PAINE ALBERT BIGELOW

MARK TWAIN: A BIOGRAPHY. VOLUME I, PART 2: 1835-1866

Albert Paine

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LIV
THE LECTURER

It was not easy to take up the daily struggle again, but it was necessary.—[Clemens once declared he had been so blue at this period that one morning he put a loaded pistol to his head, but found he lacked courage to pull the trigger.]—Out of the ruck of possibilities (his brain always thronged with plans) he constructed three or four resolves. The chief of these was the trip around the world; but that lay months ahead, and in the mean time ways and means must be provided. Another intention was to finish the Hornet article, and forward it to Harper's Magazine—a purpose carried immediately into effect. To his delight the article found acceptance, and he looked forward to the day of its publication as the beginning of a real career. He

intended to follow it up with a series on the islands, which in due time might result in a book and an income. He had gone so far as to experiment with a dedication for the book—an inscription to his mother, modified later for use in 'The Innocents Abroad'. A third plan of action was to take advantage of the popularity of the Hawaiian letters, and deliver a lecture on the same subject. But this was a fearsome prospect—he trembled when he thought of it. As Governor of the Third House he had been extravagantly received and applauded, but in that case the position of public entertainer had been thrust upon him. To come forward now, offering himself in the same capacity, was a different matter. He believed he could entertain, but he lacked the courage to declare himself; besides, it meant a risk of his slender capital. He confided his situation to Col. John McComb, of the Alta California, and was startled by McComb's vigorous endorsement.

"Do it, by all means!" urged McComb. "It will be a grand success—I know it! Take the largest house in town, and charge a dollar a ticket."

Frightened but resolute, he went to the leading theater manager the same Tom Maguire of his verses—and was offered the new opera-house at half rates. The next day this advertisement appeared:

MAGUIRE'S ACADEMY OF MUSIC
PINE STREET, NEAR MONTGOMERY

THE SANDWICH ISLANDS

MARK TWAIN

(HONOLULU CORRESPONDENT OF THE SACRAMENTO UNION) WILL DELIVER A LECTURE ON THE SANDWICH ISLANDS

AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC

ON TUESDAY EVENING, OCT. 2d

(1866)

faithful one, and need only be summarized here.

Expecting to find the house empty, he found it packed from the footlights to the walls. Sidling out from the wings—wobbly-kneed and dry of tongue—he was greeted by a murmur, a roar, a very crash of applause that frightened away his remaining vestiges of courage. Then, came reaction —these were his friends, and he began to talk to them. Fear melted away, and as tide after tide of applause rose and billowed and came breaking at his feet, he knew something of the exaltation of Monte Cristo when he declared "The world is mine!"

It was a vast satisfaction to have succeeded. It was particularly gratifying at this time, for he dreaded going back into newspaper harness. Also; it softened later the disappointment resulting from another venture; for when the December Harper appeared, with his article, the printer and proof-reader had somehow converted Mark Twain into "Mark Swain," and his literary dream perished.

As to the literary value of his lecture, it was much higher than had, been any portion of his letters, if we may judge from its few remaining fragments. One of these—a part of the description of the great volcano Haleakala, on the island of Maui—is a fair example of his eloquence.

It is somewhat more florid than his later description of the same scene in Roughing It, which it otherwise resembles; and we may imagine that its poetry, with the added charm of its delivery, held breathless his hearers, many of whom believed that no purer eloquence had ever been uttered or written.

It is worth remembering, too, that in this lecture, delivered so long ago, he advocated the idea of American ownership of these islands, dwelling at considerable length on his reasons for this ideal.

–[For fragmentary extracts from this first lecture of Mark Twain and news comment, see Appendix D, end of last volume.]

—There was a gross return from his venture of more than $1,200, but with his usual business insight, which was never foresight, he had made an arrangement by which, after paying bills and dividing with his manager, he had only about one-third of, this sum left. Still, even this was prosperity and triumph. He had acquired a new and lucrative profession at a bound. The papers lauded him as the "most piquant and humorous writer and lecturer on the Coast since the days of the lamented John Phoenix." He felt that he was on the highroad at last.

Denis McCarthy, late of the Enterprise, was in San Francisco, and was willing to become his manager. Denis was capable and honest, and Clemens was fond of him. They planned a tour of the near-by towns, beginning with Sacramento, extending it later even to the mining camps, such as Red Dog and Grass Valley; also across into Nevada, with engagements at Carson City, Virginia, and Gold Hill. It was an exultant and hilarious excursion—that first lecture tour made by Denis McCarthy and Mark Twain. Success traveled with them everywhere, whether the lecturer looked across the footlights of some pretentious "opera-house" or between the two tallow candles of some camp

"academy." Whatever the building, it was packed, and the returns were maximum.

Those who remember him as a lecturer in that long-ago time say that his delivery was more quaint, his drawl more exaggerated, even than in later life; that his appearance and movements on the stage were natural, rather than graceful; that his manuscript, which he carried under his arm, looked like a ruffled hen. It was, in fact, originally written on sheets of manila paper, in large characters, so that it could be read easily by dim light, and it was doubtless often disordered.

There was plenty of amusing experience on this tour. At one place, when the lecture was over, an old man came to him and said:

"Be them your natural tones of eloquence?"

At Grass Valley there was a rival show, consisting of a lady tight-rope walker and her husband. It was a small place, and the tight-rope attraction seemed likely to fail. The lady's husband had formerly been a compositor on the Enterprise, so that he felt there was a bond of brotherhood between him and Mark Twain.

"Look here," he said. "Let's combine our shows. I'll let my wife do the tight-rope act outside and draw a crowd, and you go inside and lecture."

The arrangement was not made.

Following custom, the lecturer at first thought it necessary to be introduced, and at each place McCarthy had to skirmish around and find the proper person. At Red Dog, on the

Stanislaus, the man selected failed to appear, and Denis had to provide another on short notice. He went down into the audience and captured an old fellow, who ducked and dodged but could not escape. Denis led him to the stage, a good deal frightened.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "this is the celebrated Mark Twain from the celebrated city of San Francisco, with his celebrated lecture about the celebrated Sandwich Islands."

That was as far as he could go; but it was far enough. Mark Twain never had a better introduction. The audience was in a shouting humor from the start.

Clemens himself used to tell of an introduction at another camp, where his sponsor said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I know only two things about this man: the first is that he's never been in jail, and the second is I don't know why."

But this is probably apocryphal; there is too much "Mark Twain" in it.

When he reached Virginia, Goodman said to him:

"Sam, you do not need anybody to introduce you. There's a piano on the stage in the theater. Have it brought out in sight, and when the curtain rises you be seated at the piano, playing and singing that song of yours, 'I Had an Old Horse Whose Name Was Methusalem,' and don't seem to notice that the curtain is up at first; then be surprised when you suddenly find out that it is up, and begin talking, without any further preliminaries."

This proved good advice, and the lecture, thus opened, started

off with general hilarity and applause.

LV
HIGHWAY ROBBERY

His Nevada, lectures were bound to be immensely successful. The people regarded him as their property over there, and at Carson and Virginia the houses overflowed. At Virginia especially his friends urged and begged him to repeat the entertainment, but he resolutely declined.

"I have only one lecture yet," he said. "I cannot bring myself to give it twice in the same town."

But that irresponsible imp, Steve Gillis, who was again in Virginia, conceived a plan which would make it not only necessary for him to lecture again, but would supply him with a subject. Steve's plan was very simple: it was to relieve the lecturer of his funds by a friendly highway robbery, and let an account of the adventure furnish the new lecture.

In 'Roughing It' Mark Twain has given a version of this mock robbery which is correct enough as far as it goes; but important details are lacking. Only a few years ago (it was April, 1907), in his cabin on jackass Hill, with Joseph Goodman and the writer of this history present, Steve Gillis made his "death-bed" confession as is here set down:

"Mark's lecture was given in Piper's Opera House, October 30, 1866. The Virginia City people had heard many famous lectures before, but they were mere sideshows compared with

Mark's. It could have been run to crowded houses for a week. We begged him to give the common people a chance; but he refused to repeat himself. He was going down to Carson, and was coming back to talk in Gold Hill about a week later, and his agent, Denis McCarthy, and I laid a plan to have him robbed on the Divide between Gold Hill and Virginia, after the Gold Hill lecture was over and he and Denis would be coming home with the money. The Divide was a good lonely place, and was famous for its hold-ups. We got City Marshal George Birdsall into it with us, and took in Leslie Blackburn, Pat Holland, Jimmy Eddington, and one or two more of Sam's old friends. We all loved him, and would have fought for him in a moment. That's the kind of friends Mark had in Nevada. If he had any enemies I never heard of them.

"We didn't take in Dan de Quille, or Joe here, because Sam was Joe's guest, and we were afraid he would tell him. We didn't take in Dan because we wanted him to write it up as a genuine robbery and make a big sensation. That would pack the opera-house at two dollars a seat to hear Mark tell the story.

"Well, everything went off pretty well. About the time Mark was finishing his lecture in Gold Hill the robbers all went up on the Divide to wait, but Mark's audience gave him a kind of reception after his lecture, and we nearly froze to death up there before he came along. By and by I went back to see what was the matter. Sam and Denis were coming, and carrying a carpet-sack about half full of silver between them. I shadowed them and blew

a policeman's whistle as a signal to the boys when the lecturers were within about a hundred yards of the place. I heard Sam say to Denis:

"'I'm glad they've got a policeman on the Divide. They never had one in my day.'

"Just about that time the boys, all with black masks on and silver dollars at the sides of their tongues to disguise their voices, stepped out and stuck six-shooters at Sam and Denis and told them to put up their hands. The robbers called each other 'Beauregard' and 'Stonewall Jackson.' Of course Denis's hands went up, and Mark's, too, though Mark wasn't a bit scared or excited. He talked to the robbers in his regular fashion. He said:

"'Don't flourish those pistols so promiscuously. They might go off by accident.'

"They told him to hand over his watch and money; but when he started to take his hands down they made him put them up again. Then he asked how they expected him to give them his valuables with his hands up in the sky. He said his treasures didn't lie in heaven. He told them not to take his watch, which was the one Sandy Baldwin and Theodore Winters had given him as Governor of the Third House, but we took it all the same.

"Whenever he started to put his hands down we made him put them up again.

Once he said:

"'Don't you fellows be so rough. I was tenderly reared.'

"Then we told him and Denis to keep their hands up for fifteen

minutes after we were gone—this was to give us time to get back to Virginia and be settled when they came along. As we were going away Mark called:

"'Say, you forgot something.'

"'What is it?'

"Why, the carpet-bag.'

"He was cool all the time. Senator Bill Stewart, in his Autobiography, tells a great story of how scared Mark was, and how he ran; but Stewart was three thousand miles from Virginia by that time, and later got mad at Mark because he made a joke about him in 'Roughing It'.

