then they begin to think different thoughts, which begin to merge so you can't tell who's thinking what. That merging to me is more tactically sensual than if I had tried to describe body parts.

#### INTERVIEWER

What about plot? Do you always know where you're going? Would you write the end before you got there?

#### MORRISON

When I really know what it is about, then I can write that end scene. I wrote the end of *Beloved* about a quarter of the way in. I wrote the end of *Jazz* very early and the end of *Song of Solomon* very early on. What I really want is for the plot to be *how* it happened. It is like a detective story in a sense. You know who is dead and you want to find out who did it. So, you put the salient elements up front and the reader is hooked into wanting to know how did that happen. Who did that and why? You are forced into having a certain kind of language that will keep the reader asking those questions. In *Jazz*, just as I did before with *The Bluest Eye*, I put the whole plot on the first page. In fact, in the first edition the plot was on the cover, so that a person in a bookstore could read the cover and know right away what the book was about, and could, if they wished, dismiss it and buy another book. This seemed a suitable technique for *Jazz* because I thought of the plot in that novel, the threesome, as the melody of the piece, and it is fine to follow a melody—to feel the satisfaction of recognizing a melody whenever the narrator returns to it. That was the real art of the enterprise for me—bumping up against that melody time and again, seeing it from another point of view, seeing it afresh each time, playing it back and forth.

When Keith Jarrett plays “Ol’ Man River,” the delight and satisfaction is not so much in the melody itself but in recognizing it when it surfaces and when it is hidden, and when it goes away completely, what is put in its place. Not so much in the original line as in all the echoes and shades and turns and pivots Jarrett plays around it. I was trying to do something similar with the plot in *Jazz*. I wanted the story to be the vehicle that moved us from page one to the end, but I wanted the delight to be found in moving away from the story and coming back to it, looking around it, and through it, as though it was a prism, constantly turning.

This playful aspect of *Jazz* may well cause a great deal of dissatisfaction in

readers who just want the melody, who want to know what happened, who did it and why. But the jazzlike structure wasn't a secondary thing for me—it was the *raison d'être* of the book. The process of trial and error by which the narrator revealed the plot was as important and exciting to me as telling the story.

#### INTERVIEWER

You also divulge the plot early on in *Beloved*.

#### MORRISON

It seemed important to me that the action in *Beloved*—the fact of infanticide—be immediately known, but deferred, unseen. I wanted to give the reader all the information and the consequences surrounding the act, while avoiding engorging myself or the reader with the violence itself. I remember writing the sentence where Sethe cuts the throat of the child very, very late in the process of writing the book. I remember getting up from the table and walking outside for a long time—walking around the yard and coming back and revising it a little bit and going back out and in and rewriting the sentence over and over again . . . Each time I fixed that sentence so that it was exactly right, or so I thought, but then I would be unable to sit there and would have to go away and come back. I thought that the act itself had to be not only buried but also understated, because if the language was going to compete with the violence itself it would be obscene or pornographic.

#### INTERVIEWER

Style is obviously very important to you. Can you talk about this in relation to *Jazz*?

#### MORRISON

With *Jazz*, I wanted to convey the sense that a musician conveys—that he has more but he's not gonna give it to you. It's an exercise in restraint, a holding back—not because it's not there, or because one had exhausted it, but because of the riches, and because it can be done again. That sense of knowing when to stop is a learned thing and I didn't always have it. It was probably not until after I wrote *Song of Solomon* that I got to feeling secure enough to experience what it meant to be thrifty with images and language and so on. I was very conscious in writing *Jazz* of trying to blend that which is contrived and artificial with improvisation. I thought of myself as like the jazz musician—someone who practices and practices and practices in order to be able to invent and to make his art look

effortless and graceful. I was always conscious of the constructed aspect of the writing process, and that art appears natural and elegant only as a result of constant practice and awareness of its formal structures. You must practice thrift in order to achieve that luxurious quality of wastefulness—that sense that you have enough to waste, that you are holding back—without actually wasting anything. You shouldn't overgratify, you should never satiate. I've always felt that that peculiar sense of hunger at the end of a piece of art—a yearning for more—is really very, very powerful. But there is at the same time a kind of contentment, knowing that at some other time there will indeed be more because the artist is endlessly inventive.

