

Mark Twain

Mark Twain's Speeches



Марк Твен

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One of the most renowned public speakers of his day, Mark Twain was often asked to give speeches to mark public holidays or important anniversaries, for school graduations, at banquets for distinguished visitors, and at events sponsored by charitable organizations, reform groups, and the like. Published a few months after his death, this wide-ranging collection of speeches, spanning more than four decades, covers the gamut of Mark Twain's interests.

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Mark Twain's Speeches With An Introduction by William Dean Howells

Introduction

These speeches will address themselves to the minds and hearts of those who read them, but not with the effect they had with those who heard them; Clemens himself would have said, not with half the effect. I have noted elsewhere how he always held that the actor doubled the value of the author's words; and he was a great actor as well as a great author. He was a most consummate actor, with this difference from other actors, that he was the first to know the thoughts and invent the fancies to which his voice and action gave the color of life. Representation is the art of other actors; his art was creative as well as representative; it was nothing at second hand.

I never heard Clemens speak when I thought he quite failed; some burst or spurt redeemed him when he seemed flagging short of the goal, and, whoever else was in the running, he came in ahead. His near-failures were the error of a rare trust to the spontaneity in which other speakers confide, or are believed to confide, when they are on their feet. He knew that from the beginning of oratory the orator's spontaneity was for the silence and solitude of the closet where he mused his words to an imagined audience; that this was the use of orators from Demosthenes and Cicero up and down. He studied every word and syllable, and memorized them by a system of mnemonics peculiar to himself, consisting of an arbitrary arrangement of things on a table – knives, forks, salt-cellars; inkstands, pens, boxes, or whatever was at hand – which stood for points and clauses and climaxes, and were at once indelible diction and constant suggestion. He studied every tone and every gesture, and he forecast the result with the real audience from its result with that imagined audience. Therefore, it was beautiful to see him and to hear him; he rejoiced in the pleasure he gave and the blows of surprise which he dealt; and because he had his end in mind, he knew when to stop.

I have been talking of his method and manner; the matter the reader has here before him; and it is good matter, glad, honest, kind, just.

W. D. Howells.

Preface

From the preface to the English edition of “Mark Twain’s sketches”

If I were to sell the reader a barrel of molasses, and he, instead of sweetening his substantial dinner with the same at judicious intervals, should eat the entire barrel at one sitting, and then abuse me for making him sick, I would say that he deserved to be made sick for not knowing any better how to utilize the blessings this world affords. And if I sell to the reader this volume of nonsense, and he, instead of seasoning his graver reading with a chapter of it now and then, when his mind demands such relaxation, unwisely overdoses himself with several chapters of it at a single sitting, he will deserve to be nauseated, and he will have nobody to blame but himself if he is. There is no more sin in publishing an entire volume of nonsense than there is in keeping a candy-store with no hardware in it. It lies wholly with the customer whether he will injure himself by means of either, or will derive from them the benefits which they will afford him if he uses their possibilities judiciously.

Respectfully submitted,

The author.

The Story Of A Speech

An address delivered in 1877, and a review of it twenty-nine years later. The original speech was delivered at a dinner given by the publishers of The Atlantic Monthly in honor of the seventieth anniversary of the birth of John Greenleaf Whittier, at the Hotel Brunswick, Boston, December 17, 1877.

This is an occasion peculiarly meet for the digging up of pleasant reminiscences concerning literary folk; therefore I will drop lightly into history myself. Standing here on the shore of the Atlantic and contemplating certain of its largest literary billows, I am reminded of a thing which happened to me thirteen years ago, when I had just succeeded in stirring up a little Nevadian literary puddle myself, whose spume-flakes were beginning to blow thinly California ward. I started an inspection tramp through the southern mines of California. I was callow and conceited, and I resolved to try the virtue of my '*nom de guerre*'.

I very soon had an opportunity. I knocked at a miner's lonely log cabin in the foot-hills of the Sierras just at nightfall. It was snowing at the time. A jaded, melancholy man of fifty, barefooted, opened the door to me. When he heard my '*nom de guerre*' he looked more dejected than before. He let me in – pretty reluctantly, I thought – and after the customary bacon and beans, black coffee and hot whiskey, I took a pipe. This sorrowful man had not said three words up to this time. Now he spoke up and said, in the voice of one who is secretly suffering, "You're the fourth – I'm going to move." "The fourth what?" said I. "The fourth littery man that has been here in twenty-four hours – I'm going to move." "You don't tell me!" said I; "who were the others?" "Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Emerson, and Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes – consound the lot!"

You can, easily believe I was interested. I supplicated – three hot whiskeys did the rest – and finally the melancholy miner began. Said he:

"They came here just at dark yesterday evening, and I let them in of course. Said they were going to the Yosemite. They were a rough lot, but that's nothing; everybody looks rough that travels afoot. Mr. Emerson was a seedy little bit of a chap, red-headed. Mr. Holmes was as fat as a balloon; he weighed as much as three hundred, and had double chins all the way down to his stomach. Mr. Longfellow was built like a prizefighter. His head was cropped and bristly, like as if he had a wig made of hair-brushes. His nose lay straight down, his face, like a finger with the end joint tilted up. They had been drinking, I could see that. And what queer talk they used! Mr. Holmes inspected this cabin, then he took me by the buttonhole, and says he:

"Through the deep caves of thought
I hear a voice that sings,
Build thee more stately mansions,
O my soul!"

"Says I, 'I can't afford it, Mr. Holmes, and moreover I don't want to.' Blamed if I liked it pretty well, either, coming from a stranger, that way. However, I started to get out my bacon and beans, when Mr. Emerson came and looked on awhile, and then he takes me aside by the buttonhole and says:

"Give me agates for my meat;
Give me cantharids to eat;
From air and ocean bring me foods,
From all zones and altitudes.'

“Says I, ‘Mr. Emerson, if you’ll excuse me, this ain’t no hotel.’ You see it sort of riled me – I warn’t used to the ways of littery swells. But I went on a-sweating over my work, and next comes Mr. Longfellow and buttonholes me, and interrupts me. Says he:

“‘Honor be to Mudjekeewis!
You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis—’

“But I broke in, and says I, ‘Beg your pardon, Mr. Longfellow, if you’ll be so kind as to hold your yawp for about five minutes and let me get this grub ready, you’ll do me proud.’ Well, sir, after they’d filled up I set out the jug. Mr. Holmes looks at it, and then he fires up all of a sudden and yells:

“Flash out a stream of blood-red wine!
For I would drink to other days.’

“By George, I was getting kind of worked up. I don’t deny it, I was getting kind of worked up. I turns to Mr. Holmes, and says I, ‘Looky here, my fat friend, I’m a-running this shanty, and if the court knows herself, you’ll take whiskey straight or you’ll go dry.’ Them’s the very words I said to him. Now I don’t want to sass such famous littery people, but you see they kind of forced me. There ain’t nothing onreasonable ‘bout me; I don’t mind a passel of guests a-treadin’ on my tail three or four times, but when it comes to standing on it it’s different, ‘and if the court knows herself,’ I says, ‘you’ll take whiskey straight or you’ll go dry.’ Well, between drinks they’d swell around the cabin and strike attitudes and spout; and pretty soon they got out a greasy old deck and went to playing euchre at ten cents a corner – on trust. I began to notice some pretty suspicious things. Mr. Emerson dealt, looked at his hand, shook his head, says:

“‘I am the doubter and the doubt—’

and ca’mly bunched the hands and went to shuffling for a new layout. Says he:

“‘They reckon ill who leave me out;
They know not well the subtle ways I keep.
I pass and deal again!’

Hang’d if he didn’t go ahead and do it, too! Oh, he was a cool one! Well, in about a minute things were running pretty tight, but all of a sudden I see by Mr. Emerson’s eye he judged he had ‘em. He had already corralled two tricks, and each of the others one. So now he kind of lifts a little in his chair and says:

“‘I tire of globes and aces!
Too long the game is played!’

– and down he fetched a right bower. Mr. Longfellow smiles as sweet as pie and says:

“‘Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught,’

– and blamed if he didn’t down with another right bower! Emerson claps his hand on his bowie, Longfellow claps his on his revolver, and I went under a bunk. There was going to be trouble; but

that monstrous Holmes rose up, wobbling his double chins, and says he, 'Order, gentlemen; the first man that draws, I'll lay down on him and smother him!' All quiet on the Potomac, you bet!

"They were pretty how-come-you-so by now, and they begun to blow. Emerson says, 'The nobbiest thing I ever wrote was "Barbara Frietchie."' Says Longfellow, 'It don't begin with my "Biglow Papers."' Says Holmes, 'My "Thanatopsis" lays over 'em both.' They mighty near ended in a fight. Then they wished they had some more company – and Mr. Emerson pointed to me and says:

"Is yonder squalid peasant all
That this proud nursery could breed?"

He was a-whetting his bowie on his boot – so I let it pass. Well, sir, next they took it into their heads that they would like some music; so they made me stand up and sing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" till I dropped-at thirteen minutes past four this morning. That's what I've been through, my friend. When I woke at seven, they were leaving, thank goodness, and Mr. Longfellow had my only boots on, and his'n under his arm. Says I, 'Hold on, there, Evangeline, what are you going to do with them?' He says, 'Going to make tracks with 'em; because:

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.'

"As I said, Mr. Twain, you are the fourth in twenty-four hours – and I'm going to move; I ain't suited to a littery atmosphere."

I said to the miner, "Why, my dear sir, these were not the gracious singers to whom we and the world pay loving reverence and homage; these were impostors."

The miner investigated me with a calm eye for a while; then said he, "Ah! impostors, were they? Are you?"

I did not pursue the subject, and since then I have not travelled on my '*nom de guerre*' enough to hurt. Such was the reminiscence I was moved to contribute, Mr. Chairman. In my enthusiasm I may have exaggerated the details a little, but you will easily forgive me that fault, since I believe it is the first time I have ever deflected from perpendicular fact on an occasion like this.

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From Mark Twain's Autobiography.

January 11, 1906.

Answer to a letter received this morning:

Dear Mrs. H., – I am forever your debtor for reminding me of that curious passage in my life. During the first year or, two after it happened, I could not bear to think of it. My pain and shame were so intense, and my sense of having been an imbecile so settled, established and confirmed, that I drove the episode entirely from my mind – and so all these twenty-eight or twenty-nine years I have lived in the conviction that my performance of that time was coarse, vulgar, and destitute of humor. But your suggestion that you and your family found humor in it twenty-eight years ago moved me to look into the matter. So I commissioned a Boston typewriter to delve among the Boston papers of that bygone time and send me a copy of it.

It came this morning, and if there is any vulgarity about it I am not able to discover it. If it isn't innocently and ridiculously funny, I am no judge. I will see to it that you get a copy.

What I have said to Mrs. H. is true. I did suffer during a year or two from the deep humiliations of that episode. But at last, in 1888, in Venice, my wife and I came across Mr. and Mrs. A. P. C., of Concord, Massachusetts, and a friendship began then of the sort which nothing but death terminates. The C.'s were very bright people and in every way charming and companionable. We were together a month or two in Venice and several months in Rome, afterward, and one day that lamented break of mine was mentioned. And when I was on the point of lathering those people for bringing it to my mind when I had gotten the memory of it almost squelched, I perceived with joy that the C.'s were indignant about the way that my performance had been received in Boston. They poured out their opinions most freely and frankly about the frosty attitude of the people who were present at that performance, and about the Boston newspapers for the position they had taken in regard to the matter. That position was that I had been irreverent beyond belief, beyond imagination. Very well; I had accepted that as a fact for a year or two, and had been thoroughly miserable about it whenever I thought of it – which was not frequently, if I could help it. Whenever I thought of it I wondered how I ever could have been inspired to do so unholy a thing. Well, the C.'s comforted me, but they did not persuade me to continue to think about the unhappy episode. I resisted that. I tried to get it out of my mind, and let it die, and I succeeded. Until Mrs. H.'s letter came, it had been a good twenty-five years since I had thought of that matter; and when she said that the thing was funny I wondered if possibly she might be right. At any rate, my curiosity was aroused, and I wrote to Boston and got the whole thing copied, as above set forth.