"Denis wanted to take his hands down pretty soon after we were gone, but Mark said:

"'No, Denis, I'm used to obeying orders when they are given in that convincing way; we'll just keep our hands up another fifteen minutes or so for good measure.'

"We were waiting in a big saloon on C Street when Mark and Denis came along. We knew they would come in, and we expected Mark would be excited; but he was as unruffled as a mountain lake. He told us they had been robbed, and asked me if I had any money. I gave him a hundred dollars of his own money, and he ordered refreshments for everybody. Then we adjourned to the Enterprise office, where he offered a reward, and Dan de Quille wrote up the story and telegraphed it to the other newspapers. Then somebody suggested that Mark would have to give another lecture now, and that the robbery would

make a great subject. He entered right into the thing, and next day we engaged Piper's Opera House, and people were offering five dollars apiece for front seats. It would have been the biggest thing that ever came to Virginia if it had come off. But we made a mistake, then, by taking Sandy Baldwin into the joke. We took in Joe here, too, and gave him the watch and money to keep, which made it hard for Joe afterward. But it was Sandy Baldwin that ruined us. He had Mark out to dinner the night before the show was to come off, and after he got well warmed up with champagne he thought it would be a smart thing to let Mark into what was really going on.

"Mark didn't see it our way. He was mad clear through."

At this point Joseph Goodman took up the story. He said:

"Those devils put Sam's money, watch, keys, pencils, and all his things into my hands. I felt particularly mean at being made accessory to the crime, especially as Sam was my guest, and I had grave doubts as to how he would take it when he found out the robbery was not genuine.

"I felt terribly guilty when he said:

"'Joe, those d—n thieves took my keys, and I can't get into my trunk. Do you suppose you could get me a key that would fit my trunk?'

"I said I thought I could during the day, and after Sam had gone I took his own key, put it in the fire and burnt it to make it look black. Then I took a file and scratched it here and there, to make it look as if I had been fitting it to the lock, feeling guilty

all the time, like a man who is trying to hide a murder. Sam did not ask for his key that day, and that evening he was invited to judge Baldwin's to dinner. I thought he looked pretty silent and solemn when he came home; but he only said:

"'Joe, let's play cards; I don't feel sleepy.'

"Steve here, and two or three of the other boys who had been active in the robbery, were present, and they did not like Sam's manner, so they excused themselves and left him alone with me. We played a good while; then he said:

"'Joe, these cards are greasy. I have got some new ones in my trunk. Did you get that key to-day?'

"I fished out that burnt, scratched-up key with fear and trembling. But he didn't seem to notice it at all, and presently returned with the cards. Then we played, and played, and played —till one o'clock—two o'clock—Sam hardly saying a word, and I wondering what was going to happen. By and by he laid down his cards and looked at me, and said:

"'Joe, Sandy Baldwin told me all about that robbery to-night. Now, Joe, I have found out that the law doesn't recognize a joke, and I am going to send every one of those fellows to the penitentiary.'

"He said it with such solemn gravity, and such vindictiveness, that I believed he was in dead earnest.

"I know that I put in two hours of the hardest work I ever did, trying to talk him out of that resolution. I used all the arguments about the boys being his oldest friends; how they all loved him,

and how the joke had been entirely for his own good; I pleaded with him, begged him to reconsider; I went and got his money and his watch and laid them on the table; but for a time it seemed hopeless. And I could imagine those fellows going behind the bars, and the sensation it would make in California; and just as I was about to give it up he said:

"'Well, Joe, I'll let it pass—this time; I'll forgive them again; I've had to do it so many times; but if I should see Denis McCarthy and Steve Gillis mounting the scaffold to-morrow, and I could save them by turning over my hand, I wouldn't do it!'

"He canceled the lecture engagement, however, next morning, and the day after left on the Pioneer Stage, by the way of Donner Lake, for California. The boys came rather sheepishly to see him off; but he would make no show of relenting. When they introduced themselves as Beauregard, Stonewall Jackson, etc., he merely said:

"'Yes, and you'll all be behind the bars some day. There's been a good deal of robbery around here lately, and it's pretty clear now who did it.' They handed him a package containing the masks which the robbers had worn. He received it in gloomy silence; but as the stage drove away he put his head out of the window, and after some pretty vigorous admonition resumed his old smile, and called out: 'Good-by, friends; good-by, thieves; I bear you no malice.' So the heaviest joke was on his tormentors after all."

This is the story of the famous Mark Twain robbery direct

from headquarters. It has been garbled in so many ways that it seems worth setting down in full. Denis McCarthy, who joined him presently in San Francisco, received a little more punishment there.

"What kind of a trip did you boys have?" a friend asked of them.

Clemens, just recovering from a cold which the exposure on the Divide had given him, smiled grimly:

"Oh, pretty good, only Denis here mistook it for a spree."

He lectured again in San Francisco, this time telling the story of his Overland trip in 1861, and he did the daring thing of repeating three times the worn-out story of Horace Greeley's ride with Hank Monk, as given later in 'Roughing It'. People were deadly tired of that story out there, and when he told it the first time, with great seriousness, they thought he must be failing mentally. They did not laugh—they only felt sorry. He waited a little, as if expecting a laugh, and presently led around to it and told it again. The audience was astonished still more, and pitied him thoroughly. He seemed to be waiting pathetically in the dead silence for their applause, then went on with his lecture; but presently, with labored effort, struggled around to the old story again, and told it for the third time. The audience suddenly saw the joke then, and became vociferous and hysterical in their applause; but it was a narrow escape. He would have been hysterical himself if the relief had not came when it did.

–[A side-light on the Horace Greeley story and on Mr.

Greeley's eccentricities is furnished by Mr. Goodman:

When I was going East in 1869 I happened to see Hank Monk just before I started. "Mr. Goodman," he said, "you tell Horace Greeley that I want to come East, and ask him to send me a pass." "All right, Hank," I said, "I will." It happened that when I got to New York City one of the first men I met was Greeley. "Mr. Greeley," said, "I have a message for you from Hank Monk." Greeley bristled and glared at me. "That—rascal?" he said, "He has done me more injury than any other man in America."]

LVI
BACK TO THE STATES

In the mean time Clemens had completed his plan for sailing, and had arranged with General McComb, of the Alta California, for letters during his proposed trip around the world. However, he meant to visit his people first, and his old home. He could go back with means now, and with the prestige of success.

"I sail to-morrow per Opposition—telegraphed you to-day," he wrote on December 14th, and a day later his note-book entry says:

> Sailed from San Francisco in Opposition (line) steamer America, Capt. Wakeman, at noon, 15th Dec., 1866. Pleasant sunny day, hills brightly clad with green grass and shrubbery.

So he was really going home at last! He had been gone five and a half years—eventful, adventurous years that had made him over completely, at least so far as ambitions and equipment were concerned. He had came away, in his early manhood, a printer and a pilot, unknown outside of his class. He was returning a man of thirty-one, with a fund of hard experience, three added professions—mining, journalism, and lecturing — also with a new name, already famous on the sunset slopes of its adoption, and beginning to be heard over the hills and far away.

In some degree, at least, he resembled the prince of a fairy tale who, starting out humble and unnoticed, wins his way through a hundred adventures and returns with gifts and honors.

The homeward voyage was a notable one. It began with a tempest a little way out of San Francisco—a storm terrible but brief, that brought the passengers from their berths to the deck, and for a time set them praying. Then there was Captain Ned Wakeman, a big, burly, fearless sailor, who had visited the edges of all continents and archipelagos; who had been born at sea, and never had a day's schooling in his life, but knew the Bible by heart; who was full of human nature and profanity, and believed he was the only man on the globe who knew the secret of the Bible miracles. He became a distinct personality in Mark Twain's work —the memory of him was an unfailing delight. Captain "Ned Blakely," in 'Roughing It', who with his own hands hanged Bill Noakes, after reading him promiscuous chapters from the Bible, was Captain Wakeman. Captain "Stormfield," who had the marvelous visit to heaven, was likewise Captain Wakeman; and he appears in the "Idle Excursion" and elsewhere.

Another event of the voyage was crossing the Nicaragua Isthmus—the trip across the lake and down the San Juan River —a brand-new experience, between shores of splendid tropic tangle, gleaming with vivid life. The luxuriance got into his note-book.

Dark grottos, fairy festoons, tunnels, temples, columns, pillars, towers, pilasters, terraces, pyramids, mounds, domes,

walls, in endless confusion of vine-work—no shape known to architecture unimitated—and all so webbed together that short distances within are only gained by glimpses. Monkeys here and there; birds warbling; gorgeous plumaged birds on the wing; Paradise itself, the imperial realm of beauty-nothing to wish for to make it perfect.

But it was beyond the isthmus that the voyage loomed into proportions somber and terrible. The vessel they took there, the San Francisco, sailed from Greytown January 1, 1867, the beginning of a memorable year in Mark Twain's life. Next day two cases of Asiatic cholera were reported in the steerage. There had been a rumor of it in Nicaragua, but no one expected it on the ship.

The nature of the disease was not hinted at until evening, when one of the men died. Soon after midnight, the other followed. A minister making the voyage home, Rev. J. G. Fackler, read the burial service. The gaiety of the passengers, who had become well acquainted during the Pacific voyage, was subdued. When the word "cholera" went among them, faces grew grave and frightened. On the morning of January 4th Reverend Fackler's services were again required. The dead man was put overboard within half an hour after he had ceased to breathe.

Gloom settled upon the ship. All steam was made to put into Key West. Then some of the machinery gave way and the ship lay rolling, helplessly becalmed in the fierce heat of the Gulf, while repairs were being made. The work was done at a disadvantage,

and the parts did not hold. Time and again they were obliged to lie to, in the deadly tropic heat, listening to the hopeless hammering, wondering who would be the next to be sewed up hastily in a blanket and slipped over the ship's side. On the 5th seven new cases of illness were reported. One of the crew, a man called "Shape," was said to be dying. A few hours later he was dead. By this time the Reverend Fackler himself had been taken.

"So they are burying poor 'Shape' without benefit of clergy," says the note-book.

General consternation now began to prevail. Then it was learned that the ship's doctor had run out of medicines. The passengers became demoralized. They believed their vessel was to become a charnel ship. Strict sanitary orders were issued, and a hospital was improvised.

> Verily the ship is becoming a floating hospital herself —not an hour passes but brings its fresh sensation, its new disaster, its melancholy tidings. When I think of poor "Shape" and the preacher, both so well when I saw them yesterday evening, I realize that I myself may be dead to-morrow.
>
> Since the last two hours all laughter, all levity, has ceased on the ship—a settled gloom is upon the faces of the passengers.

By noon it was evident that the minister could not survive. He died at two o'clock next morning; the fifth victim in less than five days. The machinery continued to break and the vessel to drag.

The ship's doctor confessed to Clemens that he was helpless. There were eight patients in the hospital.