#### INTERVIEWER

Were there other . . . ingredients, structural entities?

#### MORRISON

Well, it seems to me that migration was a major event in the cultural history of this country. Now, I'm being very speculative about all of this—I guess that's why I write novels—but it seems to me something modern and new happened after the Civil War. Of course, a number of things changed, but the era was most clearly marked by the disowning and dispossession of ex-slaves. These ex-slaves were sometimes taken into their local labor markets, but they often tried to escape their problems by migrating to the city. I was fascinated by the thought of what the city must have meant to them, these second- and third-generation ex-slaves, to rural people living there in their own number. The city must have seemed so exciting and wonderful, so much the place to be.

I was interested in how the city worked. How classes and groups and nationalities had the security of numbers within their own turfs and territories, but also felt the thrill of knowing that there were other turfs and other territories, and felt the real glamour and excitement of being in this throng. I was interested in how music changed in this country. Spirituals and gospel and blues represented one kind of response to slavery—they gave voice to the yearning for escape, in code, literally on the Underground Railroad.

I was also concerned with personal life. How did people love one another? What did they think was free? At that time, when the ex-slaves were moving into the city, running away from something that was constricting and killing them and dispossessing them over and over and over again, they were in a very limiting environment. But when you listen to their music—the beginnings of jazz—you realized that they are talking about something else. They are talking about love, about loss. But there is such grandeur, such satisfaction in those lyrics . . . they're

never happy—somebody's always leaving—but they're not whining. It's as though the whole tragedy of choosing somebody, risking love, risking emotion, risking sensuality, and then losing it all didn't matter, since it was their choice. Exercising choice in who you love was a major, major thing. And the music reinforced the idea of love as a space where one could negotiate freedom.

Obviously, jazz was considered—as all new music is—to be devil music; too sensual and provocative, and so on. But for some black people jazz meant claiming their own bodies. You can imagine what that must have meant for people whose bodies had been owned, who had been slaves as children, or who remembered their parents' being slaves. Blues and jazz represented ownership of one's own emotions. So of course it is excessive and overdone: tragedy in jazz is relished, almost as though a happy ending would take away some of its glamour, its flair. Now advertisers use jazz on television to communicate authenticity and modernity; to say “trust me,” and to say “hip.”

These days the city still retains the quality of excitement it had in the jazz age—only now we associate that excitement with a different kind of danger. We chant and scream and act alarmed about the homeless; we say we want our streets back, but it is from our awareness of homelessness and our employment of strategies to deal with it that we get our sense of the urban. Feeling as though we have the armor, the shields, the moxie, the strength, the toughness, and the smarts to be engaged and survive encounters with the unpredictable, the alien, the strange, and the violent is an intrinsic part of what it means to live in the city. When people “complain” about homelessness they are actually bragging about it: New York has more homeless than San Francisco. No, no, no, San Francisco has more homeless. No, you haven't been to Detroit. We are almost competitive about our endurance, which I think is one of the reasons why we accept homelessness so easily.

#### INTERVIEWER

So the city freed the ex-slaves from their history?

#### MORRISON

In part, yes. The city was seductive to them because it promised forgetfulness. It offered the possibility of freedom—freedom, as you put it, from history. But although history should not become a straitjacket, which overwhelms and binds, neither should it be forgotten. One must critique it, test it, confront it, and understand it in order to achieve a freedom that is more than license, to achieve true, adult agency. If you penetrate the seduction of the city, then it becomes possible to confront your own history—to forget what ought to be forgotten and



use what is useful—such true agency is made possible.

INTERVIEWER

How do visual images influence your work?

MORRISON

I was having some difficulty describing a scene in *Song of Solomon* . . . of a man running away from some obligations and himself. I used an Edvard Munch painting almost literally. He is walking and there is nobody on his side of the street. Everybody is on the other side.

INTERVIEWER

*Song of Solomon* is such a painted book in comparison with some of your others like *Beloved*, which is sepia toned.

MORRISON

Part of that has to do with the visual images that I got being aware that in historical terms women, black people in general, were very attracted to very bright-colored clothing. Most people are frightened by color anyway.

INTERVIEWER

Why?

