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# **Mark Twain's Letters**

**by**

**Mark Twain**

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### **XLVI. LETTERS 1907-08. A DEGREE FROM OXFORD. THE NEW HOME AT REDDING.**

The author, J. Howard Moore, sent a copy of his book, *The Universal*

*Kinship*, with a letter in which he said: "Most humorists have no

anxiety except to glorify themselves and add substance to their

pocket-books by making their readers laugh. You have shown, on many

occasions, that your mission is not simply to antidote

the melancholy of a world, but includes a real and intelligent concern for the general welfare of your fellowman."

The Universal Kinship was the kind of a book that Mark Twain appreciated, as his acknowledgment clearly shows.

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To Mr. J. Howard Moore:

Feb.

2, '07.

DEAR MR. MOORE, The book has furnished me several days of deep pleasure and satisfaction; it has compelled my gratitude at the same time, since it saves me the labor of stating my own long-cherished opinions and reflections and resentments by doing it lucidly and fervently and irascibly for me.

There is one thing that always puzzles me: as inheritors of the mentality of our reptile ancestors we have improved the inheritance by a thousand grades; but in the matter of the morals which they left us we have gone backward as many grades. That evolution is strange, and to me unaccountable and unnatural. Necessarily we started equipped with their perfect and blemishless morals; now we are wholly destitute; we have no real, morals, but only artificial ones—morals created and preserved by the forced suppression of natural and hellish instincts. Yet we are dull enough to be vain of them. Certainly we are a sufficiently comical invention, we humans.

Sincerely Yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain's own books were always being excommunicated by some

librarian, and the matter never failed to invite the attention and

amusement of the press, and the indignation of many correspondents.

Usually the books were Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, the morals of which

were not regarded as wholly exemplary. But in 1907 a small library,

in a very small town, attained a day's national notoriety by putting

the ban on Eve's Diary, not so much on account of its text as for

the chaste and exquisite illustrations by Lester Ralph.

When the

reporters came in a troop to learn about it, the author said: "I

believe this time the trouble is mainly with the pictures. I did

not draw them. I wish I had—they are so beautiful."

Just at this time, Dr. William Lyon Phelps, of Yale, was giving a

literary talk to the Teachers' Club, of Hartford, dwelling on the

superlative value of Mark Twain's writings for readers old and

young. Mrs. F. G. Whitmore, an old Hartford friend, wrote Clemens

of the things that Phelps had said, as consolation for Eve's latest

banishment. This gave him a chance to add something to what he had

said to the reporters.

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To Mrs. Whitmore, in Hartford:

Feb.

7, 1907.

DEAR MRS. WHITMORE,—But the truth is, that when a Library expels a book of mine and leaves an unexpurgated Bible lying around where unprotected youth and age can get hold of it, the deep unconscious irony of it delights me and doesn't anger me. But even if it angered me such words as those of Professor Phelps would take the sting all out. Nobody attaches weight to the freaks of the Charlton Library, but when a man like Phelps speaks, the world gives attention. Some day I hope to meet him and thank him for his courage for saying those things out in public. Custom is, to think a handsome thing in private but tame it down in the utterance.

I hope you are all well and happy; and thereto I add my love.

Sincerely yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

In May, 1907, Mark Twain was invited to England to receive from Oxford the degree of Literary Doctor. It was an honor that came to him as a sort of laurel crown at the end of a great career, and gratified him exceedingly. To Moberly Bell, of the London Times, he expressed his appreciation. Bell had been over in April and Clemens believed him concerned in the matter.

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To Moberly Bell, in London:

3, '07

21 FIFTH AVENUE, May

DEAR MR. BELL,—Your hand is in it! and you have my best thanks. Although I wouldn't cross an ocean again for the price of the ship that carried me, I am glad to do it for an Oxford degree. I shall plan to sail for England a shade before the middle of June, so that I can have a few days in London before the 26th.