But on January 6th they managed to make Key West, and for some reason were not quarantined. Twenty-one passengers immediately deserted the ship and were heard of no more.

"I am glad they are gone. D—n them," says the notebook. Apparently he had never considered leaving, and a number of others remained. The doctor restocked his medicine-locker, and the next day they put to sea again. Certainly they were a daring lot of voyagers. On the 8th another of the patients died. Then the cooler weather seemed to check the contagion, and it was not until the night of the 11th, when the New York harbor lights were in view, that the final death occurred. There were no new cases by this time, and the other patients were convalescent. A certificate was made out that the last man had died of "dropsy." There would seem to have been no serious difficulty in docking the vessel and landing the passengers. The matter would probably be handled differently to-day.

LVII
OLD FRIENDS AND NEW PLANS

It had been more than thirteen years since his first arrival in New York.

Then he had been a youth, green, untraveled, eager to get away from home.

Now a veteran, he was as eager to return.

He stopped only long enough in New York to see Charles Henry Webb, late of California, who had put together a number of the Mark Twain sketches, including "The Jumping Frog," for book publication. Clemens himself decided to take the book to Carleton, thinking that, having missed the fame of the "Frog" once, he might welcome a chance to stand sponsor for it now. But Carleton was wary; the "Frog" had won favor, and even fame, in its fugitive, vagrant way, but a book was another matter. Books were undertaken very seriously and with plenty of consideration in those days. Twenty-one years later, in Switzerland, Carleton said to Mark Twain:

"My chief claim to immortality is the distinction of having declined your first book."

Clemens was ready enough to give up the book when Carleton declined it, but Webb said he would publish it himself, and he set about it forthwith. The author waited no longer now, but started for St. Louis, and was soon with his mother and sister,

whom he had not seen since that eventful first year of the war. They thought he looked old, which was true enough, but they found him unchanged in his manner: buoyant, full of banter and gravely quaint remarks—he was always the same. Jane Clemens had grown older, too. She was nearly sixty-four, but as keen and vigorous as ever-proud (even if somewhat critical) of this handsome, brilliant man of new name and fame who had been her mischievous, wayward boy. She petted him, joked with him, scolded him, and inquired searchingly into his morals and habits. In turn he petted, comforted, and teased her. She decided that he was the same Sam, and always would be—a true prophecy.

He went up to Hannibal to see old friends. Many were married; some had moved away; some were dead—the old story. He delivered his lecture there, and was the center of interest and admiration—his welcome might have satisfied even Tom Sawyer. From Hannibal he journeyed to Keokuk, where he lectured again to a crowd of old friends and new, then returned to St. Louis for a more extended visit.

It was while he was in St. Louis that he first saw the announcement of the Quaker City Holy Land Excursion, and was promptly fascinated by what was then a brand-new idea in ocean travel—a splendid picnic—a choice and refined party that would sail away for a long summer's journeying to the most romantic of all lands and seas, the shores of the Mediterranean. No such argosy had ever set out before in pursuit of the golden fleece of happiness.

His projected trip around the world lost its charm in the light of this idyllic dream. Henry Ward Beecher was advertised as one of the party; General Sherman as another; also ministers, high-class journalists—the best minds of the nation. Anson Burlingame had told him to associate with persons of refinement and intellect. He lost no time in writing to the Alta, proposing that they send him in this select company.

Noah Brooks, who was then on the Alta, states—[In an article published in the Century Magazine.]—that the management was staggered by the proposition, but that Col. John McComb insisted that the investment in Mark Twain would be sound. A letter was accordingly sent, stating that a check for his passage would be forwarded in due season, and that meantime he could contribute letters from New York City. The rate for all letters was to be twenty dollars each. The arrangement was a godsend, in the fullest sense of the word, to Mark Twain.

It was now April, and he was eager to get back to New York to arrange his passage. The Quaker City would not sail for two months yet (two eventful months), but the advertisement said that passages must be secured by the 5th, and he was there on that day. Almost the first man he met was the chief of the New York Alta bureau with a check for twelve hundred and fifty dollars (the amount of his ticket) and a telegram saying, "Ship Mark Twain in the Holy Land Excursion and pay his passage."

—[The following letter, which bears no date, was probably handed to him later in the New York Alta office

as a sort of credential:

ALTA CALIFORNIA OFFICE,
42 JOHN STREET, NEW YORK

Sam'l Clemens, Esq., New York.

DEAR SIR,—I have the honor to inform you that Fred'k. MacCrellish & Co., Proprietors of Alta California, San Francisco, Cal., desire to engage your services as Special Correspondent on the pleasure excursion now about to proceed from this City to the Holy Land. In obedience to their instructions I have secured a passage for you on the vessel about to convey the excursion party referred to, and made such arrangements as I hope will secure your comfort and convenience. Your only instructions are that you will continue to write at such times and from such places as you deem proper, and in the same style that heretofore secured you the favor of the readers of the Alta California. I have the honor to remain, with high respect and esteem,

Your ob'dt. Servant,

JOHN J. MURPHY.]

The Alta, it appears, had already applied for his berth; but, not having been vouched for by Mr. Beecher or some other eminent divine, Clemens was fearful he might not be accepted. Quite casually he was enlightened on this point. While waiting for attention in the shipping-office, with the Alta agent, he heard

a newspaper man inquire what notables were going. A clerk, with evident pride, rattled off the names:

"Lieutenant-General Sherman, Henry Ward Beecher, and Mask Twain; also probably General Banks."

So he was billed as an attraction. It was his first surreptitious taste of fame on the Atlantic coast, and not without its delight. The story often told of his being introduced by Ned House, of the Tribune, as a minister, though often repeated by Mark Twain himself, was in the nature of a joke, and mainly apocryphal. Clemens was a good deal in House's company at the time, for he had made an arrangement to contribute occasional letters to the Tribune, and House no doubt introduced him jokingly as one of the Quaker City ministers.

LVIII
A NEW BOOK AND A LECTURE

Webb, meantime, had pushed the Frog book along. The proofs had been read and the volume was about ready for issue. Clemens wrote to his mother April 15th:

> My book will probably be in the bookseller's hands in about two weeks. After that I shall lecture. Since I have been gone, the boys have gotten up a "call" on me signed by two hundred Californians.

The lecture plan was the idea of Frank Fuller, who as acting Governor of Utah had known Mark Twain on the Comstock, and prophesied favorably of his future career. Clemens had hunted up Fuller on landing in New York in January, and Fuller had encouraged the lecture then; but Clemens was doubtful.

"I have no reputation with the general public here," he said. "We couldn't get a baker's dozen to hear me."

But Fuller was a sanguine person, with an energy and enthusiasm that were infectious. He insisted that the idea was sound. It would solidify Mark Twain's reputation on the Atlantic coast, he declared, insisting that the largest house in New York, Cooper Union, should be taken. Clemens had partially consented, and Fuller had arranged with all the Pacific slope people who had come East, headed by ex-Governor James W.

Nye (by this time Senator at Washington), to sign a call for the "Inimitable Mark Twain" to appear before a New York audience. Fuller made Nye agree to be there and introduce the lecturer, and he was burningly busy and happy in the prospect.

But Mark Twain was not happy. He looked at that spacious hall and imagined the little crowd of faithful Californian stragglers that might gather in to hear him, and the ridicule of the papers next day. He begged Fuller to take a smaller hall, the smallest he could get. But only the biggest hall in New York would satisfy Fuller. He would have taken a larger one if he could have found it. The lecture was announced for May 6th. Its subject was "Kanakadom, or the Sandwich Islands" —tickets fifty cents. Fuller timed it to follow a few days after Webb's book should appear, so that one event might help the other.

Mark Twain's first book, 'The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveyas County, and Other Sketches', was scheduled for May 1st, and did, in fact, appear on that date; but to the author it was no longer an important event. Jim Smiley's frog as standard-bearer of his literary procession was not an interesting object, so far as he was concerned—not with that vast, empty hall in the background and the insane undertaking of trying to fill it. The San Francisco venture had been as nothing compared with this. Fuller was working night and day with abounding joy, while the subject of his labor felt as if he were on the brink of a fearful precipice, preparing to try a pair of wings without first learning to fly. At one instant he was cold with fright, the next glowing

with an infection of Fuller's faith. He devised a hundred schemes for the sale of seats. Once he came rushing to Fuller, saying:

"Send a lot of tickets down to the Chickering Piano Company. I have promised to put on my programme, 'The piano used at this entertainment is manufactured by Chickering.'"

"But you don't want a piano, Mark," said Fuller, "do you?"

"No, of course not; but they will distribute the tickets for the sake of the advertisement, whether we have the piano or not."

Fuller got out a lot of handbills and hung bunches of them in the stages, omnibuses, and horse-cars. Clemens at first haunted these vehicles to see if anybody noticed the bills. The little dangling bunches seemed untouched. Finally two men came in; one of them pulled off a bill and glanced at it. His friend asked:

"Who's Mark Twain?"

"God knows; I don't!"

The lecturer could not ride any more. He was desperate.

"Fuller," he groaned, "there isn't a sign—a ripple of interest."

Fuller assured him that everything was working all right "working underneath," Fuller said—but the lecturer was hopeless. He reported his impressions to the folks at home:

> Everything looks shady, at least, if not dark; I have a good agent; but now, after we have hired the Cooper Institute, and gone to an expense in one way or another of $500, it comes out that I have got to play against Speaker Colfax at Irving Hall, Ristori, and also the double troop of Japanese jugglers, the latter opening at the great Academy

of Music—and with all this against me I have taken the largest house in New York and cannot back water.

He might have added that there were other rival entertainments: "The Flying Scud" was at Wallack's, the "Black Crook" was at Niblo's, John Brougham at the Olympic; and there were at least a dozen lesser attractions. New York was not the inexhaustible city in those days; these things could gather in the public to the last man. When the day drew near, and only a few tickets had been sold, Clemens was desperate.

"Fuller," he said, "there'll be nobody in the Cooper Union that night but you and me. I am on the verge of suicide. I would commit suicide if I had the pluck and the outfit. You must paper the house, Fuller. You must send out a flood of complementaries."

"Very well," said Fuller; "what we want this time is reputation anyway —money is secondary. I'll put you before the choicest, most intelligent audience that ever was gathered in New York City. I will bring in the school-instructors—the finest body of men and women in the world."

Fuller immediately sent out a deluge of complimentary tickets, inviting the school-teachers of New York and Brooklyn, and all the adjacent country, to come free and hear Mark Twain's great lecture on Kanakadom. This was within forty-eight hours of the time he was to appear.

Senator Nye was to have joined Clemens and Fuller at the Westminster, where Clemens was stopping, and they waited for

him there with a carriage, fuming and swearing, until it was evident that he was not coming. At last Clemens said:

"Fuller, you've got to introduce me."

"No," suggested Fuller; "I've got a better scheme than that. You get up and begin by bemeaning Nye for not being there. That will be better anyway."