MORRISON

They just are. In this culture quiet colors are considered elegant. Civilized Western people wouldn't buy bloodred sheets or dishes. There may be something more to it than what I am suggesting. But the slave population had no access even to what color there was, because they wore slave clothes, hand-me-downs, work clothes made out of burlap and sacking. For them a colored dress would be luxurious; it wouldn't matter whether it was rich or poor cloth . . . just to have a red or a yellow dress. I stripped *Beloved* of color so that there are only the small moments when Sethe runs amok buying ribbons and bows, enjoying herself the way children enjoy that kind of color. The whole business of color was why slavery was able to last such a long time. It wasn't as though you had a class of convicts who could dress themselves up and pass themselves off. No, these were people marked because of their skin color, as well as other features. So color is a

signifying mark. Baby Suggs dreams of color and says, “Bring me a little lavender.” It is a kind of luxury. We are so inundated with color and visuals. I just wanted to pull it back so that one could feel that hunger and that delight. I couldn’t do that if I had made it the painterly book *Song of Solomon* was.

#### INTERVIEWER

Is that what you are referring to when you speak about needing to find a controlling image?

#### MORRISON

Sometimes, yes. There are three or four in *Song of Solomon*, I knew that I wanted it to be painterly, and I wanted the opening to be red, white, and blue. I also knew that in some sense he would have to “fly.” In *Song of Solomon* it was the first time that I had written about a man who was the central, the driving engine of the narrative; I was a little unsure about my ability to feel comfortable inside him. I could always look at him and write from the outside, but those would have been just perceptions. I had to be able not only to look at him but to feel how it really must have felt. So in trying to think about this, the image in my mind was a train. All the previous books have been women centered, and they have been pretty much in the neighborhood and in the yard; this was going to move out. So, I had this feeling about a train . . . sort of revving up, then moving out as he does, and then it sort of highballs at the end; it speeds up, but it doesn’t brake, it just highballs and leaves you sort of suspended. So that image controlled the structure for me, although that is not something I articulate or even make reference to; it only matters that it works for me. Other books look like spirals, like *Sula*.

#### INTERVIEWER

How would you describe the controlling image of *Jazz*?

#### MORRISON

*Jazz* was very complicated because I wanted to re-represent two contradictory things—artifice and improvisation—where you have an artwork, planned, thought through, but at the same time appears invented, like jazz. I thought of the image being a book. Physically a book, but at the same time it is writing itself. Imagining itself. Talking. Aware of what it is doing. It watches itself think and imagine. That seemed to me to be a combination of artifice and improvisation—where you practice and plan in order to invent. Also the willingness to fail, to be

wrong, because jazz is performance. In a performance you make mistakes, and you don't have the luxury of revision that a writer has; you have to make something out of a mistake, and if you do it well enough it will take you to another place where you never would have gone had you not made that error. So, you have to be able to risk making that error in performance. Dancers do it all the time, as well as jazz musicians. *Jazz* predicts its own story. Sometimes it is wrong because of faulty vision. It simply did not imagine those characters well enough, admits it was wrong, and the characters talk back the way jazz musicians do. It has to listen to the characters it has invented and then learn something from them. It was the most intricate thing I had done, though I wanted to tell a very simple story about people who do not know that they are living in the jazz age and to never use the word.

#### INTERVIEWER

One way to achieve this structurally is to have several voices speaking throughout each book. Why do you do this?

#### MORRISON

It's important not to have a totalizing view. In American literature we have been so totalized—as though there is only one version. We are not one indistinguishable block of people who always behave the same way.

#### INTERVIEWER

Is that what you mean by *totalized*?

#### MORRISON

Yes. A definitive or an authoritarian view from somebody else or someone speaking for us. No singularity and no diversity. I try to give some credibility to all sorts of voices, each of which is profoundly different. Because what strikes me about African American culture *is* its variety. In so much of contemporary music everybody sounds alike. But when you think about black music, you think about the difference between Duke Ellington and Sidney Bechet or Satchmo or Miles Davis. They don't sound anything alike, but you know that they are all black performers, because of whatever that quality is that makes you realize, Oh yes, this is part of something called the African American music tradition. There is no black woman popular singer, jazz singer, blues singer who sounds like any other. Billie Holiday does not sound like Aretha, doesn't sound like Nina, doesn't sound like Sarah, doesn't sound like any of them. They are really powerfully

different. And they will tell you that they couldn't possibly have made it as singers if they sounded like somebody else. If someone comes along sounding like Ella Fitzgerald, they will say, Oh we have one of those . . . It's interesting to me how those women have this very distinct, unmistakable image. I would like to write like that. I would like to write novels that were unmistakably mine, but nevertheless fit first into African American traditions and second of all, this whole thing called literature.