I vaguely remember some of the details of that gathering – dimly I can see a hundred people – no, perhaps fifty – shadowy figures sitting at tables feeding, ghosts now to me, and nameless forevermore. I don't know who they were, but I can very distinctly see, seated at the grand table and facing the rest of us, Mr. Emerson, supernaturally grave, unsmiling; Mr. Whittier, grave, lovely, his beautiful spirit shining out of his face; Mr. Longfellow, with his silken white hair and his benignant face; Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, flashing smiles and affection and all good-fellowship everywhere like a rose-diamond whose facets are being turned toward the light first one way and then another – a charming man, and always fascinating, whether he was talking or whether he was sitting still (what he would call still, but what would be more or less motion to other people). I can see those figures with entire distinctness across this abyss of time.

One other feature is clear – Willie Winter (for these past thousand years dramatic editor of the New York Tribune, and still occupying that high post in his old age) was there. He was much younger then than he is now, and he showed 'it. It was always a pleasure to me to see Willie Winter at a banquet. During a matter of twenty years I was seldom at a banquet where Willie Winter was not also present, and where he did not read a charming poem written for the occasion. He did it this time, and it was up to standard: dainty, happy, choicely phrased, and as good to listen to as music, and sounding exactly as if it was pouring unprepared out of heart and brain.

Now at that point ends all that was pleasurable about that notable celebration of Mr. Whittier's seventieth birthday – because I got up at that point and followed Winter, with what I have no doubt I supposed would be the gem of the evening – the gay oration above quoted from the Boston paper. I had written it all out the day before and had perfectly memorized it, and I stood up there at my genial and happy and self-satisfied ease, and began to deliver it. Those majestic guests; that row of venerable and still active volcanoes, listened; as did everybody else in the house, with attentive interest. Well, I delivered myself of – we'll say the first two hundred words of my speech. I was expecting no returns from that part of the speech, but this was not the case as regarded the rest of it. I arrived now at the dialogue: "The old miner said, 'You are the fourth, I'm going to move.' 'The fourth what?' said I. He answered, 'The fourth littery man that has been here in twenty-four hours. I am going to move.' 'Why, you don't tell me,' said I. 'Who were the others?' 'Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, consound the lot—'"

Now, then, the house's attention continued, but the expression of interest in the faces turned to a sort of black frost. I wondered what the trouble was. I didn't know. I went on, but with difficulty – I struggled along, and entered upon that miner's fearful description of the bogus Emerson, the bogus Holmes, the bogus Longfellow, always hoping – but with a gradually perishing hope that somebody – would laugh, or that somebody would at least smile, but nobody did. I didn't know enough to give it up and sit down, I was too new to public speaking, and so I went on with this awful performance, and carried it clear through to the end, in front of a body of people who seemed turned to stone with horror. It was the sort of expression their faces would have worn if I had been making these remarks about the Deity and the rest of the Trinity; there is no milder way, in which to describe the petrified condition and the ghastly expression of those people.

When I sat down it was with a heart which had long ceased to beat. I shall never be as dead again as I was then. I shall never be as miserable again as I was then. I speak now as one who doesn't know what the condition of things may be in the next world, but in this one I shall never be as wretched again as I was then. Howells, who was near me, tried to say a comforting word, but couldn't get beyond a gasp. There was no use – he understood the whole size of the disaster. He had good intentions, but the words froze before they could get out. It was an atmosphere that would freeze anything. If Benvenuto Cellini's salamander had been in that place he would not have survived to be put into Cellini's autobiography. There was a frightful pause. There was an awful silence, a desolating silence. Then the next man on the list had to get up – there was no help for it. That was Bishop – Bishop had just burst handsomely upon the world with a most acceptable novel, which had appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, a place which would make any novel respectable and any author noteworthy. In this case the novel itself was recognized as being, without extraneous help, respectable. Bishop was away up in the public favor, and he was an object of high interest, consequently there was a sort of national expectancy in the air; we may say our American millions were standing, from Maine to Texas and from Alaska to Florida, holding their breath, their lips parted, their hands ready to applaud, when Bishop should get up on that occasion, and for the first time in his life speak in public. It was under these damaging conditions that he got up to “make good,” as the vulgar say. I had spoken several times before, and that is the reason why I was able to go on without dying in my tracks, as I ought to have done – but Bishop had had no experience. He was up facing those awful deities – facing those other people, those strangers – facing human beings for the first time in his life, with a speech to utter. No doubt it was well packed away in his memory, no doubt it was fresh and usable, until I had been heard from. I suppose that after that, and under the smothering pall of that dreary silence, it began to waste away and disappear out of his head like the rags breaking from the edge of a fog, and presently there wasn't any fog left. He didn't go on – he didn't last long. It was not many sentence's after his first before he began to hesitate, and break, and lose his grip, and totter, and wobble, and at last he slumped down in a limp and mushy pile.

Well, the programme for the occasion was probably not more than one-third finished, but it ended there. Nobody rose. The next man hadn't strength enough to get up, and everybody looked so dazed, so stupefied, paralyzed; it was impossible for anybody to do anything, or even try. Nothing could go on in that strange atmosphere. Howells mournfully, and without words, hitched himself to Bishop and me and supported us out of the room. It was very kind – he was most generous. He towed us tottering away into same room in that building, and we sat down there. I don't know what my remark was now, but I know the nature of it. It was the kind of remark you make when you know that nothing in the world can help your case. But Howells was honest – he had to say the heart-breaking things he did say: that there was no help for this calamity, this shipwreck, this cataclysm; that this was the most disastrous thing that had ever happened in anybody's history – and then he added, “That is, for you – and consider what you have done for Bishop. It is bad enough in your case, you deserve, to suffer. You have committed this crime, and you deserve to have all you are going to get. But here is an

innocent man. Bishop had never done you any harm, and see what you have done to him. He can never hold his head up again. The world can never look upon Bishop as being a live person. He is a corpse.”

That is the history of that episode of twenty-eight years ago, which pretty nearly killed me with shame during that first year or two whenever it forced its way into my mind.

Now then, I take that speech up and examine it. As I said, it arrived this morning, from Boston. I have read it twice, and unless I am an idiot, it hasn't a single defect in it from the first word to the last. It is just as good as good can be. It is smart; it is saturated with humor. There isn't a suggestion of coarseness or vulgarity in it anywhere. What could have been the matter with that house? It is amazing, it is incredible, that they didn't shout with laughter, and those deities the loudest of them all. Could the fault have been with me? Did I lose courage when I saw those great men up there whom I was going to describe in such a strange fashion? If that happened, if I showed doubt, that can account for it, for you can't be successfully funny if you show that you are afraid of it. Well, I can't account for it, but if I had those beloved and revered old literary immortals back here now on the platform at Carnegie Hall I would take that same old speech, deliver it, word for word, and melt them till they'd run all over that stage. Oh, the fault must have been with me, it is not in the speech at all.

Plymouth Rock And The Pilgrims

Address at the first annual dinner, N. E. Society, Philadelphia, December 22, 1881

On calling upon Mr. Clemens to make response, President Rollins said:

“This sentiment has been assigned to one who was never exactly born in New England, nor, perhaps, were any of his ancestors. He is not technically, therefore, of New England descent. Under the painful circumstances in which he has found himself, however, he has done the best he could – he has had all his children born there, and has made of himself a New England ancestor. He is a self-made man. More than this, and better even, in cheerful, hopeful, helpful literature he is of New England ascent. To ascend there in any thing that’s reasonable is difficult; for – confidentially, with the door shut – we all know that they are the brightest, ablest sons of that goodly land who never leave it, and it is among and above them that Mr. Twain has made his brilliant and permanent ascent – become a man of mark.”

I rise to protest. I have kept still for years; but really I think there is no sufficient justification for this sort of thing. What do you want to celebrate those people for? – those ancestors of yours of 1620—the Mayflower tribe, I mean. What do you want to celebrate them for? Your pardon: the gentleman at my left assures me that you are not celebrating the Pilgrims themselves, but the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth rock on the 22d of December. So you are celebrating their landing. Why, the other pretext was thin enough, but this is thinner than ever; the other was tissue, tinfoil, fish-bladder, but this is gold-leaf. Celebrating their lauding! What was there remarkable about it, I would like to know? What can you be thinking of? Why, those Pilgrims had been at sea three or four months. It was the very middle of winter: it was as cold as death off Cape Cod there. Why shouldn’t they come ashore? If they hadn’t landed there would be some reason for celebrating the fact: It would have been a case of monumental leatherheadedness which the world would not willingly let die. If it had been you, gentlemen, you probably wouldn’t have landed, but you have no shadow of right to be celebrating, in your ancestors, gifts which they did not exercise, but only transmitted. Why, to be celebrating the mere landing of the Pilgrims – to be trying to make out that this most natural and simple and customary procedure was an extraordinary circumstance – a circumstance to be amazed at, and admired, aggrandized and glorified, at orgies like this for two hundred and sixty years – hang it, a horse would have known enough to land; a horse – Pardon again; the gentleman on my right assures me that it was not merely the landing of the Pilgrims that we are celebrating, but the Pilgrims themselves. So we have struck an inconsistency here – one says it was the landing, the other says it was the Pilgrims. It is an inconsistency characteristic of your intractable and disputatious tribe, for you never agree about anything but Boston. Well, then, what do you want to celebrate those Pilgrims for? They were a mighty hard lot – you know it. I grant you, without the slightest unwillingness, that they were a deal more gentle and merciful and just than were the people of Europe of that day; I grant you that they are better than their predecessors. But what of that? – that is nothing. People always progress. You are better than your fathers and grandfathers were (this is the first time I have ever aimed a measureless slander at the departed, for I consider such things improper). Yes, those among you who have not been in the penitentiary, if such there be, are better than your fathers and grandfathers were; but is that any sufficient reason, for getting up annual dinners and celebrating you? No, by no means – by no means. Well, I repeat, those Pilgrims were a hard lot. They took good care of themselves, but they abolished everybody else’s ancestors. I am a border-ruffian from the State of Missouri. I am a Connecticut Yankee by adoption. In me, you have Missouri morals, Connecticut culture; this, gentlemen, is the combination which makes the perfect man. But where are my ancestors? Whom shall I celebrate? Where shall I find the raw material?

My first American ancestor, gentlemen, was an Indian – an early Indian. Your ancestors skinned him alive, and I am an orphan. Not one drop of my blood flows in that Indian's veins today. I stand here, lone and forlorn, without an ancestor. They skinned him! I do not object to that, if they needed his fur; but alive, gentlemen-alive! They skinned him alive – and before company! That is what rankles. Think how he must have felt; for he was a sensitive person and easily embarrassed. If he had been a bird, it would have been all right, and no violence done to his feelings, because he would have been considered “dressed.” But he was not a bird, gentlemen, he was a man, and probably one of the most undressed men that ever was. I ask you to put yourselves in his place. I ask it as a favor; I ask it as a tardy act of justice; I ask it in the interest of fidelity to the traditions of your ancestors; I ask it that the world may contemplate, with vision unobstructed by disguising swallow-tails and white cravats, the spectacle which the true New England Society ought to present. Cease to come to these annual orgies in this hollow modern mockery – the surplusage of raiment. Come in character; come in the summer grace, come in the unadorned simplicity, come in the free and joyous costume which your sainted ancestors provided for mine.