Clemens said:

"Well, Fuller, I can do that. I feel that way. I'll try to think up something fresh and happy to say about that horse-thief."

They drove to Cooper Union with trepidation. Suppose, after all, the school-teachers had declined to come? They went half an hour before the lecture was to begin. Forty years later Mark Twain said:

"I couldn't keep away. I wanted to see that vast Mammoth cave and die. But when we got near the building I saw that all the streets were blocked with people, and that traffic had stopped. I couldn't believe that these people were trying to get into Cooper Institute; but they were, and when I got to the stage at last the house was jammed full-packed; there wasn't room enough left for a child.

"I was happy and I was excited beyond expression. I poured the Sandwich Islands out on those people, and they laughed and shouted to my entire content. For an hour and fifteen minutes I was in paradise."

And Fuller to-day, alive and young, when so many others of that ancient time and event have vanished, has added:

"When Mark appeared the Californians gave a regular yell of welcome. When that was over he walked to the edge of the platform, looked carefully down in the pit, round the edges as if he were hunting for something. Then he said: 'There was to have been a piano here, and a senator to introduce me. I don't seem to discover them anywhere. The piano was a good one, but we will have to get along with such music as I can make with your help. As for the senator—Then Mark let himself go and did as he promised about Senator Nye. He said things that made men from the Pacific coast, who had known Nye, scream with delight. After that came his lecture. The first sentence captured the audience. From that moment to the end it was either in a roar of laughter or half breathless by his beautiful descriptive passages. People were positively ill for days, laughing at that lecture."

So it was a success: everybody was glad to have been there; the papers were kind, congratulations numerous.

–[Kind but not extravagant; those were burning political times, and the doings of mere literary people did not excite the press to the extent of headlines. A jam around Cooper Union to-day, followed by such an artistic triumph, would be a news event. On the other hand, Schuyler Colfax, then Speaker of the House, was reported to the extent of a column, nonpareil. His lecture was of no literary importance, and no echo of it now remains. But those were political, not artistic, days.

Of Mark Twain's lecture the Times notice said:

"Nearly every one present came prepared for considerable provocation for enjoyable laughter, and from the appearance of their mirthful faces leaving the hall at the conclusion of the lecture but few were disappointed, and it is not too much to say that seldom has so large an audience been so uniformly pleased as the one that listened to Mark Twain's quaint remarks last evening. The large hall of the Union was filled to its utmost capacity by fully two thousand persons, which fact spoke well for the reputation of the lecturer and his future success. Mark Twain's style is a quaint one both in manner and method, and through his discourse he managed to keep on the right side of the audience, and frequently convulsed it with hearty laughter…. During a description of the topography of the Sandwich Islands the lecturer surprised his hearers by a graphic and eloquent description of the eruption of the great volcano, which occurred in 1840, and his language was loudly applauded.

"Judging from the success achieved by the lecturer last evening, he should repeat his experiment at an early date."]

COOPER INSTITUTE

By Invitation of s large number of prominent Californians and

Citizens of New York,

MARK TWAIN

WILL DELIVER A SERIO-HUMEROUS LECTURE CONERNING

KANAKDOM OR THE SANDWICH ISLANDS,

COOPER INSTITUTE,

On Monday Evening, May 6 1867

night. Many years later, when they wanted him to read to them in Steinway Hall, he gladly gave his services without charge.

Nor was the lecture a complete financial failure. In spite of the flood of complementaries, there was a cash return of some three hundred dollars from the sale of tickets—a substantial aid in defraying the expenses which Fuller assumed and insisted on making good on his own account. That was Fuller's regal way; his return lay in the joy of the game, and in the winning of the larger stake for a friend.

"Mark," he said, "it is all right. The fortune didn't come, but it will. The fame has arrived; with this lecture and your book just out you are going to be the most talked-of man in the country. Your letters for the Alta and the Tribune will get the widest reception of any letters of travel ever written."

LIX
THE FIRST BOOK

With the shadow of the Cooper Institute so happily dispelled, The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and his following of Other Sketches, became a matter of more interest. The book was a neat blue-and-gold volume printed by John A. Gray & Green, the old firm for which the boy, Sam Clemens, had set type thirteen years before. The title-page bore Webb's name as publisher, with the American News Company as selling agents. It further stated that the book was edited by "John Paul," that is to say by Webb himself. The dedication was in keeping with the general irresponsible character of the venture. It was as follows:

> **TO JOHN SMITH WHOM I HAVE KNOWN IN DIVERS AND SUNDRY PLACES ABOUT THE WORLD, AND WHOSE MANY AND MANIFOLD VIRTUES DID ALWAYS COMMAND MY ESTEEM, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK**
>
> It is said that the man to whom a volume is dedicated always buys a copy.
>
> If this prove true in the present instance, a princely affluence is about to burst upon
>
> *THE AUTHOR.*

The "advertisement" stated that the author had "scaled the

heights of popularity at a single jump, and won for himself the sobriquet of the 'Wild Humorist of the Pacific Slope'; furthermore, that he was known to fame as the 'Moralist of the Main,'" and that as such he would be likely to go down to posterity, adding that it was in his secondary character, as humorist, rather than in his primal one of moralist, that the volume aimed to present him.—[The advertisement complete, with extracts from the book, may be found under Appendix E, at the end of last volume.]

Every little while, during the forty years or more that have elapsed since then, some one has come forward announcing Mark Twain to be as much a philosopher as a humorist, as if this were a new discovery. But it was a discovery chiefly to the person making the announcement. Every one who ever knew Mark Twain at any period of his life made the same discovery. Every one who ever took the trouble to familiarize himself with his work made it. Those who did not make it have known his work only by hearsay and quotation, or they have read it very casually, or have been very dull. It would be much more of a discovery to find a book in which he has not been serious—a philosopher, a moralist, and a poet. Even in the Jumping Frog sketches, selected particularly for their inconsequence, the under-vein of reflection and purpose is not lacking. The answer to Moral Statistician—[In "Answers to Correspondents," included now in Sketches New and Old. An extract from it, and from "A Strange Dream," will be found in Appendix E.]—is fairly alive with human wisdom

and righteous wrath. The "Strange Dream," though ending in a joke, is aglow with poetry. Webb's "advertisement" was playfully written, but it was earnestly intended, and he writes Mark Twain down a moralist—not as a discovery, but as a matter of course. The discoveries came along later, when the author's fame as a humorist had dazzled the nations.

It is as well to say it here as anywhere, perhaps, that one reason why Mark Twain found it difficult to be accepted seriously was the fact that his personality was in itself so essentially humorous. His physiognomy, his manner of speech, this movement, his mental attitude toward events —all these were distinctly diverting. When we add to this that his medium of expression was nearly always full of the quaint phrasing and those surprising appositions which we recognize as amusing, it is not so astonishing that his deeper, wiser, more serious purpose should be overlooked. On the whole these unabated discoverers serve a purpose, if only to make the rest of their species look somewhat deeper than the comic phrase.

The little blue-and-gold volume which presented the Frog story and twenty-six other sketches in covers is chiefly important to-day as being Mark Twain's first book. The selections in it were made for a public that had been too busy with a great war to learn discrimination, and most of them have properly found oblivion. Fewer than a dozen of them were included in his collected Sketches issued eight years later, and some even of those might have been spared; also some that were added, for

that matter; but detailed literary criticism is not the province of this work. The reader may investigate and judge for himself.

Clemens was pleased with the appearance of his book. To Bret Harte he wrote:

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

That he had no exaggerated opinion of the book's contents or prospects we may gather from his letter home:

As for the Frog book, I don't believe it will ever pay anything worth a cent. I published it simply to advertise myself, and not with the hope of making anything out of it.

He had grown more lenient in his opinion of the merits of the Frog story itself since it had made friends in high places, especially since James Russell Lowell had pronounced it "the finest piece of humorous writing yet produced in America"; but compared with his lecture triumph, and his prospective journey to foreign seas, his book venture, at best, claimed no more than a casual regard. A Sandwich Island book (he had collected his Union letters with the idea of a volume) he gave up altogether after one unsuccessful offer of it to Dick & Fitzgerald.

Frank Fuller's statement, that the fame had arrived, had in it some measure of truth. Lecture propositions came from various directions. Thomas Nast, then in the early day of

his great popularity, proposed a joint tour, in which Clemens would lecture, while he, Nast, illustrated the remarks with lightning caricatures. But the time was too short; the Quaker City would sail on the 8th of June, and in the mean time the Alta correspondent was far behind with his New York letters. On May 29th he wrote:

I am 18 Alta letters behind, and I must catch up or bust. I have refused all invitations to lecture. Don't know how my book is coming on.

He worked like a slave for a week or so, almost night and day, to clean up matters before his departure. Then came days of idleness and reaction-days of waiting, during which his natural restlessness and the old-time regret for things done and undone, beset him.

> My passage is paid, and if the ship sails I sail on her; but I make no calculations, have bought no cigars, no sea-going clothing—have made no preparations whatever—shall not pack my trunk till the morning we sail.
>
> All I do know or feel is that I am wild with impatience to move —move—move! Curse the endless delays! They always kill me—they make me neglect every duty, and then I have a conscience that tears me like a wild beast. I wish I never had to stop anywhere a month. I do more mean things the moment I get a chance to fold my hands and sit down than ever I get forgiveness for.
>
> Yes, we are to meet at Mr. Beach's next Thursday night, and I suppose we shall have to be gotten up regardless

of expense, in swallow-tails, white kids and everything 'en regle'.

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

The "splendid immoral room-mate" was Dan Slote—"Dan," of The Innocents, a lovable character—all as set down. Samuel Clemens wrote one more letter to his mother and sister—a conscience-stricken, pessimistic letter of good-by written the night before sailing. Referring to the Alta letters he says:

I think they are the stupidest letters ever written from New York.

Corresponding has been a perfect drag ever since I got to the States. If it continues abroad, I don't know what the Tribune and Alta folk will think.

He remembers Orion, who had been officially eliminated when Nevada had received statehood.

I often wonder if his law business is going satisfactorily. I wish I had gone to Washington in the winter instead of going West. I could have gouged an office out of Bill Stewart

for him, and that would have atoned for the loss of my home visit. But I am so worthless that it seems to me I never do anything or accomplish anything that lingers in my mind as a pleasant memory. My mind is stored full of unworthy conduct toward Orion and toward you all, and an accusing conscience gives me peace only in excitement and restless moving from place to place. If I could only say I had done one thing for any of you that entitled me to your good opinions (I say nothing of your love, for I am sure of that, no matter how unworthy of it I may make myself—from Orion down, you have always given me that; all the days of my life, when God Almighty knows I have seldom deserved it), I believe I could go home and stay there —and I know I would care little for the world's praise or blame. There is no satisfaction in the world's praise anyhow, and it has no worth to me save in the way of business. I tried to gather up its compliments to send you, but the work was distasteful and I dropped it.