Sincerely,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

He had taken a house at Tuxedo for the summer, desiring to be near New York City, and in the next letter he writes Mr. Rogers concerning his London plans. We discover, also, in this letter that he has begun work on the Redding home and the cost is to come entirely out of the autobiographical chapters then running in the North American Review. It may be of passing interest to note here that he had the usual house-builder's fortune. He received thirty thousand dollars for the chapters; the house cost him nearly double that amount.

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To H. H. Rogers, in New York:

TUXEDO PARK,

May 29, '07.

DEAR ADMIRAL,—Why hang it, I am not going to see you and Mrs. Rogers at all in England! It is a great disappointment. I leave there a month from now—June 29. No, I shall see you; for by your itinerary you are most likely to come to London June 21st or along there. So that is very good and satisfactory. I have declined all engagements but two—Whitelaw Reid (dinner) June 21, and the Pilgrims (lunch), June 25. The Oxford ceremony is June 26. I have paid my return passage in the Minnesomething, but it is just possible that I may want to stay in England a week or two longer—I can't tell, yet. I do very much want to meet up with the boys for the last time.

I have signed the contract for the building of the house on my Connecticut farm and specified the cost limit, and work has been begun. The cost has to all come out of a year's instalments of Autobiography in the N. A. Review.

Clara, is winning her way to success and distinction with sure and steady strides. By all accounts she is singing like a bird, and is not afraid on the concert stage any more.

Tuxedo is a charming place; I think it hasn't its equal anywhere.

Very best wishes to you both.

S. L. C.

The story of Mark Twain's extraordinary reception and triumph in

England has been told.—[Mark Twain; A Biography, chaps. cclvi-

cclix]—It was, in fact, the crowning glory of his career. Perhaps

one of the most satisfactory incidents of his sojourn was a dinner

given to him by the staff of Punch, in the historic offices at 10

Bouverie Street where no other foreign visitor had been thus

honored—a notable distinction. When the dinner ended, little joy

Agnew, daughter of the chief editor, entered and presented to the

chief guest the original drawing of a cartoon by Bernard Partridge,



which had appeared on the front page of Punch. In this picture the presiding genius of the paper is offering to Mark Twain health, long life, and happiness from "The Punch Bowl."

A short time after his return to America he received a pretty childish letter from little Miss Agnew acknowledging a photograph he had sent her, and giving a list of her pets and occupations. Such a letter always delighted Mark Twain, and his pleasure in this one is reflected in his reply.

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To Miss Joy Agnew, in London:

TUXEDO

PARK, NEW YORK.

Unto you greetings and salutation and worship, you dear, sweet little rightly-named Joy! I can see you now almost as vividly as I saw you that night when you sat flashing and beaming upon those sombre swallow-tails.

"Fair as a star when only one  
Is shining in the sky."

Oh, you were indeed the only one—there wasn't even the remotest chance of competition with you, dear! Ah, you are a decoration, you little witch!

The idea of your house going to the wanton expense of a flower garden!—aren't you enough? And what do you want to go and discourage the other flowers for? Is that the right spirit? is it considerate? is it kind? How do

you suppose they feel when you come around—looking the way you look? And you so pink and sweet and dainty and lovely and supernatural? Why, it makes them feel embarrassed and artificial, of course; and in my opinion it is just as pathetic as it can be. Now then you want to reform—dear—and do right.

Well certainly you are well off, Joy:

3 bantams;  
3 goldfish;  
3 doves;  
6 canaries;  
2 dogs;  
1 cat;

All you need, now, to be permanently beyond the reach of want, is one more dog—just one more good, gentle, high principled, affectionate, loyal dog who wouldn't want any nobler service than the golden privilege of lying at your door, nights, and biting everything that came along—and I am that very one, and ready to come at the dropping of a hat.

Do you think you could convey my love and thanks to your “daddy” and Owen Seaman and those other oppressed and down-trodden subjects of yours, you darling small tyrant?