Later ancestors of mine were the Quakers William Robinson, Marmaduke Stevenson, *et al.* Your tribe chased them put of the country for their religion's sake; promised them death if they came back; for your ancestors had forsaken the homes they loved, and braved the perils of the sea, the implacable climate, and the savage wilderness, to acquire that highest and most precious of boons, freedom for every man on this broad continent to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience – and they were not going to allow a lot of pestiferous Quakers to interfere with it. Your ancestors broke forever the chains of political slavery, and gave the vote to every man in this wide land, excluding none! – none except those who did not belong to the orthodox church. Your ancestors – yes, they were a hard lot; but, nevertheless, they gave us religious liberty to worship as they required us to worship, and political liberty to vote as the church required; and so I the bereft one, I the forlorn one, am here to do my best to help you celebrate them right.

The Quaker woman Elizabeth Hooton was an ancestress of mine. Your people were pretty severe with her you will confess that. But, poor thing! I believe they changed her opinions before she died, and took her into their fold; and so we have every reason to presume that when she died she went to the same place which your ancestors went to. It is a great pity, for she was a good woman. Roger Williams was an ancestor of mine. I don't really remember what your people did with him. But they banished him to Rhode Island, anyway. And then, I believe, recognizing that this was really carrying harshness to an unjustifiable extreme, they took pity on him and burned him. They were a hard lot! All those Salem witches were ancestors of mine! Your people made it tropical for them. Yes, they did; by pressure and the gallows they made such a clean deal with them that there hasn't been a witch and hardly a halter in our family from that day to this, and that is one hundred and eighty-nine years. The first slave brought into New England out of Africa by your progenitors was an ancestor of mine – for I am of a mixed breed, an infinitely shaded and exquisite Mongrel. I'm not one of your sham meerschaums that you can color in a week. No, my complexion is the patient art of eight generations. Well, in my own time, I had acquired a lot of my kin – by purchase, and swapping around, and one way and another – and was getting along very well. Then, with the inborn perversity of your lineage, you got up a war, and took them all away from me. And so, again am I bereft, again am I forlorn; no drop of my blood flows in the veins of any living being who is marketable.

O my friends, hear me and reform! I seek your good, not mine. You have heard the speeches. Disband these New England societies – nurseries of a system of steadily augmenting laudation and hosannaing, which; if persisted in uncurbed, may some day in the remote future beguile you into prevaricating and bragging. Oh, stop, stop, while you are still temperate in your appreciation of your ancestors! Hear me, I beseech you; get up an auction and sell Plymouth Rock! The Pilgrims were a simple and ignorant race. They never had seen any good rocks before, or at least any that were not watched, and so they were excusable for hopping ashore in frantic delight and clapping an iron fence

around this one. But you, gentlemen, are educated; you are enlightened; you know that in the rich land of your nativity, opulent New England, overflowing with rocks, this one isn't worth, at the outside, more than thirty-five cents. Therefore, sell it, before it is injured by exposure, or at least throw it open to the patent-medicine advertisements, and let it earn its taxes:

Yes, hear your true friend-your only true friend – list to his voice. Disband these societies, hotbeds of vice, of moral decay – perpetuators of ancestral superstition. Here on this board I see water, I see milk, I see the wild and deadly lemonade. These are but steps upon the downward path. Next we shall see tea, then chocolate, then coffee – hotel coffee. A few more years – all too few, I fear – mark my words, we shall have cider! Gentlemen, pause ere it be too late. You are on the broad road which leads to dissipation, physical ruin, moral decay, gory crime and the gallows! I beseech you, I implore you, in the name of your anxious friends, in the name of your suffering families, in the name of your impending widows and orphans, stop ere it be too late. Disband these New England societies, renounce these soul-blistering saturnalia, cease from varnishing the rusty reputations of your long-vanished ancestors – the super-high-moral old iron-clads of Cape Cod, the pious buccaneers of Plymouth Rock – go home, and try to learn to behave!

However, chaff and nonsense aside, I think I honor and appreciate your Pilgrim stock as much as you do yourselves, perhaps; and I endorse and adopt a sentiment uttered by a grandfather of mine once – a man of sturdy opinions, of sincere make of mind, and not given to flattery. He said: “People may talk as they like about that Pilgrim stock, but, after all's said and done, it would be pretty hard to improve on those people; and, as for me, I don't mind coming out flatfooted and saying there ain't any way to improve on them – except having them born in, Missouri!”

Compliments And Degrees

Delivered at the Lotos Club, January 11, 1908

In introducing Mr. Clemens, Frank R. Lawrence, the President of the Lotos Club, recalled the fact that the first club dinner in the present club-house, some fourteen years ago, was in honor of Mark Twain.

I wish to begin this time at the beginning, lest I forget it altogether; that is to say, I wish to thank you for this welcome that you are giving, and the welcome which you gave me seven years ago, and which I forgot to thank you for at that time. I also wish to thank you for the welcome you gave me fourteen years ago, which I also forgot to thank you for at the time.

I hope you will continue this custom to give me a dinner every seven years before I join the hosts in the other world – I do not know which world.

Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Porter have paid me many compliments. It is very difficult to take compliments. I do not care whether you deserve the compliments or not, it is just as difficult to take them. The other night I was at the Engineers' Club, and enjoyed the sufferings of Mr. Carnegie. They were complimenting him there; there it was all compliments, and none of them deserved. They say that you cannot live by bread alone, but I can live on compliments.

I do not make any pretence that I dislike compliments. The stronger the better, and I can manage to digest them. I think I have lost so much by not making a collection of compliments, to put them away and take them out again once in a while. When in England I said that I would start to collect compliments, and I began there and I have brought some of them along.

The first one of these lies – I wrote them down and preserved them – I think they are mighty good and extremely just. It is one of Hamilton Mabie's compliments. He said that La Salle was the first one to make a voyage of the Mississippi, but Mark Twain was the first to chart, light, and navigate it for the whole world.

If that had been published at the time that I issued that book [Life on the Mississippi], it would have been money in my pocket. I tell you, it is a talent by itself to pay compliments gracefully and have them ring true. It's an art by itself.

Here is another compliment by Albert Bigelow Paine, my biographer. He is writing four octavo volumes about me, and he has been at my elbow two and one-half years.

I just suppose that he does not know me, but says he knows me. He says "Mark Twain is not merely a great writer, a great philosopher, a great man; he is the supreme expression of the human being, with his strength and his weakness." What a talent for compression! It takes a genius in compression to compact as many facts as that.

W. D. Howells spoke of me as first of Hartford, and ultimately of the solar system, not to say of the universe:

You know how modest Howells is. If it can be proved that my fame reaches to Neptune and Saturn; that will satisfy even me. You know how modest and retiring Howells seems to be, but deep down he is as vain as I am.

Mr. Howells had been granted a degree at Oxford, whose gown was red. He had been invited to an exercise at Columbia, and upon inquiry had been told that it was usual to wear the black gown: Later he had found that three other men wore bright gowns, and he had lamented that he had been one of the black mass, and not a red torch.

Edison wrote: "The average American loves his family. If he has any love left over for some other person, he generally selects Mark Twain."

Now here's the compliment of a little Montana girl which came to me indirectly. She was in a room in which there was a large photograph of me. After gazing at it steadily for a time, she said:

"We've got a John the Baptist like that." She also said: "Only ours has more trimmings."

I suppose she meant the halo. Now here is a gold-miner's compliment. It is forty-two years old. It was my introduction to an audience to which I lectured in a log school-house. There were no ladies there. I wasn't famous then. They didn't know me. Only the miners were there, with their breeches tucked into their boottops and with clay all over them. They wanted some one to introduce me, and they selected a miner, who protested, saying:

"I don't know anything about this man. Anyhow, I only know two things about him. One is, he has never been in jail, and the other is, I don't know why."

There's one thing I want to say about that English trip. I knew his Majesty the King of England long years ago, and I didn't meet him for the first time then. One thing that I regret was that some newspapers said I talked with the Queen of England with my hat on. I don't do that with any woman. I did not put it on until she asked me to. Then she told me to put it on, and it's a command there. I thought I had carried my American democracy far enough. So I put it on. I have no use for a hat, and never did have.

Who was it who said that the police of London knew me? Why, the police know me everywhere. There never was a day over there when a policeman did not salute me, and then put up his hand and stop the traffic of the world. They treated me as though I were a duchess.

The happiest experience I had in England was at a dinner given in the building of the Punch publication, a humorous paper which is appreciated by all Englishmen. It was the greatest privilege ever allowed a foreigner. I entered the dining-room of the building, where those men get together who have been running the paper for over fifty years. We were about to begin dinner when the toastmaster said: "Just a minute; there ought to be a little ceremony." Then there was that meditating silence for a while, and out of a closet there came a beautiful little girl dressed in pink, holding in her hand a copy of the previous week's paper, which had in it my cartoon. It broke me all up. I could not even say "Thank you." That was the prettiest incident of the dinner, the delight of all that wonderful table. When she was about to go; I said, "My child, you are not going to leave me; I have hardly got acquainted with you." She replied, "You know I've got to go; they never let me come in here before, and they never will again." That is one of the beautiful incidents that I cherish.

[At the conclusion of his speech, and while the diners were still cheering him, Colonel Porter brought forward the red-and-gray gown of the Oxford "doctor," and Mr. Clemens was made to don it. The diners rose to their feet in their enthusiasm. With the mortar-board on his head, and looking down admiringly at himself, Mr. Twain said –]

I like that gown. I always did like red. The redder it is the better I like it. I was born for a savage. Now, whoever saw any red like this? There is no red outside the arteries of an archangel that could compare with this. I know you all envy me. I am going to have luncheon shortly with ladies just ladies. I will be the only lady of my sex present, and I shall put on this gown and make those ladies look dim.

Books, Authors, And Hats

Address at the pilgrims' club luncheon, given in honor of Mr. Clemens at the Savoy hotel, London, June 25, 1907.

Mr. Birrell, M.P., Chief-Secretary for Ireland, in introducing Mr. Clemens said: "We all love Mark Twain, and we are here to tell him so. One more point – all the world knows it, and that is why it is dangerous to omit it – our guest is a distinguished citizen of the Great Republic beyond the seas. In America his 'Huckleberry Finn' and his 'Tom Sawyer' are what 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'Tom Brown's School Days' have been to us. They are racy of the soil. They are books to which it is impossible to place any period of termination. I will not speak of the classics – reminiscences of much evil in our early lives. We do not meet here to-day as critics with our appreciations and depreciations, our twopenny little prefaces or our forewords. I am not going to say what the world a thousand years hence will think of Mark Twain. Posterity will take care of itself, will read what it wants to read, will forget what it chooses to forget, and will pay no attention whatsoever to our critical mumblings and jumbings. Let us therefore be content to say to our friend and guest that we are here speaking for ourselves and for our children, to say what he has been to us. I remember in Liverpool, in 1867, first buying the copy, which I still preserve, of the celebrated 'Jumping Frog.' It had a few words of preface which reminded me then that our guest in those days was called 'the wild humorist of the Pacific slope,' and a few lines later down, 'the moralist of the Main.' That was some forty years ago. Here he is, still the humorist, still the moralist. His humor enlivens and enlightens his morality, and his morality is all the better for his humor. That is one of the reasons why we love him. I am not here to mention any book of his – that is a subject of dispute in my family circle, which is the best and which is the next best – but I must put in a word, lest I should not be true to myself – a terrible thing – for his Joan of Arc, a book of chivalry, of nobility, and of manly sincerity for which I take this opportunity of thanking him. But you can all drink this toast, each one of you with his own intention. You can get into it what meaning you like. Mark Twain is a man whom English and Americans do well to honor. He is the true consolidator of nations. His delightful humor is of the kind which dissipates and destroys national prejudices. His truth and his honor, his love of truth, and his love of honor, overflow all boundaries. He has made the world better by his presence. We rejoice to see him here. Long may he live to reap the plentiful harvest of hearty, honest human affection!"