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

Yrs. forever,

SAM

LX
THE INNOCENTS AT SEA
HOLY LAND PLEASURE EXCURSION

Steamer: Quaker City.

Captain C. C. Duncan.

Left New York at 2 P.m., June 8, 1867.

Rough weather—anchored within the harbor to lay all night.

That first note recorded an event momentous in Mark Twain's career—an event of supreme importance; if we concede that any link in a chain regardless of size is of more importance than any other link. Undoubtedly it remains the most conspicuous event, as the world views it now, in retrospect.

The note further heads a new chapter of history in sea-voyaging. No such thing as the sailing of an ocean steamship with a pleasure-party on a long transatlantic cruise had ever occurred before. A similar project had been undertaken the previous year, but owing to a cholera scare in the East it had been abandoned. Now the dream had become a fact—a stupendous fact when we consider it. Such an important beginning as that now would in all likelihood furnish the chief news story of the day.

But they had different ideas of news in those days. There were no headlines announcing the departure of the Quaker City—only the barest mention of the ship's sailing, though a

prominent position was given to an account of a senatorial excursion-party which set out that same morning over the Union Pacific Railway, then under construction. Every name in that political party was set dawn, and not one of them except General Hancock will ever be heard of again. The New York Times, however, had some one on its editorial staff who thought it worth while to comment a little on the history-making Quaker City excursion. The writer was pleasantly complimentary to officers and passengers. He referred to Moses S. Beach, of the Sun, who was taking with him type and press, whereby he would "skilfully utilize the brains of the company for their mutual edification." Mr. Beecher and General Sherman would find talent enough aboard to make the hours go pleasantly (evidently the writer had not interested himself sufficiently to know that these gentlemen were not along), and the paragraph closed by prophesying other such excursions, and wishing the travelers "good speed, a happy voyage, and a safe return."

That was handsome, especially for those days; only now, some fine day, when an airship shall start with a band of happy argonauts to land beyond the sunrise for the first time in history, we shall feature it and emblazon it with pictures in the Sunday papers, and weeklies, and in the magazines.—[The Quaker City idea was so unheard-of that in some of the foreign ports visited, the officials could not believe that the vessel was simply a pleasure-craft, and were suspicious of some dark, ulterior purpose.]

That Henry Ward Beecher and General Sherman had concluded not to go was a heavy disappointment at first; but it proved only a temporary disaster. The inevitable amalgamation of all ship companies took place. The sixty-seven travelers fell into congenial groups, or they mingled and devised amusements, and gossiped and became a big family, as happy and as free from contention as families of that size are likely to be.

The Quaker City was a good enough ship and sizable for her time. She was registered eighteen hundred tons—about one-tenth the size of Mediterranean excursion-steamers today—and when conditions were favorable she could make ten knots an hour under steam—or, at least, she could do it with the help of her auxiliary sails. Altogether she was a cozy, satisfactory ship, and they were a fortunate company who had her all to themselves and went out on her on that long-ago ocean gipsying. She has grown since then, even to the proportions of the Mayflower. It was necessary for her to grow to hold all of those who in later times claimed to have sailed in her on that voyage with Mark Twain.—[The Quaker City passenger list will be found under Appendix F, at the end of last volume.]

They were not all ministers and deacons aboard the Quaker City. Clemens found other congenial spirits be sides his room-mate Dan Slote—among them the ship's surgeon, Dr. A. Reeve Jackson (the guide-destroying "Doctor" of The Innocents); Jack Van Nostrand, of New Jersey ("Jack"); Julius Moulton, of St. Louis ("Moult"), and other care-free fellows, the smoking-

room crowd which is likely to make comradeship its chief watchword. There were companionable people in the cabin crowd also —fine, intelligent men and women, especially one of the latter, a middle-aged, intellectual, motherly soul—Mrs. A. W. Fairbanks, of Cleveland, Ohio. Mrs. Fairbanks—herself a newspaper correspondent for her husband's paper, the Cleveland Herald had a large influence on the character and general tone of those Quaker City letters which established Mark Twain's larger fame. She was an able writer herself; her judgment was thoughtful, refined, unbiased—altogether of a superior sort. She understood Samuel Clemens, counseled him, encouraged him to read his letters aloud to her, became in reality "Mother Fairbanks," as they termed her, to him and to others of that ship who needed her kindly offices.

In one of his home letters, later, he said of her:

> She was the most refined, intelligent, cultivated lady in the ship, and altogether the kindest and best. She sewed my buttons on, kept my clothing in presentable trim, fed me on Egyptian jam (when I behaved), lectured me awfully on the quarter-deck on moonlit promenading evenings, and cured me of several bad habits. I am under lasting obligations to her. She looks young because she is so good, but she has a grown son and daughter at home.

In one of the early letters which Mrs. Fairbanks wrote to her paper she is scarcely less complimentary to him, even if in a different way.

> We have D.D.'s and M.D.'s—we have men of wisdom and men of wit. There is one table from which is sure to come a peal of laughter, and all eyes are turned toward Mark Twain, whose face is, perfectly mirth-provoking. Sitting lazily at the table, scarcely genteel in his appearance, there is something, I know not what, that interests and attracts. I saw to-day at dinner venerable divines and sage- looking men convulsed with laughter at his drolleries and quaint, odd manners.

It requires only a few days on shipboard for acquaintances to form, and presently a little afternoon group was gathering to hear Mark Twain read his letters. Mrs. Fairbanks was there, of course, also Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Severance, likewise of Cleveland, and Moses S. Beach, of the Sun, with his daughter Emma, a girl of seventeen. Dan Slote was likely to be there, too, and Jack, and the Doctor, and Charles J. Langdon, of Elmira, New York, a boy of eighteen, who had conceived a deep admiration for the brilliant writer. They were fortunate ones who first gathered to hear those daring, wonderful letters.

But the benefit was a mutual one. He furnished a priceless entertainment, and he derived something equally priceless in return—the test of immediate audience and the boon of criticism. Mrs. Fairbanks especially was frankly sincere. Mr. Severance wrote afterward:

> One afternoon I saw him tearing up a bunch of the soft, white paper- copy paper, I guess the newspapers call

it-on which he had written something, and throwing the fragments into the Mediterranean. I inquired of him why he cast away the fruits of his labors in that manner.

"Well," he drawled, "Mrs. Fairbanks thinks it oughtn't to be printed, and, like as not, she is right."

And Emma Beach (Mrs. Abbott Thayer) remembers hearing him say:

"Well, Mrs. Fairbanks has just destroyed another four hours' work for me."

Sometimes he played chess with Emma Beach, who thought him a great hero because, once when a crowd of men were tormenting a young lad, a passenger, Mark Twain took the boy's part and made them desist.

"I am sure I was right, too," she declares; "heroism came natural to him."

Mr. Severance recalls another incident which, as he says, was trivial enough, but not easy to forget:

We were having a little celebration over the birthday anniversary of Mrs. Duncan, wife of our captain. Mark Twain got up and made a little speech, in which he said Mrs. Duncan was really older than Methuselah because she knew a lot of things that Methuselah never heard of. Then he mentioned a number of more or less modern inventions, and wound up by saying, "What did Methuselah know about a barbed-wire fence?"

Except Following the Equator, The Innocents Abroad comes nearer to being history than any other of Mark Twain's travel-

books. The notes for it were made on the spot, and there was plenty of fact, plenty of fresh, new experience, plenty of incident to set down. His idea of descriptive travel in those days was to tell the story as it happened; also, perhaps, he had not then acquired the courage of his inventions. We may believe that the adventures with Jack, Dan, and the Doctor are elaborated here and there; but even those happened substantially as recorded. There is little to add, then, to the story of that halcyon trip, and not much to elucidate.

The old note-books give a light here and there that is interesting. It is curious to be looking through them now, trying to realize that these penciled memoranda were the fresh, first impressions that would presently grow into the world's most delightful book of travel; that they were set down in the very midst of that care-free little company that frolicked through Italy, climbed wearily the arid Syrian hills. They are all dead now; but to us they are as alive and young to-day as when they followed the footprints of the Son of Man through Palestine, and stood at last before the Sphinx, impressed and awed by its "five thousand slow-revolving years."

Some of the items consist of no more than a few terse, suggestive words —serious, humorous, sometimes profane. Others are statistical, descriptive, elaborated. Also there are drawings—"not copied," he marks them, with a pride not always justified by the result. The earlier notes are mainly comments on the "pilgrims," the freak pilgrims: "the Frenchy-

looking woman who owns a dog and keeps up an interminable biography of him to the passengers"; the "long-legged, simple, wide-mouthed, horse-laughing young fellow who once made a sea voyage to Fortress Monroe, and quotes eternally from his experiences"; also, there is reference to another young man, "good, accommodating, pleasant but fearfully green." This young person would become the "Interrogation Point," in due time, and have his picture on page 71 (old edition), while opposite him, on page 70, would appear the "oracle," identified as one Doctor Andrews, who (the note-book says) had the habit of "smelling in guide-books for knowledge and then trying to play it for old information that has been festering in his brain." Sometimes there are abstract notes such as:

How lucky Adam was. He knew when he said a good thing that no one had ever said it before.

Of the "character" notes, the most important and elaborated is that which presents the "Poet Lariat." This is the entry, somewhat epitomized:

> **BLOODGOOD H. CUTTER**
>
> He is fifty years old, and small of his age. He dresses in homespun, and is a simple-minded, honest, old-fashioned farmer, with a strange proclivity for writing rhymes. He writes them on all possible subjects, and gets them printed on slips of paper, with his portrait at the head. These he will give to any man who comes along, whether he has anything against him or not . . . .

Dan said:

> "It must be a great happiness to you to sit down at the close of day and put its events all down in rhymes and poetry, like Byron and Shakespeare and those fellows."
>
> "Oh yes, it is—it is—Why, many's the time I've had to get up in

the night when it comes on me:

> Whether we're on the sea or the land
> We've all got to go at the word of command—

"Hey! how's that?"

A curious character was Cutter—a Long Island farmer with the obsession of rhyme. In his old age, in an interview, he said:

"Mark was generally writing and he was glum. He would write what we were doing, and I would write poetry, and Mark would say:

"'For Heaven's sake, Cutter, keep your poems to yourself.'

"Yes, Mark was pretty glum, and he was generally writing."

Poor old Poet Lariat—dead now with so many others of that happy crew. We may believe that Mark learned to be "glum" when he saw the Lariat approaching with his sheaf of rhymes. We may believe, too, that he was "generally writing." He contributed fifty-three letters to the Alta during that five months and six to the Tribune. They would average about two columns nonpareil each, which is to say four thousand words, or something like two

hundred and fifty thousand words in all. To turn out an average of fifteen hundred words a day, with continuous sight-seeing besides, one must be generally writing during any odd intervals; those who are wont to regard Mark Twain as lazy may consider these statistics. That he detested manual labor is true enough, but at the work for which he was fitted and intended it may be set down here upon authority (and despite his own frequent assertions to the contrary) that to his last year he was the most industrious of men.