INTERVIEWER

First African American?

MORRISON

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

. . . rather than the whole of literature?

MORRISON

Oh yes.

INTERVIEWER

Why?

MORRISON

It's richer. It has more complex sources. It pulls from something that's closer to the edge, it's much more modern. It has a human future.

INTERVIEWER

Wouldn't you rather be known as a great exponent of literature rather than as an African American writer?

MORRISON

It's very important to me that my work be African American; if it assimilates into a different or larger pool, so much the better. But I shouldn't be *asked* to do that. Joyce is not asked to do that. Tolstoy is not. I mean, they can all be Russian,

French, Irish or Catholic, they write out of where they come from, and I do too. It just so happens that that space for me is African American; it could be Catholic, it could be Midwestern. I'm those things too, and they are all important.

#### INTERVIEWER

Why do you think people ask, Why don't you write something that we can understand? Do you threaten them by not writing in the typical Western, linear, chronological way?

#### MORRISON

I don't think that they mean that. I think they mean, Are you ever going to write a book about white people? For them perhaps that's a kind of a compliment. They're saying, You write well enough, I would even let you write about me. They couldn't say that to anybody else. I mean, could I have gone up to André Gide and said, Yes, but when are you going to get serious and start writing about black people? I don't think he would know how to answer that question. Just as I don't. He would say, What? I will if I want to, or, Who are you? What is behind that question is, there's the center, which is white, and then there are these regional blacks or Asians, or any sort of marginal people. That question can only be asked from the center. Bill Moyers asked me that when-are-you-going-to-write-about question on television. I just said, Well, maybe one day . . . but I couldn't say to him, you know, you can only ask that question from the center. The center of the world! I mean he's a white male. He's asking a marginal person when are you going to get to the center, when are you going to write about white people. I can't say, Bill, why are you asking me that question? Or, As long as that question seems reasonable is as long as I won't, can't. The point is that he's patronizing; he's saying, You write well enough; you could come on into the center if you wanted to. You don't have to stay out there on the margins. And I'm saying, Yeah, well, I'm gonna stay out here on the margin, and let the center look for me.

Maybe it's a false claim, but not fully. I'm sure it was true for the ones we think of as giants now. Joyce is a good example. He moved here and there, but he wrote about Ireland wherever he was, didn't care where he was. I am sure people said to him, Why . . .? Maybe the French asked, When you gonna write about Paris?

#### INTERVIEWER

What do you appreciate most in Joyce?

MORRISON

It is amazing how certain kinds of irony and humor travel. Sometimes Joyce is hilarious. I read *Finnegans Wake* after graduate school and I had the great good fortune of reading it without any help. I don't know if I read it right, but it was hilarious! I laughed constantly! I didn't know what was going on for whole blocks but it didn't matter because I wasn't going to be graded on it. I think the reason why everyone still has so much fun with Shakespeare is because he didn't have any literary critic. He was just doing it; and there were no reviews except for people throwing stuff on stage. He could just do it.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think if he had been reviewed he would have worked less?

MORRISON

Oh, if he'd cared about it, he'd have been very self-conscious. That's a hard attitude to maintain, to pretend you don't care, pretend you don't read.

INTERVIEWER

Do you read your reviews?

MORRISON

I read everything.

INTERVIEWER

Really? You look deadly serious.

MORRISON

I read everything written about me that I see.

INTERVIEWER

Why is that?

MORRISON

I have to know what's going on!



INTERVIEWER

You want to see how you're coming across?

MORRISON

No, no. It's not about me or my work, it's about what is going on. I have to get a sense, particularly of what's going on with women's work or African American work, contemporary work. I teach a literature course. So I read any information that's going to help me teach.