Pilgrims, I desire first to thank those undergraduates of Oxford. When a man has grown so old as I am, when he has reached the verge of seventy-two years, there is nothing that carries him back to the dreamland of his life, to his boyhood, like recognition of those young hearts up yonder. And so I thank them out of my heart. I desire to thank the Pilgrims of New York also for their kind notice and message which they have cabled over here. Mr. Birrell says he does not know how he got here. But he will be able to get away all right – he has not drunk anything since he came here. I am glad to know about those friends of his, Otway and Chatterton – fresh, new names to me. I am glad of the disposition he has shown to rescue them from the evils of poverty, and if they are still in London, I hope to have a talk with them. For a while I thought he was going to tell us the effect which my book had upon his growing manhood. I thought he was going to tell us how much that effect amounted to, and whether it really made him what he now is, but with the discretion born of Parliamentary

experience he dodged that, and we do not know now whether he read the book or not. He did that very neatly. I could not do it any better myself.

My books have had effects, and very good ones, too, here and there, and some others not so good. There is no doubt about that. But I remember one monumental instance of it years and years ago. Professor Norton, of Harvard, was over here, and when he came back to Boston I went out with Howells to call on him. Norton was allied in some way by marriage with Darwin.

Mr. Norton was very gentle in what he had to say, and almost delicate, and he said: "Mr. Clemens, I have been spending some time with Mr. Darwin in England, and I should like to tell you something connected with that visit. You were the object of it, and I myself would have been very proud of it, but you may not be proud of it. At any rate, I am going to tell you what it was, and to leave to you to regard it as you please. Mr. Darwin took me up to his bedroom and pointed out certain things there—pitcher-plants, and so on, that he was measuring and watching from day to day—and he said: 'The chambermaid is permitted to do what she pleases in this room, but she must never touch those plants and never touch those books on that table by that candle. With those books I read myself to sleep every night.' Those were your own books." I said: "There is no question to my mind as to whether I should regard that as a compliment or not. I do regard it as a very great compliment and a very high honor that that great mind, laboring for the whole human race, should rest itself on my books. I am proud that he should read himself to sleep with them."

Now, I could not keep that to myself—I was so proud of it. As soon as I got home to Hartford I called up my oldest friend—and dearest enemy on occasion—the Rev. Joseph Twichell, my pastor, and I told him about that, and, of course, he was full of interest and venom. Those people who get no compliments like that feel like that. He went off. He did not issue any applause of any kind, and I did not hear of that subject for some time. But when Mr. Darwin passed away from this life, and some time after Darwin's *Life and Letters* came out, the Rev. Mr. Twichell procured an early copy of that work and found something in it which he considered applied to me. He came over to my house—it was snowing, raining, sleeting, but that did not make any difference to Twichell. He produced the book, and turned over and over, until he came to a certain place, when he said: "Here, look at this letter from Mr. Darwin to Sir Joseph Hooker." What Mr. Darwin said—I give you the idea and not the very words—was this: I do not know whether I ought to have devoted my whole life to these drudgeries in natural history and the other sciences or not, for while I may have gained in one way I have lost in another. Once I had a fine perception and appreciation of high literature, but in me that quality is atrophied. "That was the reason," said Mr. Twichell, "he was reading your books."

Mr. Birrell has touched lightly—very lightly, but in not an uncomplimentary way—on my position in this world as a moralist. I am glad to have that recognition, too, because I have suffered since I have been in this town; in the first place, right away, when I came here, from a newsman going around with a great red, highly displayed placard in the place of an apron. He was selling newspapers, and there were two sentences on that placard which would have been all right if they had been punctuated; but they ran those two sentences together without a comma or anything, and that would naturally create a wrong impression, because it said, "Mark Twain arrives Ascot Cup stolen." No doubt many a person was misled by those sentences joined together in that unkind way. I have no doubt my character has suffered from it. I suppose I ought to defend my character, but how can I defend it? I can say here and now—and anybody can see by my face that I am sincere, that I speak the truth—that I have never seen that Cup. I have not got the Cup—I did not have a chance to get it. I have always had a good character in that way. I have hardly ever stolen anything, and if I did steal anything I had discretion enough to know about the value of it first. I do not steal things that are likely to get myself into trouble. I do not think any of us do that. I know we all take things—that is to be expected—but really, I have never taken anything, certainly in England, that amounts to any great thing. I do confess that when I was here seven years ago I stole a hat, but that did not amount to anything. It was not a good hat, and was only a clergyman's hat, anyway.

I was at a luncheon party, and Archdeacon Wilberforce was there also. I dare say he is Archdeacon now – he was a canon then – and he was serving in the Westminster battery, if that is the proper term – I do not know, as you mix military and ecclesiastical things together so much. He left the luncheon table before I did. He began this. I did steal his hat, but he began by taking mine. I make that interjection because I would not accuse Archdeacon Wilberforce of stealing my hat – I should not think of it. I confine that phrase to myself. He merely took my hat. And with good judgment, too – it was a better hat than his. He came out before the luncheon was over, and sorted the hats in the hall, and selected one which suited. It happened to be mine. He went off with it. When I came out by-and-by there was no hat there which would go on my head except his, which was left behind. My head was not the customary size just at that time. I had been receiving a good many very nice and complimentary attentions, and my head was a couple of sizes larger than usual, and his hat just suited me. The bumps and corners were all right intellectually. There were results pleasing to me – possibly so to him. He found out whose hat it was, and wrote me saying it was pleasant that all the way home, whenever he met anybody his gravities, his solemnities, his deep thoughts, his eloquent remarks were all snatched up by the people he met, and mistaken for brilliant humorisms.

I had another experience. It was not displeasing. I was received with a deference which was entirely foreign to my experience by everybody whom I met, so that before I got home I had a much higher opinion of myself than I have ever had before or since. And there is in that very connection an incident which I remember at that old date which is rather melancholy to me, because it shows how a person can deteriorate in a mere seven years. It is seven years ago. I have not that hat now. I was going down Pall-Mall, or some other of your big streets, and I recognized that that hat needed ironing. I went into a big shop and passed in my hat, and asked that it might be ironed. They were courteous, very courteous, even courtly. They brought that hat back to me presently very sleek and nice, and I asked how much there was to pay. They replied that they did not charge the clergy anything. I have cherished the delight of that moment from that day to this. It was the first thing I did the other day to go and hunt up that shop and hand in my hat to have it ironed. I said when it came back, “How much to pay?” They said, “Ninepence.” In seven years I have acquired all that worldliness, and I am sorry to be back where I was seven years ago.

But now I am chaffing and chaffing and chaffing here, and I hope you will forgive me for that; but when a man stands on the verge of seventy-two you know perfectly well that he never reached that place without knowing what this life is heart-breaking bereavement. And so our reverence is for our dead. We do not forget them; but our duty is toward the living; and if we can be cheerful, cheerful in spirit, cheerful in speech and in hope, that is a benefit to those who are around us.

My own history includes an incident which will always connect me with England in a pathetic way, for when I arrived here seven years ago with my wife and my daughter – we had gone around the globe lecturing to raise money to clear off a debt – my wife and one of my daughters started across the ocean to bring to England our eldest daughter. She was twenty four years of age and in the bloom of young womanhood, and we were unsuspecting. When my wife and daughter – and my wife has passed from this life since – when they had reached mid Atlantic, a cablegram – one of those heartbreaking cablegrams which we all in our days have to experience – was put into my hand. It stated that that daughter of ours had gone to her long sleep. And so, as I say, I cannot always be cheerful, and I cannot always be chaffing; I must sometimes lay the cap and bells aside, and recognize that I am of the human race like the rest, and must have my cares and griefs. And therefore I noticed what Mr. Birrell said – I was so glad to hear him say it – something that was in the nature of these verses here at the top of this:

“He lit our life with shafts of sun
And vanquished pain.
Thus two great nations stand as one

In honoring Twain.”

I am very glad to have those verses. I am very glad and very grateful for what Mr. Birrell said in that connection. I have received since I have been here, in this one week, hundreds of letters from all conditions of people in England – men, women, and children – and there is in them compliment, praise, and, above all and better than all, there is in them a note of affection. Praise is well, compliment is well, but affection – that is the last and final and most precious reward that any man can win, whether by character or achievement, and I am very grateful to have that reward. All these letters make me feel that here in England – as in America – when I stand under the English flag, I am not a stranger. I am not an alien, but at home.

Dedication Speech

At the dedication of the college of the city of New York, may 16, 1908 Mr. Clemens wore his gown as Doctor of Laws, Oxford University. Ambassador Bryce and Mr. Choate had made the formal addresses.

How difficult, indeed, is the higher education. Mr. Choate needs a little of it. He is not only short as a statistician of New York, but he is off, far off, in his mathematics. The four thousand citizens of Greater New York, indeed!

But I don't think it was wise or judicious on the part of Mr. Choate to show this higher education he has obtained. He sat in the lap of that great education (I was there at the time), and see the result – the lamentable result. Maybe if he had had a sandwich here to sustain him the result would not have been so serious.

For seventy-two years I have been striving to acquire that higher education which stands for modesty and diffidence, and it doesn't work.

And then look at Ambassador Bryce, who referred to his alma mater, Oxford. He might just as well have included me. Well, I am a later production.

If I am the latest graduate, I really and sincerely hope I am not the final flower of its seven centuries; I hope it may go on for seven ages longer.

The Horrors Of The German Language

Address to the Vienna press club, November 21, 1897, delivered in German [A literal translation]

It has me deeply touched, my gentlemen, here so hospitably received to be. From colleagues out of my own profession, in this from my own home so far distant land. My heart is full of gratitude, but my poverty of German words forces me to greater economy of expression. Excuse you, my gentlemen, that I read off, what I you say will. [But he didn't read].

The German language speak I not good, but have numerous connoisseurs me assured that I her write like an angel. Maybe – maybe – I know not. Have till now no acquaintance with the angels had. That comes later – when it the dear God please – it has no hurry.

Since long, my gentlemen, have I the passionate longing nursed a speech on German to hold, but one has me not permitted. Men, who no feeling for the art had, laid me ever hindrance in the way and made naught my desire – sometimes by excuses, often by force. Always said these men to me: “Keep you still, your Highness! Silence! For God’s sake seek another way and means yourself obnoxious to make.”

In the present case, as usual it is me difficult become, for me the permission to obtain. The committee sorrowed deeply, but could me the permission not grant on account of a law which from the Concordia demands she shall the German language protect. Du liebe *Zeit*! How so had one to me this say could – might – dared – should? I am indeed the truest friend of the German language – and not only now, but from long since – yes, before twenty years already. And never have I the desire had the noble language to hurt; to the contrary, only wished she to improve – I would her only reform. It is the dream of my life been. I have already visits by the various German governments paid and for contracts prayed. I am now to Austria in the same task come. I would only some changes effect. I would only the language method – the luxurious, elaborate construction compress, the eternal parenthesis suppress, do away with, annihilate; the introduction of more than thirteen subjects in one sentence forbid; the verb so far to the front pull that one it without a telescope discover can. With one word, my gentlemen, I would your beloved language simplify so that, my gentlemen, when you her for prayer need, One her yonder-up understands.

I beseech you, from me yourself counsel to let, execute these mentioned reforms. Then will you an elegant language possess, and afterward, when you some thing say will, will you at least yourself understand what you said had. But often nowadays, when you a mile-long sentence from you given and you yourself somewhat have rested, then must you have a touching inquisitiveness have yourself to determine what you actually spoken have. Before several days has the correspondent of a local paper a sentence constructed which hundred and twelve words contain, and therein were seven parentheses smuggled in, and the subject seven times changed. Think you only, my gentlemen, in the course of the voyage of a single sentence must the poor, persecuted, fatigued subject seven times change position!