LXI
THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

It was Dan, Jack, and the Doctor who with Mark Twain wandered down through Italy and left moral footprints that remain to this day. The Italian guides are wary about showing pieces of the True Cross, fragments of the Crown of Thorns, and the bones of saints since then. They show them, it is true, but with a smile; the name of Mark Twain is a touch-stone to test their statements. Not a guide in Italy but has heard the tale of that iconoclastic crew, and of the book which turned their marvels into myths, their relics into bywords.

It was Doctor Jackson, Colonel Denny, Doctor Birch, and Samuel Clemens who evaded the quarantine and made the perilous night trip to Athens and looked upon the Parthenon and the sleeping city by moonlight. It is all set down in the notes, and the account varies little from that given in the book; only he does not tell us that Captain Duncan and the quartermaster, Pratt, connived at the escapade, or how the latter watched the shore in anxious suspense until he heard the whistle which was their signal to be taken aboard. It would have meant six months' imprisonment if they had been captured, for there was no discretion in the Greek law.

It was T. D. Crocker, A. N. Sanford, Col. Peter Kinney, and William Gibson who were delegated to draft the address

to the Emperor of Russia at Yalta, with Samuel L. Clemens as chairman of that committee. The chairman wrote the address, the opening sentence of which he grew so weary of hearing:

> We are a handful of private citizens of America, traveling simply for recreation, and unostentatiously, as becomes our unofficial state.

The address is all set down in the notes, and there also exists the first rough draft, with the emendations in his own hand. He deplores the time it required:

> That job is over. Writing addresses to emperors is not my strong suit. However, if it is not as good as it might be it doesn't signify—the other committeemen ought to have helped me write it; they had nothing to do, and I had my hands full. But for bothering with this I would have caught up entirely with my New York Tribune correspondence and nearly up with the San Francisco.

They wanted him also to read the address to the Emperor, but he pointed out that the American consul was the proper person for that office. He tells how the address was presented:

August 26th. The Imperial carriages were in waiting at eleven, and at twelve we were at the palace….

The Consul for Odessa read the address and the Czar said frequently,

"Good—very good; indeed"—and at the close, "I am very, very grateful."

It was not improper for him to set down all this, and much

more, in his own note-book—not then for publication. It was in fact a very proper record—for today.

One incident of the imperial audience Mark Twain omitted from his book, perhaps because the humor of it had not yet become sufficiently evident. "The humorous perception of a thing is a pretty slow growth sometimes," he once remarked. It was about seventeen years before he could laugh enjoyably at a slight mistake he made at the Emperor's reception. He set down a memorandum of it, then, for fear it might be lost:

> There were a number of great dignitaries of the Empire there, and although, as a general thing, they were dressed in citizen's clothing, I observed that the most of them wore a very small piece of ribbon in the lapels of their coats. That little touch of color struck my fancy, and it seemed to me a good idea to add it to my own attractions; not imagining that it had any special significance. So I stepped aside, hunted up a bit of red ribbon, and ornamented my lapel with it. Presently, Count Festetics, the Grand Master of ceremonies, and the only man there who was gorgeously arrayed, in full official costume, began to show me a great many attentions. He was particularly polite, and pleasant, and anxious to be of service to me. Presently, he asked me what order of nobility I belonged to? I said, "I didn't belong to any." Then he asked me what order of knighthood I belonged to? I said, "None." Then he asked me what the red ribbon in my buttonhole stood for? I saw, at once, what an ass I had been making of myself, and was accordingly confused and embarrassed. I said the first thing that came

into my mind, and that was that the ribbon was merely the symbol of a club of journalists to which I belonged, and I was not pursued with any more of Count Festetic's attentions.

Later, I got on very familiar terms with an old gentleman, whom I took to be the head gardener, and walked him all about the gardens, slipping my arm into his without invitation, yet without demur on his part, and by and by was confused again when I found that he was not a gardener at all, but the Lord High Admiral of Russia! I almost made up my mind that I would never call on an Emperor again.

Like all Mediterranean excursionists, those first pilgrims were insatiable collectors of curios, costumes, and all manner of outlandish things. Dan Slote had the stateroom hung and piled with such gleanings. At Constantinople his room-mate writes:

I thought Dan had got the state-room pretty full of rubbish at last, but awhile ago his dragoman arrived with a brand-new ghastly tombstone of the Oriental pattern, with his name handsomely carved and gilted on it in Turkish characters. That fellow will buy a Circassian slave next.

It was Church, Denny, Jack, Davis, Dan, Moult, and Mark Twain who made the "long trip" through Syria from Beirut to Jerusalem with their elaborate camping outfit and decrepit nags "Jericho," "Baalbec," and the rest. It was better camping than that Humboldt journey of six years before, though the horses were not so dissimilar, and altogether it was a hard, nerve-racking experience, climbing the arid hills of Palestine in that torrid

summer heat. Nobody makes that trip in summer-time now. Tourists hurry out of Syria before the first of April, and they do not go back before November. One brief quotation from Mark Twain's book gives us an idea of what that early party of pilgrims had to undergo:

> We left Damascus at noon and rode across the plain a couple of hours, and then the party stopped a while in the shade of some fig- trees to give me a chance to rest. It was the hottest day we had seen yet—the sun-flames shot down like the shafts of fire that stream out before a blow-pipe; the rays seemed to fall in a deluge on the head and pass downward like rain from a roof. I imagined I could distinguish between the floods of rays. I thought I could tell when each flood struck my head, when it reached my shoulders, and when the next one came. It was terrible.

He had been ill with cholera at Damascus, a light attack; but any attack of that dread disease is serious enough. He tells of this in the book, but he does not mention, either in the book or in his notes, the attack which Dan Slote had some days later. It remained for William F. Church, of the party, to relate that incident, for it was the kind of thing that Mark Twain was not likely to record, or even to remember. Doctor Church was a deacon with orthodox views and did not approve of Mark Twain; he thought him sinful, irreverent, profane.

"He was the worst man I ever knew," Church said; then he added, "And the best."

What happened was this: At the end of a terrible day of heat, when the party had camped on the edge of a squalid Syrian village, Dan was taken suddenly ill. It was cholera, beyond doubt. Dan could not go on—he might never go on. The chances were that way. It was a serious matter all around. To wait with Dan meant to upset their travel schedule—it might mean to miss the ship. Consultation was held and a resolution passed (the pilgrims were always passing resolutions) to provide for Dan as well as possible, and leave him behind. Clemens, who had remained with Dan, suddenly appeared and said:

"Gentlemen, I understand that you are going to leave Dan Slote here alone. I'll be d–d if I do!"

And he didn't. He stayed there and brought Dan into Jerusalem, a few days late, but convalescent.

Perhaps most of them were not always reverent during that Holy Land trip. It was a trying journey, and after fierce days of desert hills the reaction might not always spare even the holiest memories. Jack was particularly sinful. When they learned the price for a boat on Galilee, and the deacons who had traveled nearly half around the world to sail on that sacred water were confounded by the charge, Jack said:

"Well, Denny, do you wonder now that Christ walked?"

It was the irreverent Jack who one morning (they had camped the night before by the ruins of Jericho) refused to get up to see the sun rise across the Jordan. Deacon Church went to his tent.

"Jack, my boy, get up. Here is the place where the Israelites

crossed over into the Promised Land, and beyond are the mountains of Moab, where Moses lies buried."

"Moses who!" said Jack.

"Oh, Jack, my boy, Moses, the great lawgiver—who led the Israelites out of Egypt-forty years through the wilderness—to the Promised Land."

"Forty years!" said Jack. "How far was it?"

"It was three hundred miles, Jack; a great wilderness, and he brought them through in safety."

Jack regarded him with scorn. "Huh, Moses—three hundred miles forty years—why, Ben Holiday would have brought them through in thirty-six hours!"—[Ben Holiday, owner of the Overland stages, and a man of great executive ability. This incident, a true one, is more elaborately told in Roughing It, but it seems pertinent here.]

Jack probably learned more about the Bible during that trip-its history and its heroes-than during all his former years. Nor was Jack the only one of that group thus benefited. The sacred landmarks of Palestine inspire a burning interest in the Scriptures, and Mark Twain probably did not now regret those early Sunday-school lessons; certainly he did not fail to review them exhaustively on that journey. His note-books fairly overflow with Bible references; the Syrian chapters in The Innocents Abroad are permeated with the poetry and legendary beauty of the Bible story. The little Bible he carried on that trip, bought in Constantinople, was well worn by the time they

reached the ship again at Jaffa. He must have read it with a large and persistent interest; also with a double benefit. For, besides the knowledge acquired, he was harvesting a profit—probably unsuspected at the time–viz., the influence of the most direct and beautiful English—the English of the King James version—which could not fail to affect his own literary method at that impressionable age. We have already noted his earlier admiration for that noble and simple poem, "The Burial of Moses," which in the Palestine note-book is copied in full. All the tendency of his expression lay that way, and the intense consideration of stately Bible phrase and imagery could hardly fail to influence his mental processes. The very distinct difference of style, as shown in The Innocents Abroad and in his earlier writings, we may believe was in no small measure due to his study of the King James version during those weeks in Palestine.

He bought another Bible at Jerusalem; but it was not for himself. It was a little souvenir volume bound in olive and balsam wood, and on the fly-leaf is inscribed:

Mrs. Jane Clemens from her son. Jerusalem, Sept. 24, 1867.

There is one more circumstance of that long cruise-recorded neither in the book nor the notes—an incident brief, but of more importance in the life of Samuel Clemens than any heretofore set down. It occurred in the beautiful Bay of Smyrna, on the fifth or sixth of September, while the vessel lay there for the Ephesus trip.

Reference has been made to young Charles Langdon, of

Elmira (the "Charley" once mentioned in the Innocents), as an admirer of Mark Twain. There was a good deal of difference in their ages, and they were seldom of the same party; but sometimes the boy invited the journalist to his cabin and, boy-like, exhibited his treasures. He had two sisters at home; and of Olivia, the youngest, he had brought a dainty miniature done on ivory in delicate tints—a sweet-pictured countenance, fine and spiritual. On that fateful day in the day of Smyrna, Samuel Clemens, visiting in young Langdon's cabin, was shown this portrait. He looked at it with long admiration, and spoke of it reverently, for the delicate face seemed to him to be something more than a mere human likeness. Each time he came, after that, he asked to see the picture, and once even begged to be allowed to take it away with him. The boy would not agree to this, and the elder man looked long and steadily at the miniature, resolving in his mind that some day he would meet the owner of that lovely face—a purpose for once in accord with that which the fates had arranged for him, in the day when all things were arranged, the day of the first beginning.

LXII
THE RETURN OF THE PILGRIMS

The last note-book entry bears date of October 11th:

At sea, somewhere in the neighborhood of Malta. Very stormy.