INTERVIEWER

Are you ever really surprised when they compare you to the magic realists, such as Gabriel García Márquez?

MORRISON

Yes, I used to be. It doesn't mean anything to me. Schools are only important to me when I'm teaching literature. It doesn't mean anything to me when I'm sitting here with a big pile of blank yellow paper . . . what do I say? I'm a magic realist? Each subject matter demands its own form, you know.

INTERVIEWER

Why do you teach undergraduates?

MORRISON

Here at Princeton, they really do value undergraduates, which is nice because a lot of universities value only the graduate school or the professional research schools. I like Princeton's notion. I would have loved that for my own children. I don't like freshman and sophomores being treated as the staging ground or the playground or the canvas on which graduate students learn how to teach. They need the best instruction. I've always thought the public schools needed to study the best literature. I always taught *Oedipus Rex* to all kinds of what they used to call remedial or development classes. The reason those kids are in those classes is that they're bored to death; so you can't give them boring things. You have to give them the best there is to engage them.

INTERVIEWER

One of your sons is a musician. Were you ever musical, did you ever play the

piano?

MORRISON

No, but I come from a family of highly skilled musicians. Highly skilled, meaning most of them couldn't read music but they could play everything that they heard . . . instantly. They sent us, my sister and me, to music lessons. They were sending me off to learn how to do something that they could do naturally. I thought I was deficient, retarded. They didn't explain that perhaps it's more important that you learn how to *read* music . . . that it's a good thing, not a bad thing. I thought we were sort of lame people going off to learn how to walk, while, you know, they all just stood up and did it naturally.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think there is an education for becoming a writer? Reading perhaps?

MORRISON

That has only limited value.

INTERVIEWER

Travel the world? Take courses in sociology, history?

MORRISON

Or stay home . . . I don't think they have to go anywhere.

INTERVIEWER

Some people say, Oh, I can't write a book until I've lived my life, until I've had experiences.

MORRISON

That may be—maybe they can't. But look at the people who never went anywhere and just thought it up. Thomas Mann. I guess he took a few little trips . . . I think you either have or you acquire this sort of imagination. Sometimes you do need a stimulus. But I myself don't ever go anywhere for stimulation. I don't want to go anywhere. If I could just sit in one spot I would be happy. I don't trust the ones who say I have to go do something before I can write. You see, I don't write autobiographically. First of all, I'm not interested in real-life people as

subjects for fiction—including myself. If I write about somebody who's a historical figure like Margaret Garner, I really don't know anything about her. What I knew came from reading two interviews with her. They said, Isn't this extraordinary. Here's a woman who escaped into Cincinnati from the horrors of slavery and was not crazy. Though she'd killed her child, she was not foaming at the mouth. She was very calm; she said, I'd do it again. That was more than enough to fire my imagination.

#### INTERVIEWER

She was sort of a cause célèbre?

#### MORRISON

She was. Her real life was much more awful than it's rendered in the novel, but if I had known all there was to know about her I never would have written it. It would have been finished; there would have been no place in there for me. It would be like a recipe already cooked. There you are. You're already this person. Why should I get to steal from you? I don't like that. What I really love is the process of invention. To have characters move from the curl all the way to a full-fledged person, that's interesting.

#### INTERVIEWER

Do you ever write out of anger or any other emotion?

#### MORRISON

No. Anger is a very intense but tiny emotion, you know. It doesn't last. It doesn't produce anything. It's not creative . . . at least not for me. I mean these books take at least three years!

#### INTERVIEWER

That is a long time to be angry.

#### MORRISON

Yes. I don't trust that stuff anyway. I don't like those little quick emotions, like, I'm lonely, *ohhh*, God . . . I don't like those emotions as fuel. I mean, I have them, but—

INTERVIEWER

—they're not a good muse?

MORRISON

No, and if it's not your brain thinking cold, cold thoughts, which you can dress in any kind of mood, then it's nothing. It has to be a cold, cold thought. I mean cold, or cool at least. Your brain. That's all there is.

# Mark Twain's Letter to Walt Whitman

Hartford, May 24/89

To Walt Whitman:

You have lived just the seventy years which are greatest in the world's history & richest in benefit & advancement to its peoples. These seventy years have done much more to widen the interval between man & the other animals than was accomplished by any five centuries which preceded them.