Now, when we the mentioned reforms execute, will it no longer so bad be. *Doch noch eins*. I might gladly the separable verb also a little bit reform. I might none do let what Schiller did: he has the whole history of the Thirty Years’ War between the two members of a separable verb in-pushed. That has even Germany itself aroused, and one has Schiller the permission refused the History of the Hundred Years’ War to compose – God be it thanked! After all these reforms established be will, will the German language the noblest and the prettiest on the world be.

Since to you now, my gentlemen, the character of my mission known is, beseech I you so friendly to be and to me your valuable help grant. Mr. Potzl has the public believed make would that I to Vienna come am in order the bridges to clog up and the traffic to hinder, while I observations gather and note. Allow you yourselves but not from him deceived. My frequent presence on the bridges has an entirely innocent ground. Yonder gives it the necessary space, yonder can one a noble long German sentence elaborate, the bridge-railing along, and his whole contents with one glance

overlook. On the one end of the railing pasted I the first member of a separable verb and the final member cleave I to the other end – then spread the body of the sentence between it out! Usually are for my purposes the bridges of the city long enough; when I but Potzl's writings study will I ride out and use the glorious endless imperial bridge. But this is a calumny; Potzl writes the prettiest German. Perhaps not so pliable as the mine, but in many details much better. Excuse you *these flatteries*. These are well deserved.

Now I my speech execute – no, I would say I bring her to the close. I am a foreigner – but here, under you, have I it entirely forgotten. And so again and yet again proffer I you my heartiest thanks.

German For The Hungarians

Address at the Jubilee celebration of the emancipation of the Hungarian press, march 26, 1899

The Ministry and members of Parliament were present. The subject was the "Ausgleich"—i. e., the arrangement for the apportionment of the taxes between Hungary and Austria. Paragraph 14 of the ausgleich fixes the proportion each country must pay to the support of the army. It is the paragraph which caused the trouble and prevented its renewal.

Now that we are all here together, I think it will be a good idea to arrange the ausgleich. If you will act for Hungary I shall be quite willing to act for Austria, and this is the very time for it. There couldn't be a better, for we are all feeling friendly, fair-minded, and hospitable now, and, full of admiration for each other, full of confidence in each other, full of the spirit of welcome, full of the grace of forgiveness, and the disposition to let bygones be bygones.

Let us not waste this golden, this beneficent, this providential opportunity. I am willing to make any concession you want, just so we get it settled. I am not only willing to let grain come in free, I am willing to pay the freight on it, and you may send delegates to the Reichsrath if you like. All I require is that they shall be quiet, peaceable people like your own deputies, and not disturb our proceedings.

If you want the Gegenseitigengeldbeitragendenverhältnismassigkeiten rearranged and readjusted I am ready for that. I will let you off at twenty-eight per cent. – twenty-seven – even twenty-five if you insist, for there is nothing illiberal about me when I am out on a diplomatic debauch.

Now, in return for these concessions, I am willing to take anything in reason, and I think we may consider the business settled and the ausgleich ausgegloschen at last for ten solid years, and we will sign the papers in blank, and do it here and now.

Well, I am unspeakably glad to have that ausgleich off my hands. It has kept me awake nights for anderthalbjahr.

But I never could settle it before, because always when I called at the Foreign Office in Vienna to talk about it, there wasn't anybody at home, and that is not a place where you can go in and see for yourself whether it is a mistake or not, because the person who takes care of the front door there is of a size that discourages liberty of action and the free spirit of investigation. To think the ausgleich is *abgemacht* at last! It is a grand and beautiful consummation, and I am glad I came.

The way I feel now I do honestly believe I would rather be just my own humble self at this moment than paragraph 14.

A New German Word

To aid a local charity Mr. Clemens appeared before a fashionable audience in Vienna, March 10, 1899, reading his sketch "The Lucerne Girl," and describing how he had been interviewed and ridiculed. He said in part:

I have not sufficiently mastered German, to allow my using it with impunity. My collection of fourteen-syllable German words is still incomplete. But I have just added to that collection a jewel – a veritable jewel. I found it in a telegram from Linz, and it contains ninety-five letters:

Personaleinkommensteuerschatzungskommissionsmitgliedsreisekostenrechnungs
erganzungsrevisionsfund

If I could get a similar word engraved upon my tombstone I should sleep beneath it in peace.

Unconscious Plagiarism

Delivered at the dinner given by the publishers of "The Atlantic monthly" To Oliver Wendell Holmes, in honor of his Seventieth birthday, August 29, 1879

I would have travelled a much greater distance than I have come to witness the paying of honors to Doctor Holmes; for my feeling toward him has always been one of peculiar warmth. When one receives a letter from a great man for the first time in his life, it is a large event to him, as all of you know by your own experience. You never can receive letters enough from famous men afterward to obliterate that one, or dim the memory of the pleasant surprise it was, and the gratification it gave you. Lapse of time cannot make it commonplace or cheap.

Well, the first great man who ever wrote me a letter was our guest – Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was also the first great literary man I ever stole anything from – and that is how I came to write to him and he to me. When my first book was new, a friend of mine said to me, "The dedication is very neat." Yes, I said, I thought it was. My friend said, "I always admired it, even before I saw it in *The Innocents Abroad*." I naturally said: "What do you mean? Where did you ever see it before?" "Well, I saw it first some years ago as Doctor Holmes's dedication to his *Songs in Many Keys*." Of course, my first impulse was to prepare this man's remains for burial, but upon reflection I said I would reprieve him for a moment or two and give him a chance to prove his assertion if he could: We stepped into a book-store, and he did prove it. I had really stolen that dedication, almost word for word. I could not imagine how this curious thing had happened; for I knew one thing – that a certain amount of pride always goes along with a teaspoonful of brains, and that this pride protects a man from deliberately stealing other people's ideas. That is what a teaspoonful of brains will do for a man – and admirers had often told me I had nearly a basketful – though they were rather reserved as to the size of the basket.

However, I thought the thing out, and solved the mystery. Two years before, I had been laid up a couple of weeks in the Sandwich Islands, and had read and re-read Doctor Holmes's poems till my mental reservoir was filled up with them to the brim. The dedication lay on the top, and handy, so, by-and-by, I unconsciously stole it. Perhaps I unconsciously stole the rest of the volume, too, for many people have told me that my book was pretty poetical, in one way or another. Well, of course, I wrote Doctor Holmes and told him I hadn't meant to steal, and he wrote back and said in the kindest way that it was all right and no harm done; and added that he believed we all unconsciously worked over ideas gathered in reading and hearing, imagining they were original with ourselves. He stated a truth, and did it in such a pleasant way, and salved over my sore spot so gently and so healingly, that I was rather glad I had committed the crime, far the sake of the letter. I afterward called on him and told him to make perfectly free with any ideas of mine that struck him as being good protoplasm for poetry. He could see by that that there wasn't anything mean about me; so we got along right from the start. I have not met Doctor Holmes many times since; and lately he said – However, I am wandering wildly away from the one thing which I got on my feet to do; that is, to make my compliments to you, my fellow-teachers of the great public, and likewise to say that I am right glad to see that Doctor Holmes is still in his prime and full of generous life; and as age is not determined by years, but by trouble and infirmities of mind and body, I hope it may be a very long time yet before any one can truthfully say, "He is growing old."

The Weather

*Address at the new England society's seventy first annual dinner, New York city
The next toast was: "The Oldest Inhabitant-The Weather of New England."*

“Who can lose it and forget it?
Who can have it and regret it?
Be interposer 'twixt us Twain.”

– Merchant of Venice.

I reverently believe that the Maker who made us all makes everything in New England but the weather. I don't know who makes that, but I think it must be raw apprentices in the weather-clerk's factory who experiment and learn how, in New England, for board and clothes, and then are promoted to make weather for countries that require a good article, and will take their custom elsewhere if they don't get it. There is a sumptuous variety about the New England weather that compels the stranger's admiration – and regret. The weather is always doing something there; always attending strictly to business; always getting up new designs and trying them on the people to see how they will go. But it gets through more business in spring than in any other season. In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four-and-twenty hours. It was I that made the fame and fortune of that man that had that marvellous collection of weather on exhibition at the Centennial, that so astounded the foreigners. He was going to travel all over the world and get specimens from all the climes. I said, “Don't you do it; you come to New England on a favorable spring day.” I told him what we could do in the way of style, variety, and quantity. Well, he came and he made his collection in four days. As to variety, why, he confessed that he got hundreds of kinds of weather that he had never heard of before. And as to quantity well, after he had picked out and discarded all that was blemished in any way, he not only had weather enough, but weather to spare; weather to hire out; weather to sell; to deposit; weather to invest; weather to give to the poor. The people of New England are by nature patient and forbearing, but there are some things which they will not stand. Every year they kill a lot of poets for writing about “Beautiful Spring.” These are generally casual visitors, who bring their notions of spring from somewhere else, and cannot, of course, know how the natives feel about spring. And so the first thing they know the opportunity to inquire how they feel has permanently gone by. Old Probabilities has a mighty reputation for accurate prophecy, and thoroughly well deserves it. You take up the paper and observe how crisply and confidently he checks off what to-day's weather is going to be on the Pacific, down South, in the Middle States, in the Wisconsin region. See him sail along in the joy and pride of his power till he gets to New England, and then see his tail drop. He doesn't know what the weather is going to be in New England. Well, he mulls over it, and by and-by he gets out something about like this: Probably northeast to southwest winds, varying to the southward and westward and eastward, and points between, high and low barometer swapping around from place to place; probable areas of rain, snow, hail, and drought, succeeded or preceded by earthquakes, with thunder and lightning. Then he jots down his postscript from his wandering mind, to cover accidents. “But it is possible that the programme may be wholly changed in the mean time.” Yes, one of the brightest gems in the New England weather is the dazzling uncertainty of it. There is only one thing certain about it: you are certain there is going to be plenty of it – a perfect grand review; but you never can tell which end of the procession is going to move first. You fix up for the drought; you leave your umbrella in the house and sally out, and two to one you get drowned. You make up your mind that the earthquake is due; you stand from under, and take hold of something to steady yourself, and the first thing you know you get struck by lightning. These are great disappointments; but they can't be helped. The lightning there is peculiar; it is so

convincing, that when it strikes a thing it doesn't leave enough of that thing behind for you to tell whether – Well, you'd think it was something valuable, and a Congressman had been there. And the thunder. When the thunder begins to merely tune up and scrape and saw, and key up the instruments for the performance, strangers say, "Why, what awful thunder you have here!" But when the baton is raised and the real concert begins, you'll find that stranger down in the cellar with his head in the ash-barrel. Now as to the size of the weather in New England – lengthways, I mean. It is utterly disproportioned to the size of that little country. Half the time, when it is packed as full as it can stick, you will see that New England weather sticking out beyond the edges and projecting around hundreds and hundreds of miles over the neighboring States. She can't hold a tenth part of her weather. You can see cracks all about where she has strained herself trying to do it. I could speak volumes about the inhuman perversity of the New England weather, but I will give but a single specimen. I like to hear rain on a tin roof. So I covered part of my roof with tin, with an eye to that luxury. Well, sir, do you think it ever rains on that tin? No, sir; skips it every time. Mind, in this speech I have been trying merely to do honor to the New England weather – no language could do it justice. But, after all, there is at least one or two things about that weather (or, if you please, effects produced by it) which we residents would not like to part with. If we hadn't our bewitching autumn foliage, we should still have to credit the weather with one feature which compensates for all its bullying vagaries – the ice-storm: when a leafless tree is clothed with ice from the bottom to the top – ice that is as bright and clear as crystal; when every bough and twig is strung with ice-beads, frozen dew-drops, and the whole tree sparkles cold and white, like the Shah of Persia's diamond plume. Then the wind waves the branches and the sun comes out and turns all those myriads of beads and drops to prisms that glow and burn and flash with all manner of colored fires, which change and change again with inconceivable rapidity from blue to red, from red to green, and green to gold – the tree becomes a spraying fountain, a very explosion of dazzling jewels; and it stands there the acme, the climax, the supremest possibility in art or nature, of bewildering, intoxicating, intolerable magnificence. One cannot make the words too strong.