> Terrible death to be talked to death. The storm has blown two small land birds and a hawk to sea and they came on board. Sea full of flying-fish.

That is all. There is no record of the week's travel in Spain, which a little group of four made under the picturesque Gibraltar guide, Benunes, still living and quite as picturesque at last accounts. This side-trip is covered in a single brief paragraph in the Innocents, and the only account we have of it is in a home letter, from Cadiz, of October 24th:

> We left Gibraltar at noon and rode to Algeciras (4 hours), thus dodging the quarantine—took dinner, and then rode horseback all night in a swinging trot, and at daylight took a caleche (a-wheeled vehicle), and rode 5 hours—then took cars and traveled till twelve at night. That landed us at Seville, and we were over the hard part of our trip and somewhat tired. Since then we have taken things comparatively easy, drifting around from one town to another and attracting a good deal of attention—for I guess strangers do not wander through Andalusia and the other

southern provinces of Spain often. The country is precisely what it was when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were possible characters.

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

We may wish that he had left us a chapter of that idyllic journey, but it will never be written now. A night or two before the vessel reached New York there was the usual good-by assembly, and for this occasion, at Mrs. Severance's request, Mark Twain wrote some verses. They were not especially notable, for meter and rhyme did not come easy to him, but one prophetic stanza is worth remembering. In the opening lines the passengers are referred to as a fleet of vessels, then follows:

Lo! other ships of that parted fleet
Shall suffer this fate or that:
One shall be wrecked, another shall sink,
Or ground on treacherous flat.
Some shall be famed in many lands
As good ships, fast and fair,
And some shall strangely disappear,
Men know not when or where.

The Quaker City returned to America on November 19, 1867,

and Mark Twain found himself, if not famous, at least in very wide repute. The fifty-three letters to the Alta and the half-dozen to the New York Tribune had carried his celebrity into every corner of the States and Territories. Vivid, fearless, full of fresh color, humor, poetry, they came as a revelation to a public weary of the driveling, tiresome travel-letters of that period. They preached a new gospel in travel-literature: the gospel of seeing with an overflowing honesty; a gospel of sincerity in according praises to whatever seemed genuine, and ridicule to the things considered sham. It was the gospel that Mark Twain would continue to preach during his whole career. It became his chief literary message to the world-a world waiting for that message.

Moreover, the letters were literature. He had received, from whatever source, a large and very positive literary impulse, a loftier conception and expression. It was at Tangier that he first struck the grander chord, the throbbing cadence of human story.

Here is a crumbling wall that was old when Columbus discovered America; old when Peter the Hermit roused the knightly men of the Middle Ages to arm for the first Crusade; old when Charlemagne and his paladins beleaguered enchanted castles and battled with giants and genii in the fabled days of the olden time; old when Christ and his disciples walked the earth; stood where it stands to-day when the lips of Memnon were vocal and men bought and sold in the streets of ancient Thebes.

This is pure poetry. He had never touched so high a strain

before, but he reached it often after that, and always with an ever-increasing mastery and confidence. In Venice, in Rome, in Athens, through the Holy Land, his retrospection becomes a stately epic symphony, a processional crescendo that swings ever higher until it reaches that sublime strain, the ageless contemplation of the Sphinx. We cannot forego a paragraph or two of that word-picture:

> After years of waiting it was before me at last. The great face was so sad, so earnest, so longing, so patient. There was a dignity not of earth in its mien, and in its countenance a benignity such as never anything human wore. It was stone, but it seemed sentient. If ever image of stone thought, it was thinking. It was looking toward the verge of the landscape, yet looking at nothing—nothing but distance and vacancy. It was looking over and beyond everything of the present, and far into the past…. It was thinking of the wars of the departed ages; of the empires it had seen created and destroyed; of the nations whose birth it had witnessed, whose progress it had watched, whose annihilation it had noted; of the joy and sorrow, the life and death, the grandeur and decay, of five thousand slow-revolving years . . . .
>
> The Sphinx is grand in its loneliness; it is imposing in its magnitude; it is impressive in the mystery that hangs over its story. And there is that in the overshadowing majesty of this eternal figure of stone, with its accusing memory of the deeds of all ages, which reveals to one something of what we shall feel when we shall stand at last in the awful presence of God.

Then that closing word of Egypt. He elaborated it for the book, and did not improve it. Let us preserve here its original form.

> We are glad to have seen Egypt. We are glad to have seen that old land which taught Greece her letters—and through Greece, Rome—and through Rome, the world —that venerable cradle of culture and refinement which could have humanized and civilized the Children of Israel, but allowed them to depart out of her borders savages—those Children whom we still revere, still love, and whose sad shortcomings we still excuse—not because they were savages, but because they were the chosen savages of God.

The Holy Land letters alone would have brought him fame. They presented the most graphic and sympathetic picture of Syrian travel ever written —one that will never become antiquated or obsolete so long as human nature remains unchanged. From beginning to end the tale is rarely, reverently told. Its closing paragraph has not been surpassed in the voluminous literature of that solemn land:

> Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Where Sodom and Gomorrah reared their domes and towers that solemn sea now floods the plain, in whose bitter waters no living thing exists—over whose waveless surface the blistering air hangs motionless and dead—about whose borders nothing grows but weeds and scattering tufts of cane, and that treacherous fruit that promises refreshment

to parching lips, but turns to ashes at the touch. Nazareth is forlorn; about that ford of Jordan where the hosts of Israel entered the Promised Land with songs of rejoicing one finds only a squalid camp of fantastic Bedouins of the desert; Jericho the accursed lies a moldering ruin today, even as Joshua's miracle left it more than three thousand years ago; Bethlehem and Bethany, in their poverty and their humiliation, have nothing about them now to remind one that they once knew the high honor of the Saviour's presence; the hallowed spot where the shepherds watched their flocks by night, and where the angels sang Peace on earth, goodwill to men, is untenanted by any living creature, and unblessed by any feature that is pleasant to the eye. Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel is gone, and the Ottoman crescent is lifted above the spot where, on that most memorable day in the annals of the world, they reared the Holy Cross. The noted Sea of Galilee, where Roman fleets once rode at anchor and the disciples of the Saviour sailed in their ships, was long ago deserted by the devotees of war and commerce, and its borders are a silent wilderness; Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala is the home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and Chorazin have vanished from the earth, and the "desert places" round about them where thousands of men once listened to the Saviour's voice and ate the miraculous bread sleep in the hush of a

solitude that is inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes.

Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise?

Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land?

It would be easy to quote pages here—a pictorial sequence from Gibraltar to Athens, from Athens to Egypt, a radiant panoramic march. In time he would write technically better. He would avoid solecism, he would become a greater master of vocabulary and phrase, but in all the years ahead he would never match the lambent bloom and spontaneity of those fresh, first impressions of Mediterranean lands and seas. No need to mention the humor, the burlesque, the fearless, unrestrained ridicule of old masters and of sacred relics, so called. These we have kept familiar with much repetition. Only, the humor had grown more subtle, more restrained; the burlesque had become impersonal and harmless, the ridicule so frank and good-natured, that even the old masters themselves might have enjoyed it, while the most devoted churchman, unless blinded by bigotry, would find in it satisfaction, rather than sacrilege.

The final letter was written for the New York Herald after the arrival, and was altogether unlike those that preceded it. Gaily satirical and personal—inclusively so—it might better have been left unwritten, for it would seem to have given needless offense to a number of goodly people, whose chief sin was the sedateness of years. However, it is all past now, and those who were old

then, and perhaps queer and pious and stingy, do not mind any more, and those who were young and frivolous have all grown old too, and most of them have set out on the still farther voyage. Somewhere, it may be, they gather, now; and then, and lightly, tenderly recall their old-time journeying.

LXIII
IN WASHINGTON—A PUBLISHING PROPOSITION

Clemens remained but one day in New York. Senator Stewart had written, about the time of the departure of the Quaker City, offering him the position of private secretary—a position which was to give him leisure for literary work, with a supporting salary as well. Stewart no doubt thought it would be considerably to his advantage to have the brilliant writer and lecturer attached to his political establishment, and Clemens likewise saw possibilities in the arrangement. From Naples, in August, he had written accepting Stewart's offer; he lost no time now in discussing the matter in person.—[In a letter home, August 9th, he referred to the arrangement: "I wrote to Bill Stewart to-day accepting his private secretaryship in Washington, next winter."]

There seems to have been little difficulty in concluding the arrangement.

When Clemens had been in Washington a week we find him writing:

> DEAR FOLKS, Tired and sleepy—been in Congress all day and making newspaper acquaintances. Stewart is to look up a clerkship in the Patent Office for Orion. Things necessarily move slowly where there is so much business

and such armies of office-seekers to be attended to. I guess it will be all right. I intend it shall be all right.

I have 18 invitations to lecture, at $100 each, in various parts of the Union—have declined them all. I am for business now.

Belong on the Tribune Staff, and shall write occasionally. Am offered the same berth to-day on the Herald by letter. Shall write Mr. Bennett and accept, as soon as I hear from Tribune that it will not interfere. Am pretty well known now—intend to be better known.

Am hobnobbing with these old Generals and Senators and other humbugs for no good purpose. Don't have any more trouble making friends than I did in California. All serene. Good-by. Shall continue on the Alta.

Yours affectionately,

SAM.

P.S.—I room with Bill Stewart and board at Willard's Hotel.

But the secretary arrangement was a brief matter. It is impossible to conceive of Mark Twain as anybody's secretary, especially as the secretary of Senator Stewart.

–[In Senator Stewart's memoirs he refers unpleasantly to Mark Twain, and after relating several incidents that bear only strained relations to the truth, states that when the writer returned from the Holy Land he (Stewart) offered him a secretaryship as a sort of charity. He adds that Mark Twain's behavior on his premises was such that a threat of a thrashing was necessary. The reason for such statements becomes apparent, however, when he

adds that in 'Roughing It' the author accuses him of cheating, prints a picture of him with a hatch over his eye, and claims to have given him a sound thrashing, none of which statements, save only the one concerning the picture (an apparently unforgivable offense to his dignity), is true, as the reader may easily ascertain for himself.]

Within a few weeks he was writing humorous accounts of "My Late Senatorial Secretaryship," "Facts Concerning the Recent Resignation," etc., all good-natured burlesque, but inspired, we may believe, by the change: These articles appeared in the New York Tribune, the New York Citizen, and the Galaxy Magazine.

There appears to have been no ill-feeling at this time between Clemens and Stewart. If so, it is not discoverable in any of the former's personal or newspaper correspondence. In fact, in his article relating to his "late senatorial secretaryship" he puts the joke, so far as it is a joke, on Senator James W. Nye, probably as an additional punishment for Nye's failure to appear on the night of his lecture. He established headquarters with a brilliant newspaper correspondent named Riley. "One of the best men in Washington—or elsewhere," he tells us in a brief sketch of that person.—[See Riley, newspaper correspondent. Sketches New and Old.]—He had known Riley in San Francisco; the two were congenial, and settled down to their several undertakings.