What great births you have witnessed! The steam press, the steamship, the steel ship, the railroad, the perfected cotton-gin, the telegraph, the phonograph, the photograph, photo-gravure, the electrotpe, the gaslight, the electric light, the sewing machine, & the amazing, infinitely varied & innumerable products of coal tar, those latest & strangest marvels of a marvelous age. And you have seen even greater births than these; for you have seen the application of anesthesia to surgery-practice, whereby the ancient dominion of pain, which began with the first created life, came to an end in this earth forever; you have seen the slave set free, you have seen the monarchy banished from France, & reduced in England to a machine which makes an imposing show of diligence & attention to business, but isn't connected with the works. Yes, you have indeed seen much — but tarry yet a while, for the greatest is yet to come. Wait thirty years, & then look out over the earth! You shall see marvels upon marvels added to these whose nativity you have witnessed; & conspicuous above them you shall see their formidable Result — Man at almost his full stature at last! — & still growing, visibly growing while you look. In that day, who that hath a throne, or a gilded privilege not attainable by his neighbor, let him procure his slippers & get ready to dance, for there is going to be music. Abide, & see these things! Thirty of us who honor & love you, offer the opportunity. We have among us 600 years, good & sound, left in the bank of life. Take 30 of them — the richest birth-day gift ever offered to poet in this world — & sit down & wait. Wait till you see that great figure appear, & catch the far glint of the sun upon his banner; then you may depart satisfied, as knowing you have seen him for whom the earth was made, & that he will proclaim that human wheat is worth more than human tares, & proceed to organize human values on that basis.

Mark Twain

# Mark Twain Letter to To William Dean and Elinor M. Howells

(*Union Catalog of Clemens Letters*, edited by Paul Machlis, 2515)

Elmira, Aug. 25/77

My Dear Howellses:

I thought I ought to make a sort of record of it for future reference; the pleasantest way to do that would be to write it to somebody; but that somebody would let it leak into print, & 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 & Cousin May Marsh were here visiting Susie Crane & Livy at our farm house. By & by mother Langdon came up the hill in the “high carriage” with Nora the nurse & little Jervis (Charley Langdon’s little boy)—Timothy the coachman driving. Behind these came Charley’s wife & little girl in the buggy, with the new, young, spry gray horse—a high-stepper. Theodore Crane arrived a little later.

The Bay & Susie were on hand with their nurse, Rosa. I was on hand, too. Susie Crane’s trio of colored servants ditto—these being Josie, housemaid; Auntie 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); and Chocklate (the laundress,) (as the Bay calls her—she can’t say Charlotte), still s taller, still more majestic of proportions, turbaned, very black, straight as an Indian—age, 24. Then there was the farmer’s wife (colored) & her little girl, Susie.

Wasn’t it a good audience to get up an excitement before? Good excitable, inflammable, ~~combustible~~ 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 & muscle, stocky, stooping, ungainly, has a good manly face & a clear eye. Age about 45—& 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 & neck. It is a spectacle to make the broken-hearted smile.

Lewis has worked mighty hard & remained mighty poor. At the end of a 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—& he being conscientious & honest, imagine what it was to him to have to carry this stubborn, hopeless load year in & year out.

Well, sunset came, & Ida the young & comely (Charley Langdon’s wife) & her little Julia & the nurse Nora, drove out at the gate behind the new gray horse & started down the long hill—the high carriage receiving its load under the porte cochère. Ida was seen to turn her face toward us across the fence & intervening lawn—Theodore waved goodbye 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 & apparently spring the height of a man from the ground.

Theodore & I left the shrieking crowd behind & ran down the hill bareheaded & shouting. A neighbor appeared at his gate—a tenth of a second too late!—the buggy ~~sped by~~ vanished past him like a ~~rocket~~ 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, & 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, & so



delay for a moment the ghastly spectacle of mutilation & death I was expecting.

I ran on & on, still spared this spectacle, but saying to myself “I shall ~~st~~ 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 & 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 & said, “Well, you’re alive yet, ~~am~~ aren’t you?” A miracle had been performed—nothing less.