The Babies

Delivered at the banquet, in Chicago, given by the army of the Tennessee to their first commander, general U. S. Grant, November, 1879

The fifteenth regular toast was "The Babies. – As they comfort us in our sorrows, let us not forget them in our festivities."

I like that. We have not all had the good fortune to be ladies. We have not all been generals, or poets, or statesmen; but when the toast works down to the babies, we stand on common ground. It is a shame that for a thousand years the world's banquets have utterly ignored the baby, as if he didn't amount to anything. If you will stop and think a minute – if you will go back fifty or one hundred years to your early married life and recontemplate your first baby – you will remember that he amounted to a good deal, and even something over. You soldiers all know that when that little fellow arrived at family headquarters you had to hand in your resignation. He took entire command. You became his lackey, his mere body-servant, and you had to stand around too. He was not a commander who made allowances for time, distance, weather, or anything else. You had to execute his order whether it was possible or not. And there was only one form of marching in his manual of tactics, and that was the double-quick. He treated you with every sort of insolence and disrespect, and the bravest of you didn't dare to say a word. You could face the death-storm at Donelson and Vicksburg, and give back blow for blow; but when he clawed your whiskers, and pulled your hair, and twisted your nose, you had to take it. When the thunders of war were sounding in your ears you set your faces toward the batteries, and advanced with steady tread; but when he turned on the terrors of his war whoop you advanced in the other direction, and mighty glad of the chance, too. When he called for soothing-syrup, did you venture to throw out any side-remarks about certain services being unbecoming an officer and a gentleman? No. You got up and got it. When he ordered his pap bottle and it was not warm, did you talk back? Not you. You went to work and warmed it. You even descended so far in your menial office as to take a suck at that warm, insipid stuff yourself, to see if it was right – three parts water to one of milk, a touch of sugar to modify the colic, and a drop of peppermint to kill those immortal hiccoughs. I can taste that stuff yet. And how many things you learned as you went along! Sentimental young folks still take stock in that beautiful old saying that when the baby smiles in his sleep, it is because the angels are whispering to him. Very pretty, but too thin – simply wind on the stomach, my friends. If the baby proposed to take a walk at his usual hour, two o'clock in the morning, didn't you rise up promptly and remark, with a mental addition which would not improve a Sunday-school book much, that that was the very thing you were about to propose yourself? Oh! you were under good discipline, and as you went fluttering up and down the room in your undress uniform, you not only prattled undignified baby-talk, but even tuned up your martial voices and tried to sing! – Rock a-by Baby in the Tree-top, for instance. What a spectacle for an Army of the Tennessee! And what an affliction for the neighbors, too; for it is not everybody within, a mile around that likes military music at three in the morning. And, when you had been keeping this sort of thing up two or three hours, and your little velvet head intimated that nothing suited him like exercise and noise, what did you do? You simply went on until you dropped in the last ditch. The idea that a baby doesn't amount to anything! Why, one baby is just a house and a front yard full by itself. One baby can, furnish more business than you and your whole Interior Department can attend to. He is enterprising, irrepressible, brimful of lawless activities. Do what you please, you can't make him stay on the reservation. Sufficient unto the day is one baby. As long as you are in your right mind don't you ever pray for twins. Twins amount to a permanent riot. And there ain't any real difference between triplets and an insurrection.

Yes, it was high time for a toast-master to recognize the importance of the babies. Think what is in store for the present crop! Fifty years from now we shall all be dead, I trust, and then this flag, if it still survive (and let us hope it may), will be floating over a Republic numbering 200,000,000

souls, according to the settled laws of our increase. Our present schooner of State will have grown into a political leviathan – a Great Eastern. The cradled babies of to-day will be on deck. Let them be well trained, for we are going to leave a big contract on their hands. Among the three or four million cradles now rocking in the land are some which this nation would preserve for ages as sacred things, if we could know which ones they are. In one of these cradles the unconscious Farragut of the future is at this moment teething think of it! and putting in a world of dead earnest, unarticulated, but perfectly justifiable profanity over it, too. In another the future renowned astronomer is blinking at the shining Milky Way with but a languid interest poor little chap! – and wondering what has become of that other one they call the wet-nurse. In another the future great historian is lying – and doubtless will continue to lie until his earthly mission is ended. In another the future President is busying himself with no profounder problem of state than what the mischief has become of his hair so early; and in a mighty array of other cradles there are now some 60,000 future office-seekers, getting ready to furnish him occasion to grapple with that same old problem a second, time. And in still one more cradle, some where under the flag, the future illustrious commander-in-chief of the American armies is so little burdened with his approaching *grandeurs* and responsibilities as to be giving his whole strategic mind at this moment to trying to find out some way to get his big toe into his mouth – an achievement which, meaning no disrespect, the illustrious guest of this evening turned his entire attention to some fifty-six years ago; and if the child is but a prophecy of the man, there are mighty few who will doubt that he succeeded.

Our Children And Great Discoveries

Delivered at the authors' club, New York

Our children – yours – and – mine. They seem like little things to talk about – our children, but little things often make up the sum of human life – that's a good sentence. I repeat it, little things often produce great things. Now, to illustrate, take Sir Isaac Newton – I presume some of you have heard of Mr. Newton. Well, once when Sir Isaac Newton – a mere lad – got over into the man's apple orchard – I don't know what he was doing there – I didn't come all the way from Hartford to q-u-e-s-t-i-o-n Mr. Newton's honesty – but when he was there – in the main orchard – he saw an apple fall and he was a-t-t-racted toward it, and that led to the discovery – not of Mr. Newton but of the great law of attraction and gravitation.

And there was once another great discoverer – I've forgotten his name, and I don't remember what he discovered, but I know it was something very important, and I hope you will all tell your children about it when you get home. Well, when the great discoverer was once loafn' around down in Virginia, and a-puttin' in his time flirting with Pocahontas – oh! Captain John Smith, that was the man's name – and while he and Poca were sitting in Mr. Powhatan's garden, he accidentally put his arm around her and picked something simple weed, which proved to be tobacco – and now we find it in every Christian family, shedding its civilizing influence broadcast throughout the whole religious community.

Now there was another great man, I can't think of his name either, who used to loaf around and watch the great chandelier in the cathedral at Pisa., which set him to thinking about the great law of gunpowder, and eventually led to the discovery of the cotton-gin.

Now, I don't say this as an inducement for our young men to loaf around like Mr. Newton and Mr. Galileo and Captain Smith, but they were once little babies two days old, and they show what little things have sometimes accomplished.

Educating Theatre-Goers

The children of the Educational Alliance gave a performance of "The Prince and the Pauper" on the afternoon of April 14, 1907, in the theatre of the Alliance Building in East Broadway. The audience was composed of nearly one thousand children of the neighborhood. Mr. Clemens, Mr. Howells, and Mr. Daniel Frohman were among the invited guests.

I have not enjoyed a play so much, so heartily, and so thoroughly since I played Miles Hendon twenty-two years ago. I used to play in this piece ("The Prince and the Pauper") with my children, who, twenty-two years ago, were little youngsters. One of my daughters was the Prince, and a neighbor's daughter was the Pauper, and the children of other neighbors played other parts. But we never gave such a performance as we have seen here to-day. It would have been beyond us.

My late wife was the dramatist and stage-manager. Our coachman was the stage-manager, second in command. We used to play it in this simple way, and the one who used to bring in the crown on a cushion – he was a little fellow then – is now a clergyman way up high – six or seven feet high – and growing higher all the time. We played it well, but not as well as you see it here, for you see it done by practically trained professionals.

I was especially interested in the scene which we have just had, for Miles Hendon was my part. I did it as well as a person could who never remembered his part. The children all knew their parts. They did not mind if I did not know mine. I could thread a needle nearly as well as the player did whom you saw to-day. The words of my part I could supply on the spot. The words of the song that Miles Hendon sang here I did not catch. But I was great in that song.

[Then Mr. Clemens hummed a bit of doggerel that the reporter made out as this:

"There was a woman in her town,
She loved her husband well,
But another man just twice as well."

"How is that?" demanded Mr. Clemens. Then resuming]

It was so fresh and enjoyable to make up a new set of words each time that I played the part.

If I had a thousand citizens in front of me, I would like to give them information, but you children already know all that I have found out about the Educational Alliance. It's like a man living within thirty miles of Vesuvius and never knowing about a volcano. It's like living for a lifetime in Buffalo, eighteen miles from Niagara, and never going to see the Falls. So I had lived in New York and knew nothing about the Educational Alliance.

This theatre is a part of the work, and furnishes pure and clean plays. This theatre is an influence. Everything in the world is accomplished by influences which train and educate. When you get to be seventy-one and a half, as I am, you may think that your education is over, but it isn't.

If we had forty theatres of this kind in this city of four millions, how they would educate and elevate! We should have a body of educated theatre-goers.

It would make better citizens, honest citizens. One of the best gifts a millionaire could make would be a theatre here and a theatre there. It would make of you a real Republic, and bring about an educational level.

The Educational Theatre

On November 19, 1907, Mr. Clemens entertained a party of six or seven hundred of his friends, inviting them to witness the representation of "The Prince and the Pauper," flayed by boys and girls of the East Side at the Children's Educational Theatre, New York.

Just a word or two to let you know how deeply I appreciate the honor which the children who are the actors and frequenters of this cozy playhouse have conferred upon me. They have asked me to be their ambassador to invite the hearts and brains of New York to come down here and see the work they are doing. I consider it a grand distinction to be chosen as their intermediary. Between the children and myself there is an indissoluble bond of friendship.

I am proud of this theatre and this performance – proud, because I am naturally vain – vain of myself and proud of the children.

I wish we could reach more children at one time. I am glad to see that the children of the East Side have turned their backs on the Bowery theatres to come to see the pure entertainments presented here.

This Children's Theatre is a great educational institution. I hope the time will come when it will be part of every public school in the land. I may be pardoned in being vain. I was born vain, I guess. [At this point the stage-manager's whistle interrupted Mr. Clemens.] That settles it; there's my cue to stop. I was to talk until the whistle blew, but it blew before I got started. It takes me longer to get started than most people. I guess I was born at slow speed. My time is up, and if you'll keep quiet for two minutes I'll tell you something about Miss Herts, the woman who conceived this splendid idea. She is the originator and the creator of this theatre. Educationally, this institution coins the gold of young hearts into external good.

[On April 23, 1908, he spoke again at the same place]

I will be strictly honest with you; I am only fit to be honorary president. It is not to be expected that I should be useful as a real president. But when it comes to things ornamental I, of course, have no objection. There is, of course, no competition. I take it as a very real compliment because there are thousands of children who have had a part in this request. It is promotion in truth.

It is a thing worth doing that is done here. You have seen the children play. You saw how little Sally reformed her burglar. She could reform any burglar. She could reform me. This is the only school in which can be taught the highest and most difficult lessons – morals. In other schools the way of teaching morals is revolting. Here the children who come in thousands live through each part.