Clemens was chiefly concerned over two things: he wished to make money and he wished to secure a government appointment for Orion. He had used up the most of his lecture accumulations,

and was moderately in debt. His work was in demand at good rates, for those days, and with working opportunity he could presently dispose of his financial problem. The Tribune was anxious for letters; the Enterprise and Alta were waiting for them; the Herald, the Chicago Tribune, the magazines—all had solicited contributions; the lecture bureaus pursued him. Personally his outlook was bright.

The appointment for Orion was a different matter. The powers were not especially interested in a brother; there were too many brothers and assorted relatives on the official waiting-list already. Clemens was offered appointments for himself—a consulship, a post-mastership; even that of San Francisco. From the Cabinet down, the Washington political contingent had read his travel-letters, and was ready to recognize officially the author of them in his own person and personality.

Also, socially: Mark Twain found himself all at once in the midst of receptions, dinners, and speech-making; all very exciting for a time at least, but not profitable, not conducive to work. At a dinner of the Washington Correspondents Club his response to the toast, "Women," was pronounced by Schuyler Colfax to be "the best after dinner speech ever made." Certainly it was a refreshing departure from the prosy or clumsy-witted efforts common to that period. He was coming altogether into his own.—[This is the first of Mark Twain's after-dinner speeches to be preserved. The reader will find it complete, as reported next day, in Appendix G, at the end of last volume.]

He was not immediately interested in the matter of book publication. The Jumping Frog book was popular, and in England had been issued by Routledge; but the royalty returns were modest enough and slow in arrival. His desire was for prompter results. His interest in book publication had never been an eager one, and related mainly to the advertising it would furnish, which he did not now need; or to the money return, in which he had no great faith. Yet at this very moment a letter for him was lying in the Tribune office in New York which would bring the book idea into first prominence and spell the beginning of his fortune.

Among those who had read and found delight in the Tribune letters was Elisha Bliss, Jr., of the American Publishing Company, of Hartford. Bliss was a shrewd and energetic man, with a keen appreciation for humor and the American fondness for that literary quality. He had recently undertaken the management of a Hartford concern, and had somewhat alarmed its conservative directorate by publishing books that furnished entertainment to the reader as well as moral instruction. Only his success in paying dividends justified this heresy and averted his downfall. Two days after the arrival of the Quaker City Bliss wrote the letter above mentioned. It ran as follows:

> OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO.
> HARTFORD, CONN., November 21, 1867.
> SAMUEL L. CLEMENS, ESQ., Tribune Office, New York.

DEAR SIR,—We take the liberty to address you this, in place of a letter which we had recently written and were about to forward to you, not knowing your arrival home was expected so soon. We are desirous of obtaining from you a work of some kind, perhaps compiled from your letters from the past, etc., with such interesting additions as may be proper. We are the publishers of A. D. Richardson's works, and flatter ourselves that we can give an author a favorable term and do as full justice to his productions as any other house in the country. We are perhaps the oldest subscription house in the country, and have never failed to give a book an immense circulation. We sold about 100,000 copies of Richardson's F. D. and E. ('Field, Dungeon and Escape'), and are now printing 41,000 of 'Beyond the Mississippi', and large orders ahead. If you have any thought of writing a book, or could be induced to do so, we should be pleased to see you, and will do so. Will you do us the favor of reply at once, at your earliest convenience.

Very truly etc.,

E. BLISS, JR.,
Secretary.

After ten days' delay this letter was forwarded to the Tribune bureau in Washington, where Clemens received it. He replied promptly.

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1867.

E. BLISS, JR., ESQ., Secretary American Publishing Co.

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

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

I have other propositions for a book, but have doubted the propriety of interfering with good newspaper engagements, except my way as an author could be

demonstrated to be plain before me. But I know Richardson, and learned from him some months ago something of an idea of the subscription plan of publishing. If that is your plan invariably it looks safe.

I am on the New York Tribune staff here as an "occasional," among other things, and a note from you addressed to

Very truly, etc.,

SAM. L. CLEMENS,

New York Tribune Bureau, Washington

will find me, without fail.

The exchange of those two letters marked the beginning of one of the most notable publishing connections in American literary history.

Consummation, however, was somewhat delayed. Bliss was ill when the reply came, and could not write again in detail until nearly a month later. In this letter he recited the profits made by Richardson and others through subscription publication, and named the royalties paid. Richardson had received four per cent. of the sale price, a small enough rate for these later days; but the cost of manufacture was larger then, and the sale and delivery of books through agents has ever been an expensive process. Even Horace Greeley had received but a fraction more on his Great American Conflict. Bliss especially suggested and emphasized a "humorous work—that is to say, a work humorously inclined." He added that they had two arrangements for paying authors: outright purchase, and royalty. He invited a meeting in New York

to arrange terms.

LXIV
OLIVIA LANGDON

Clemens did in fact go to New York that same evening, to spend Christmas with Dan Slote, and missed Bliss's second letter. It was no matter. Fate had his affairs properly in hand, and had prepared an event of still larger moment than the publication even of Innocents Abroad. There was a pleasant reunion at Dan Slote's. He wrote home about it:

> Charley Langdon, Jack Van Nostrand, Dan and I (all Quaker City night-hawks) had a blow-out at Dan's house and a lively talk over old times. I just laughed till my sides ached at some of our reminiscences. It was the unholiest gang that ever cavorted through Palestine, but those are the best boys in the world.

This, however, was not the event; it was only preliminary to it. We are coming to that now. At the old St. Nicholas Hotel, which stood on the west of Broadway between Spring and Broome streets, there were stopping at this time Jervis Langdon, a wealty coal-dealer and mine-owner of Elmira, his son Charles and his daughter Olivia, whose pictured face Samuel Clemens had first seen in the Bay of Smyrna one September day. Young Langdon had been especially anxious to bring his distinguished Quaker City friend and his own people together, and two days before Christmas Samuel Clemens was invited to dine at the hotel. He

went very willingly. The lovely face of that miniature had been often a part of his waking dreams. For the first time now he looked upon its reality. Long afterward he said:

"It is forty years ago. From that day to this she has never been out of my mind."

Charles Dickens was in New York then, and gave a reading that night in Steinway Hall. The Langdons went, and Samuel Clemens accompanied them. He remembered afterward that Dickens wore a black velvet coat with a fiery red flower in his buttonhole, and that he read the storm scene from Copperfield —the death of James Steerforth. But he remembered still more clearly the face and dress of that slender girlish figure at his side.

Olivia Langdon was twenty-two years old at this time, delicate as the miniature he had seen, fragile to look upon, though no longer with the shattered health of her girlhood. At sixteen, through a fall upon the ice, she had become a complete invalid, confined to her bed for two years, unable to sit, even when supported, unable to lie in any position except upon her back. Great physicians and surgeons, one after another, had done their best for her but she had failed steadily until every hope had died. Then, when nothing else was left to try, a certain Doctor Newton, of spectacular celebrity, who cured by "laying on of hands," was brought to Elmira to see her. Doctor Newton came into the darkened room and said:

"Open the windows—we must have light!"

They protested that she could not bear the light, but the

windows were opened. Doctor Newton came to the bedside of the helpless girl, delivered a short, fervent prayer, put his arm under her shoulders, and bade her sit up. She had not moved for two years, and the family were alarmed, but she obeyed, and he assisted her into a chair. Sensation came back to her limbs. With his assistance she even made a feeble attempt to walk. He left then, saying that she would gradually improve, and in time be well, though probably never very strong. On the same day he healed a boy, crippled and drawn with fever.

It turned out as he had said. Olivia Langdon improved steadily, and now at twenty-two, though not robust—she was never that—she was comparatively well. Gentle, winning, lovable, she was the family idol, and Samuel Clemens joined in their worship from the moment of that first meeting.

Olivia Langdon, on her part, was at first dazed and fascinated, rather than attracted, by this astonishing creature, so unlike any one she had ever known. Her life had been circumscribed, her experiences of a simple sort. She had never seen anything resembling him before. Indeed, nobody had. Somewhat carelessly, even if correctly, attired; eagerly, rather than observantly, attentive; brilliant and startling, rather than cultured, of speech—a blazing human solitaire, unfashioned, unset, tossed by the drift of fortune at her feet. He disturbed rather than gratified her. She sensed his heresy toward the conventions and forms which had been her gospel; his bantering, indifferent attitude toward life—to her always so serious and

sacred; she suspected that he even might have unorthodox views on matters of religion. When he had gone she somehow had the feeling that a great fiery meteor of unknown portent had swept across her sky.

To her brother, who was eager for her approval of his celebrity, Miss Langdon conceded admiration. As for her father, he did not qualify his opinion. With hearty sense of humor, and a keen perception of verity and capability in men, Jervis Langdon accepted Samuel Clemens from the start, and remained his stanch admirer and friend. Clemens left that night with an invitation to visit Elmira by and by, and with the full intention of going—soon. Fate, however, had another plan. He did not see Elmira for the better part of a year.

He saw Miss Langdon again within the week. On New-Year's Day he set forth to pay calls, after the fashion of the time—more lavish then than now. Miss Langdon was receiving with Miss Alice Hooker, a niece of Henry Ward Beecher, at the home of a Mrs. Berry; he decided to go there first. With young Langdon he arrived at eleven o'clock in the morning, and they did not leave until midnight. If his first impression upon Olivia Langdon had been meteoric, it would seem that he must now have become to her as a streaming comet that swept from zenith to horizon. One thing is certain: she had become to him the single, unvarying beacon of his future years. He visited Henry Ward Beecher on that trip and dined with him by invitation. Harriet Beecher Stowe was present, and others of that eminent family. Likewise his old

Quaker City comrades, Moses S. and Emma Beach. It was a brilliant gathering, a conclave of intellectual gods—a triumph to be there for one who had been a printer-boy on the banks of the Mississippi, and only a little while before a miner with pick and shovel. It was gratifying to be so honored; it would be pleasant to write home; but the occasion lacked something too —everything, in fact—for when he ran his eye around the board the face of the minature was not there.

Still there were compensations; inadequate, of course, but pleasant enough to remember. It was Sunday evening and the party adjourned to Plymouth Church. After services Mr. Beecher invited him to return home with him for a quiet talk. Evidently they had a good time, for in the letter telling of these things Samuel Clemens said: "Henry Ward Beecher is a brick."

LXV
A CONTRACT WITH ELISHA BLISS, JR

He returned to Washington without seeing Miss Langdon again, though he would seem to have had permission to write—friendly letters. A little later (it was on the evening of January 9th) he lectured in Washington —on very brief notice indeed. The arrangement for his appearance had been made by a friend during his absence—"a friend," Clemens declared afterward, "not entirely sober at the time." To his mother he wrote:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.