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 & stood in this V. ~~With~~ He gathered his vast strength, and with a perfect Creedmoor aim he siezed the gray horse’s bit as he plunged ~~by~~ by& 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 & accuracy, is clear beyond my comprehension—& grows more so the more I go & examine the ground & 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, & we should have found the rest of the remains away down at the bottom of the steep ravine.

~~Two~~ Ten minutes later Theodore & I arrived opposite the house, with the servants straggling after us, & shouted to the [one word canceled and torn away] 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; & 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 ~~absent~~ long pauses between—pictures of that flying carriage, these pauses represented—this ~~ese~~ picture intruded itself all the time & disjointed the talk.

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

(The end whereof is not yet, of course, for Charley Langdon is west & will arrive ignorant of all these things to-day.)

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

Now Aunty Cord is a violent Methodist & Lewis an ~~fanatic~~ implacable Dunker-Baptist. These two are inveterate

religious disputants. The revealments ~~being~~ 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 & as grotesquely picturesque as usual, everybody wanted to go & see how he looked. They came back & said he was beautiful. It was so, too—& yet he would have photographed exactly as he would have done any day these past 7 years that he has occupied this farm.

*section break*

Aug. 27.

P. S.—Our little romance in real life is happily & satisfactorily completed. Charley has come, listened, acted—& 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. To-day Ida has given him a new, sumptuous gold Swiss stem-winding stop-watch; & 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.

I was asked, beforehand, if this would be a wise gift, & I said, “Yes, the very wisest of all; I know the colored race, & 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, & 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, & 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 & 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.

# Mark Twain Letter to James A. Garfield

(*Union Catalog of Clemens Letters*, edited by Paul Machlis, 1891)

Hartford Jan. 12/81.

General Garfield—

Dear Sir:

Several times, since your election, people 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. ~~with those peoples’ requests.~~ I could not, without exposing the fact that I hadn’t any influence with you; & that was a thing which 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—& 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. Douglas, I am not asked to you “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 to office; & so I beg permission to hope that you will retain Mr. Douglas in his present office of Marshal of Washington, if such a course will not clash with your own preferences, or with the expediences & interests of your administration. I offer this petition with peculiar pleasure & strong desire, because I so honor this man’s high & blemishless character & so admire his brave long crusade for the liberties & 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 to feel them, too.

With great respect,

I am, General,

Truly Yours

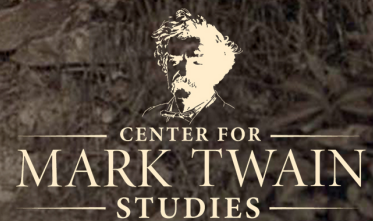
S. L. Clemens.



QUARRY FARM WEEKEND SYMPOSIUM

# MARK TWAIN & NATURE

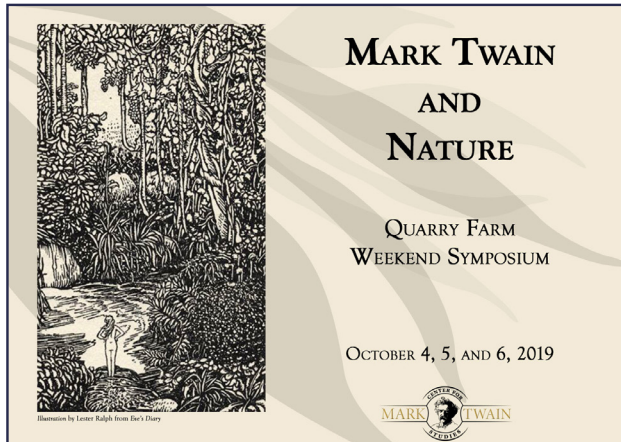
OCTOBER 4, 5, AND 6, 2019





# SYMPOSIUM 2019

## THE SIXTH QUARRY FARM WEEKEND SYMPOSIUM



The natural world figures prominently in the writings of Mark Twain, whether as the main object of description and commentary as in *Life on the Mississippi* and *Roughing It* or as an inextricable element of fictional narratives such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* and more. However, these writings (other than short excerpts from *Life* and *Roughing It*) rarely find their way into anthologies of nature writing. And yet, Twain's writing about the natural world across his literary oeuvre provides prescient and germane commentary on the relationship between human beings and the natural world—revealing it to be a conflicted a relationship of antagonism and praise. On the one hand, he seemed at war with nature: “The purpose of all human laws is one—to defeat the laws of Nature.” On the other hand, he expressed both awe and respect for the

power of the natural world: “Architects cannot teach nature anything,” and “Nature knows no indecencies; man invents them.”