They are terribly anxious for the villain to get his bullet, and that I take to be a humane and proper sentiment. They spend freely the ten cents that is not saved without a struggle. It comes out of the candy money, and the money that goes for chewing-gum and other necessities of life. They make the sacrifice freely. This is the only school which they are sorry to leave.

Poets As Policemen

Mr. Clemens was one of the speakers at the Lotos Club dinner to Governor Odell, March 24, 1900. The police problem was referred to at length.

Let us abolish policemen who carry clubs and revolvers, and put in a squad of poets armed to the teeth with poems on Spring and Love. I would be very glad to serve as commissioner, not because I think I am especially qualified, but because I am too tired to work and would like to take a rest.

Howells would go well as my deputy. He is tired too, and needs a rest badly.

I would start in at once to elevate, purify, and depopulate the red-light district. I would assign the most soulful poets to that district, all heavily armed with their poems. Take Chauncey Depew as a sample. I would station them on the corners after they had rounded up all the depraved people of the district so they could not escape, and then have them read from their poems to the poor unfortunates. The plan would be very effective in causing an emigration of the depraved element.

Pudd'nhead Wilson Dramatized

When Mr. Clemens arrived from Europe in 1895 one of the first things he did was to see the dramatization of Pudd'nhead Wilson. The audience becoming aware of the fact that Mr. Clemens was in the house called upon him for a speech.

Never in my life have I been able to make a speech without preparation, and I assure you that this position in which I find myself is one totally unexpected.

I have been hemmed in all day by William Dean Howells and other frivolous persons, and I have been talking about everything in the world except that of which speeches are constructed. Then, too, seven days on the water is not conducive to speech-making. I will only say that I congratulate Mr. Mayhew; he has certainly made a delightful play out of my rubbish. His is a charming gift. Confidentially I have always had an idea that I was well equipped to write plays, but I have never encountered a manager who has agreed with me.

Daly Theatre

Address at A dinner after the one hundredth performance of "The taming of the shrew."

Mr. Clemens made the following speech, which he incorporated afterward in Following the Equator.

I am glad to be here. This is the hardest theatre in New York to get into, even at the front door. I never, got in without hard work. I am glad we have got so far in at last. Two or three years ago I had an appointment to meet Mr. Daly on the stage of this theatre at eight o'clock in the evening. Well, I got on a train at Hartford to come to New York and keep the appointment. All I had to do was to come to the back door of the theatre on Sixth Avenue. I did not believe that; I did not believe it could be on Sixth Avenue, but that is what Daly's note said – come to that door, walk right in, and keep the appointment. It looked very easy. It looked easy enough, but I had not much confidence in the Sixth Avenue door.

Well, I was kind of bored on the train, and I bought some newspapers – New Haven newspapers – and there was not much news in them, so I read the advertisements. There was one advertisement of a bench-show. I had heard of bench-shows, and I often wondered what there was about them to interest people. I had seen bench-shows – lectured to bench-shows, in fact – but I didn't want to advertise them or to brag about them. Well, I read on a little, and learned that a bench-show was not a bench-show – but dogs, not benches at all – only dogs. I began to be interested, and as there was nothing else to do I read every bit of the advertisement, and learned that the biggest thing in this show was a St. Bernard dog that weighed one hundred and forty-five pounds. Before I got to New York I was so interested in the bench-shows that I made up my mind to go to one the first chance I got. Down on Sixth Avenue, near where that back door might be, I began to take things leisurely. I did not like to be in too much of a hurry. There was not anything in sight that looked like a back door. The nearest approach to it was a cigar store. So I went in and bought a cigar, not too expensive, but it cost enough to pay for any information I might get and leave the dealer a fair profit. Well, I did not like to be too abrupt, to make the man think me crazy, by asking him if that was the way to Daly's Theatre, so I started gradually to lead up to the subject, asking him first if that was the way to Castle Garden. When I got to the real question, and he said he would show me the way, I was astonished. He sent me through a long hallway, and I found myself in a back yard. Then I went through a long passageway and into a little room, and there before my eyes was a big St. Bernard dog lying on a bench. There was another door beyond and I went there, and was met by a big, fierce man with a fur cap on and coat off, who remarked, "Phwat do yez want?" I told him I wanted to see Mr. Daly. "Yez can't see Mr. Daly this time of night," he responded. I urged that I had an appointment with Mr. Daly, and gave him my card, which did not seem to impress him much. "Yez can't get in and yez can't shmoke here. Throw away that cigar. If yez want to see Mr. Daly, yez 'll have to be after going to the front door and buy a ticket, and then if yez have luck and he's around that way yez may see him." I was getting discouraged, but I had one resource left that had been of good service in similar emergencies. Firmly but kindly I told him my name was Mark Twain, and I awaited results. There was none. He was not fazed a bit. "Phwere's your order to see Mr. Daly?" he asked. I handed him the note, and he examined it intently. "My friend," I remarked, "you can read that better if you hold it the other side up." But he took no notice of the suggestion, and finally asked: "Where's Mr. Daly's name?" "There it is," I told him, "on the top of the page." "That's all right," he said, "that's where he always puts it; but I don't see the 'W' in his name," and he eyed me distrustfully. Finally, he asked, "Phwat do yez want to see Mr. Daly for?" "Business." "Business?" "Yes." It was my only hope. "Phwat kind – theatres?" that was too much. "No." "What kind of shows, then?" "Bench-shows." It was risky, but I was desperate. "Bench – shows, is it – where?" The big man's face changed, and he began to look interested. "New Haven." "New Haven, it is? Ah, that's going to be a fine show. I'm glad to see you."

Did you see a big dog in the other room?" "Yes." "How much do you think that dog weighs?" "One hundred and forty-five pounds." "Look at that, now! He's a good judge of dogs, and no mistake. He weighs all of one hundred and thirty-eight. Sit down and shmoke – go on and shmoke your cigar, I'll tell Mr. Daly you are here." In a few minutes I was on the stage shaking hands with Mr. Daly, and the big man standing around glowing with satisfaction. "Come around in front," said Mr. Daly, "and see the performance. I will put you into my own box." And as I moved away I heard my honest friend mutter, "Well, he desarves it."

The Dress Of Civilized Woman

A large part of the daughter of civilization is her dress – as it should be. Some civilized women would lose half their charm without dress, and some would lose all of it. The daughter Of modern civilization dressed at her utmost best is a marvel of exquisite and beautiful art and expense. All the lands, all the climes, and all the arts are laid under tribute to furnish her forth. Her linen is from Belfast, her robe is from Paris, her lace is from Venice, or Spain, or France, her feathers are from the remote regions of Southern Africa, her furs from the remoter region of the iceberg and the aurora, her fan from Japan, her diamonds from Brazil, her bracelets from California, her pearls from Ceylon, her cameos from Rome. She has gems and trinkets from buried Pompeii, and others that graced comely Egyptian forms that have been dust and ashes now for forty centuries. Her watch is from Geneva, her card case is from China, her hair is from – from – I don't know where her hair is from; I never could find out; that is, her other hair – her public hair, her Sunday hair; I don't mean the hair she goes to bed with.

And that reminds me of a trifle. Any time you want to you can glance around the carpet of a Pullman car, and go and pick up a hair-pin; but not to save your life can you get any woman in that car to acknowledge that hair-pin. Now, isn't that strange? But it's true. The woman who has never swerved from cast-iron veracity and fidelity in her whole life will, when confronted with this crucial test, deny her hair-pin. She will deny that hair-pin before a hundred witnesses. I have stupidly got into more trouble and more hot water trying to hunt up the owner of a hair-pin in a Pullman than by any other indiscretion of my life.

Dress Reform And Copyright

When the present copyright law was under discussion, Mr. Clemens appeared before the committee. He had sent Speaker Cannon the following letter:

“Dear uncle Joseph, – Please get me the thanks of Congress, not next week but right away. It is very necessary. Do accomplish this for your affectionate old friend right away – by, persuasion if you can, by violence if you must, for it is imperatively necessary that I get on the floor of the House for two or three hours and talk to the members, man by man, in behalf of support; encouragement, and protection of one of the nation’s most valuable assets and industries – its literature. I have arguments with me – also a barrel with liquid in it.

“Give me a chance. Get me the thanks of Congress. Don’t wait for others – there isn’t time; furnish them to me yourself and let Congress ratify later. I have stayed away and let Congress alone for seventy-one years and am entitled to the thanks. Congress knows this perfectly well, and I have long felt hurt that this quite proper and earned expression of gratitude has been merely felt by the House and never publicly uttered.

“Send me an order on the sergeant-at-arms quick. When shall I come?

“With love and a benediction,

“Mark Twain.”

While waiting to appear before the committee, Mr. Clemens talked to the reporters:

Why don’t you ask why I am wearing such apparently unseasonable clothes? I’ll tell you. I have found that when a man reaches the advanced age of seventy-one years, as I have, the continual sight of dark clothing is likely to have a depressing effect upon him. Light-colored clothing is more pleasing to the eye and enlivens the spirit. Now, of course, I cannot compel every one to wear such clothing just for my especial benefit, so I do the next best thing and wear it myself.

Of course, before a man reaches my years the fear of criticism might prevent him from indulging his fancy. I am not afraid of that. I am decidedly for pleasing color combinations in dress. I like to see the women’s clothes, say, at the opera. What can be more depressing than the sombre black which custom requires men to wear upon state occasions? A group of men in evening clothes looks like a flock of crows, and is just about as inspiring.

After all, what is the purpose of clothing? Are not clothes intended primarily to preserve dignity and also to afford comfort to their wearer? Now I know of nothing more uncomfortable than the present-day clothes of men. The finest clothing made is a person’s own skin, but, of course, society demands something more than this.

The best-dressed man I have ever seen, however, was a native of the Sandwich Islands who attracted my attention thirty years ago. Now, when that man wanted to don especial dress to honor a public occasion or a holiday, why, he occasionally put on a pair of spectacles. Otherwise the clothing with which God had provided him sufficed.

Of course, I have ideas of dress reform. For one thing, why not adopt some of the women’s styles? Goodness knows, they adopt enough of ours. Take the peek-a-boo waist, for instance. It has the obvious advantages of being cool and comfortable, and in addition it is almost always made up in pleasing colors which cheer and do not depress.

It is true that I dressed the Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court in a plug-hat, but, let’s see, that was twenty-five years ago. Then no man was considered fully dressed until he donned a plug-hat. Nowadays I think that no man is dressed until he leaves it home. Why, when I left home yesterday they trotted out a plug-hat for me to wear.

“You must wear it,” they told me; “why, just think of going to Washington without a plug-hat!” But I said no; I would wear a derby or nothing. Why, I believe I could walk along the streets of New York – I never do – but still I think I could – and I should never see a well-dressed man wearing a plug-hat. If I did I should suspect him of something. I don’t know just what, but I would suspect him.

Why, when I got up on the second story of that Pennsylvania ferry-boat coming down here yesterday I saw Howells coming along. He was the only man on the boat with a plug-hat, and I tell you he felt ashamed of himself. He said he had been persuaded to wear it against his better sense. But just think of a man nearly seventy years old who has not a mind of his own on such matters!

“Are you doing any work now?” the youngest and most serious reporter asked.

Work? I retired from work on my seventieth birthday. Since then I have been putting in merely twenty-six hours a day dictating my autobiography, which, as John Phoenix said in regard to his autograph, may be relied upon as authentic, as it is written exclusively by me. But it is not to be published in full until I am thoroughly dead. I have made it as caustic, fiendish, and devilish as possible. It will fill many volumes, and I shall continue writing it until the time comes for me to join the angels. It is going to be a terrible autobiography. It will make the hair of some folks curl. But it cannot be published until I am dead, and the persons mentioned in it and their children and grandchildren are dead. It is something awful!

“Can you tell us the names of some of the notables that are here to see you off?”

I don’t know. I am so shy. My shyness takes a peculiar phase. I never look a person in the face. The reason is that I am afraid they may know me and that I may not know them, which makes it very embarrassing for both of us. I always wait for the other person to speak. I know lots of people, but I don’t know who they are. It is all a matter of ability to observe things. I never observe anything now. I gave up the habit years ago. You should keep a habit up if you want to become proficient in it. For instance, I was a pilot once, but I gave it up, and I do not believe the captain of the Minneapolis would let me navigate his ship to London. Still, if I think that he is not on the job I may go up on the bridge and offer him a few suggestions.

College Girls

Five hundred undergraduates, under the auspices of the Woman's University Club, New York, welcomed Mr. Clemens as their guest, April 3, 1906, and gave him the freedom of the club, which the chairman explained was freedom to talk individually to any girl present.

I've worked for the public good thirty years, so for the rest of my life I shall work for my personal contentment. I am glad Miss *Nerón* has fed me, for there is no telling what iniquity I might wander into on an empty stomach – I mean, an empty mind.

I am going to tell you a practical story about how once upon a time I was blind – a story I should have been using all these months, but I never thought about telling it until the other night, and now it is too late, for on the nineteenth of this month I hope to take formal leave of the platform forever at Carnegie Hall – that is, take leave so far as talking for money and for people who have paid money to hear me talk. I shall continue to infest the platform on these conditions – that there is nobody in the house who has paid to hear me, that I am not paid to be heard, and that there will be none but young women students in the audience. [Here Mr. Clemens told the story of how he took a girl to the theatre while he was wearing tight boots, which appears elsewhere in this volume, and ended by saying: “And now let this be a lesson to you – I don't know what kind of a lesson; I'll let you think it out.”]

Girls

In my capacity of publisher I recently received a manuscript from a teacher which embodied a number of answers given by her pupils to questions propounded. These answers show that the children had nothing but the sound to go by – the sense was perfectly empty. Here are some of their answers to words they were asked to define: Auriferous – pertaining to an orifice; ammonia – the food of the gods; equestrian – one who asks questions; parasite – a kind of umbrella; ipecaca – man who likes a good dinner. And here is the definition of an ancient word honored by a great party: Republican – a sinner mentioned in the Bible. And here is an innocent deliverance of a zoological kind: “There are a good many donkeys in the theological gardens.” Here also is a definition which really isn’t very bad in its way: Demagogue – a vessel containing beer and other liquids. Here, too, is a sample of a boy’s composition on girls, which, I must say, I rather like:

“Girls are very stuckup and dignified in their manner and behaveyour. They think more of dress than anything and like to play with dowls and rags. They cry if they see a cow in a far distance and are afraid of guns. They stay at home all the time and go to church every Sunday. They are *al*-ways sick. They are *al*-ways furry and making fun of boys hands and they say how dirty. They cant play marbles. I pity them poor things. They make fun of boys and then turn round and love them. I don’t belave they ever kiled a cat or anything. They look out every nite and say, ‘Oh, a’nt the moon lovely!’—Thir is one thing I have not told and that is they *al*-ways now their lessons bettern boys.”

The Ladies

Delivered at the anniversary festival, 1872, of the Scottish corporation of London Mr. Clemens replied to the toast "The Ladies."

I am proud, indeed, of the distinction of being chosen to respond to this especial toast, to "The Ladies," or to women if you please, for that is the preferable term, perhaps; it is certainly the older, and therefore the more entitled to reverence. I have noticed that the Bible, with that plain, blunt honesty which is such a conspicuous characteristic of the Scriptures, is always particular to never refer to even the illustrious mother of all mankind as a "lady," but speaks of her as a woman. It is odd, but you will find it is so. I am peculiarly proud of this honor, because I think that the toast to women is one which, by right and by every rule of gallantry, should take precedence of all others – of the army, of the navy, of even royalty itself – perhaps, though the latter is not necessary in this day and in this land, for the reason that, tacitly, you do drink a broad general health to all good women when you drink the health of the Queen of England and the Princess of Wales. I have in mind a poem just now which is familiar to you all, familiar to everybody. And what an inspiration that was, and how instantly the present toast recalls the verses to all our minds when the most noble, the most gracious, the purest, and sweetest of all poets says:

"Woman! O woman! – er

Wom—"

However, you remember the lines; and you remember how feelingly, how daintily, how almost imperceptibly the verses raise up before you, feature by feature, the ideal of a true and perfect woman; and how, as you contemplate the finished marvel, your homage grows into worship of the intellect that could create so fair a thing out of mere breath, mere words. And you call to mind now, as I speak, how the poet, with stern fidelity to the history of all humanity, delivers this beautiful child of his heart and his brain over to the trials and sorrows that must come to all, sooner or later, that abide in the earth, and how the pathetic story culminates in that apostrophe – so wild, so regretful, so full of mournful retrospection. The lines run thus:

"Alas! – alas! – a – alas! – Alas! – alas!" —and so on. I do not remember the rest; but, taken together, it seems to me that poem is the noblest tribute to woman that human genius has ever brought forth – and I feel that if I were to talk hours I could not do my great theme completer or more graceful justice than I have now done in simply quoting that poet's matchless words. The phases of the womanly nature are infinite in their variety. Take any type of woman, and you shall find in it something to respect, something to admire, something to love. And you shall find the whole joining you heart and hand. Who was more patriotic than Joan of Arc? Who was braver? Who has given us a grander instance of self-sacrificing devotion? Ah! you remember, you remember well, what a throb of pain, what a great tidal wave of grief swept over us all when Joan of Arc fell at Waterloo. Who does not sorrow for the loss of Sappho, the sweet singer of Israel? Who among us does not miss the gentle ministrations, the softening influences, the humble piety of Lucretia Borgia? Who can join in the heartless libel that says woman is extravagant in dress when he can look back and call to mind our simple and lowly mother Eve arrayed in her modification of the Highland costume? Sir, women have been soldiers, women have been painters, women have been poets. As long as language lives the name of Cleopatra will live. And not because she conquered George III. – but because she wrote those divine lines:

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so."

The story of the world is adorned with the names of illustrious ones of our own sex – some of, them sons of St. Andrew, too – Scott, Bruce, Burns, the warrior Wallace, Ben Nevis – the gifted Ben Lomond, and the great new Scotchman, Ben Disraeli¹. Out of the great plains of history tower whole mountain ranges of sublime women: the Queen of Sheba, Josephine, Semiramis, Sairey Gamp; the list is endless – but I will not call the mighty roll, the names rise up in your own memories at the mere suggestion, luminous with the glory of deeds that cannot die, hallowed by the loving worship of the good and the true of all epochs and all climes. Suffice it for our pride and our honor that we in our day have added to it such names as those of Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale. Woman is all that she should be gentle, patient, longsuffering, trustful, unselfish, full of generous impulses. It is her blessed mission to comfort the sorrowing, plead for the erring, encourage the faint of purpose, succor the distressed, uplift the fallen, befriend the friendless – in a word, afford the healing of her sympathies and a home in her heart for all the bruised and persecuted children that knock at its hospitable door. And when I say, God bless her, there is none among us who has known the ennobling affection of a wife, or the steadfast devotion of a mother but in his heart will say, Amen!

¹ Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, at that time Prime Minister of England, had just been elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University, and had made a speech which gave rise to a world of discussion.

Woman's Press Club

On October 27, 1900, the New York Woman's Press Club gave a tea in Carnegie Hall. Mr. Clemens was the guest of honor.

If I were asked an opinion I would call this an ungrammatical nation. There is no such thing as perfect grammar, and I don't always speak good grammar myself. But I have been foregathering for the past few days with professors of American universities, and I've heard them all say things like this: "He don't like to do it." [There was a stir.] Oh, you'll hear that to-night if you listen, or, "He would have liked to have done it." You'll catch some educated Americans saying that. When these men take pen in hand they write with as good grammar as any. But the moment they throw the pen aside they throw grammatical morals aside with it.

To illustrate the desirability and possibility of concentration, I must tell you a story of my little six-year-old daughter. The governess had been teaching her about the reindeer, and, as the custom was, she related it to the family. She reduced the history of that reindeer to two or three sentences when the governess could not have put it into a page. She said: "The reindeer is a very swift animal. A reindeer once drew a sled four hundred miles in two hours." She appended the comment: "This was regarded as extraordinary." And concluded: "When that reindeer was done drawing that sled four hundred miles in two hours it died."

As a final instance of the force of limitations in the development of concentration, I must mention that beautiful creature, Helen Keller, whom I have known for these many years. I am filled with the wonder of her knowledge, acquired because shut out from all distraction. If I could have been deaf, dumb, and blind I also might have arrived at something.

Votes For Women

At the annual meeting of the Hebrew technical school for girls, held in the Temple Emmanuel, January 20, 1901

Mr. Clemens was introduced by President Meyer, who said: "In one of Mr. Clemens's works he expressed his opinion of men, saying he had no choice between Hebrew and Gentile, black men or white; to him all men were alike. But I never could find that he expressed his opinion of women; perhaps that opinion was so exalted that he could not express it. We shall now be called to hear what he thinks of women."

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

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

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

Oh, many a time have I thought of that and regretted it, and I adjure you all to give while the fever is on you.

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

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

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

Woman-An Opinion

Address at an early banquet of the Washington correspondents' club.

The twelfth toast was as follows: "Woman – The pride of any profession, and the jewel of ours."

Mr. President, – I do not know why I should be singled out to receive the greatest distinction of the evening – for so the office of replying to the toast of woman has been regarded in every age. I do not know why I have received this distinction, unless it be that I am a trifle less homely than the other members of the club. But be this as it may, Mr. President, I am proud of the position, and you could not have chosen any one who would have accepted it more gladly, or labored with a heartier good-will to do the subject justice than I – because, sir, I love the sex. I love all the women, irrespective of age or color.

Human intellect cannot estimate what we owe to woman, sir. She sews on our buttons; she mends our clothes; she ropes us in at the church fairs; she confides in us; she tells us whatever she can find out about the little private affairs of the neighbors; she gives us good advice, and plenty of it; she soothes our aching brows; she bears our children – ours as a general thing. In all relations of life, sir, it is but a just and graceful tribute to woman to say of her that she is a brick.

Wheresoever you place woman, sir – in whatever position or estate – she is an ornament to the place she occupies, and a treasure to the world. [Here Mr. Clemens paused, looked inquiringly at his hearers, and remarked that the applause should come in at this point. It came in. He resumed his eulogy.] Look at Cleopatra! look at Desdemona! – look at Florence Nightingale! – look at Joan of Arc! – look at Lucretia Borgia! [Disapprobation expressed.] Well [said Mr. Clemens, scratching his head, doubtfully], suppose we let Lucretia slide. Look at Joyce Heth! – look at Mother Eve! You need not look at her unless you want to, but [said Mr. Clemens, reflectively, after a pause] Eve was ornamental, sir – particularly before the fashions changed. I repeat, sir, look at the illustrious names of history. Look at the Widow Machree! – look at Lucy Stone! – look at Elizabeth Cady Stanton! – look at George Francis Train! And, sir, I say it with bowed head and deepest veneration – look at the mother of Washington! She raised a boy that could not tell a lie – could not tell a lie! But he never had any chance. It might have been different if he had belonged to the Washington Newspaper Correspondents' Club.

I repeat, sir, that in whatever position you place a woman she is an ornament to society and a treasure to the world. As a sweetheart, she has few equals and no superiors; as a cousin, she is convenient; as a wealthy grandmother with an incurable distemper, she is precious; as a wetnurse, she has no equal among men.

What, sir, would the people of the earth be without woman? They would be scarce, sir, almighty scarce. Then let us cherish her; let us protect her; let us give her our support, our encouragement, our sympathy, ourselves – if we get a chance.

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