CMTS's Sixth Quarry Farm Weekend Symposium will offer various critical examinations of the natural world in Twain's writing: as nature writing similar to the ecocritical discourse of Thoreau, Dillard, and Abbey; as exploration of the aesthetic nexus between art and nature; as commentary on animal welfare; and as analysis of the intersection between nature and culture. Moreover, papers cut across all periods of Twain's writing life and will further the claim of Twain as a forerunner to mid-20th to early 21st century writers such as Krutch, Cuppy, Abbey, Kingsolver, Quammen, and Gessner who offer comic responses to nature as well as recognize the intrinsically humorous place of humanity in nature.

The symposium will be organized by **Ben Click** (St. Mary's College of Maryland). The keynote speaker will be **Michael P. Branch**, a writer of creative nonfiction and humor, focusing on the environment and the life in the American West. Branch is also professor of literature and environment at the University of Nevada, Reno. He has published five books and more than two hundred essays, articles, and reviews.

The symposium will begin on Friday, October 4, 2019 with a dinner in Meier Hall on the Elmira College campus, followed by the keynote address. The symposium will continue throughout the next day with presentations and discussions in the tranquil atmosphere of **Quarry Farm**, where breakfast, lunch, a cocktail hour and dinner will also be served. Registrants will be invited back to Quarry Farm on Sunday morning to enjoy an autumnal breakfast and casual discussions.

**DATES:** Friday, October 4, 2019 to Sunday, October 6, 2019

**HOUSING:** Special rates at the Elmira Riverside Holiday Inn

**COST:** \$175 - Price includes 5 full meals, with beer/wine at dinners, and a conference program.

*Please note that due to the fragile nature of Quarry Farm, the symposium will be limited to 40 attendees.*

**ATTENTION GRADUATE STUDENTS:** CMTS will waive all registration fees and provide free lodging for a select number of graduate students. If you are interested in this opportunity, contact Joseph Lemak ([jlemak@elmira.edu](mailto:jlemak@elmira.edu)).



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [MARKTWINSTUDIES.ORG](http://MARKTWINSTUDIES.ORG)



## QUARRY FARM FELLOWSHIPS

### NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Quarry Farm Fellowships are open to any scholar working in any field related to Mark Twain Studies at any career stage. This is a unique opportunity to work on academic or creative projects at Quarry Farm, Mark Twain's summer retreat where he penned *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and other iconic works.

**Nine Quarry Farm Fellowships will be offered in 2020:**

- Three one-month residencies, including housing at Quarry Farm and a \$1500 honorarium for each residency
- Six two-week residencies, including housing at Quarry Farm and a \$1000 honorarium for each residency
- At least one month-long and two two-week fellowships will be reserved for graduate students, contingent faculty, and faculty three or fewer years removed from completion of their Ph.D.



**Applications are due: November 30, 2019**  
**Visit: [www.marktwainstudies.com](http://www.marktwainstudies.com) for more information.**



## NOTES

## NOTES

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1. Hamilton Hall\*
2. Fassett Commons\*
3. Cowles Hall\*
4. Mark Twain Study\*
5. Gillett Memorial Hall\*
6. Alumni Hall
7. Carnegie Hall\*
8. Kolker Hall
9. Watson Fine Arts
10. Harris Hall
11. McGraw Hall
12. The College Store
13. College Post Office
14. The College Cottages
15. Anderson Hall
16. Columbia Hall
17. Meier Hall
18. Gannett Tripp Library
19. Clarke Health Center
20. Twin Towers
21. Campus Center
22. Speidel Gymnasium in Emerson Hall
23. Gibson Theatre in Emerson Hall
24. Tompkins Hall\*
25. Perry Hall
26. The Office of Admissions & Financial Aid
27. Campus Field



\*Listed on the National Register of Historic Places