On my knees! These—with the kiss of fealty from your other subject—

MARK TWAIN

Elinor Glyn, author of Three Weeks and other erotic tales, was in America that winter and asked permission to call on Mark Twain. An appointment was made and Clemens discussed with her, for an hour or more, those crucial phases of life which have made living a complex problem since the days of Eve in Eden. Mrs. Glyn had never before heard anything like Mark Twain's wonderful talk, and she was anxious to print their interview. She wrote what she could remember of it

and sent it to him for approval. If his conversation had been frank, his refusal was hardly less so.

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To Mrs. Elinor Glyn, in New York:

22, '08.

Jan.

DEAR MRS. GLYN, It reads pretty poorly—I get the sense of it, but it is a poor literary job; however, it would have to be that because nobody can be reported even approximately, except by a stenographer. Approximations, synopsised speeches, translated poems, artificial flowers and chromos all have a sort of value, but it is small. If you had put upon paper what I really said it would have wrecked your type-machine. I said some fetid, over-vigorous things, but that was because it was a confidential conversation. I said nothing for print. My own report of the same conversation reads like Satan roasting a Sunday school. It, and certain other readable chapters of my autobiography will not be published until all the Clemens family are dead—dead and correspondingly indifferent. They were written to entertain me, not the rest of the world. I am not here to do good—at least not to do it intentionally. You must pardon me for dictating this letter; I am sick a-bed and not feeling as well as I might.

Sincerely Yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Among the cultured men of England Mark Twain had no greater admirer, or warmer friend, than Andrew Lang. They were at one on most literary subjects, and especially so in their admiration

of the life

and character of Joan of Arc. Both had written of her, and both

held her to be something almost more than mortal. When, therefore,

Anatole France published his exhaustive biography of the maid of

Domremy, a book in which he followed, with exaggerated minuteness

and innumerable footnotes, every step of Joan's physical career at

the expense of her spiritual life, which he was inclined to cheapen,

Lang wrote feelingly, and with some contempt, of the performance,

inviting the author of the Personal Recollections to come to the

rescue of their heroine. "Compare every one of his statements with

the passages he cites from authorities, and make him the laughter of

the world" he wrote. "If you are lazy about comparing I can make

you a complete set of what the authorities say, and of what this

amazing novelist says that they say. When I tell you that he thinks

the Epiphany (January 6, Twelfth Night) is December 25th—Christmas

Day—you begin to see what an egregious ass he is. Treat him like

Dowden, and oblige"—a reference to Mark Twain's defense of Harriet

Shelley, in which he had heaped ridicule on Dowden's Life of the

Poet—a masterly performance; one of the best that ever came from

Mark Twain's pen.

Lang's suggestion would seem to have been a welcome one.

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To Andrew Lang, in London:

1908.

NEW YORK, April 25,

DEAR MR. LANG,—I haven't seen the book nor any review of it, but only not very-understandable references to it—of a sort which discomfited me, but of course set my interest on fire. I don't want to have to read it in French—I should lose the nice shades, and should do a lot of gross misinterpreting, too. But there'll be a translation soon, nicht wahr? I will wait for it. I note with joy that you say: “If you are lazy about comparing, (which I most certainly am), I can make you a complete set of what the authorities say, and of what this amazing novelist says that they say.”

Ah, do it for me! Then I will attempt the article, and (if I succeed in doing it to my satisfaction,) will publish it. It is long since I touched a pen (3 1/2 years), and I was intending to continue this happy holiday to the gallows, but—there are things that could beguile me to break this blessed Sabbath.

Yours very sincerely,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Certainly it is an interesting fact that an Englishman—  
one of the  
race that burned Joan—should feel moved to defend her  
memory  
against the top-heavy perversions of a distinguished  
French author.

But Lang seems never to have sent the notes. The  
copying would have  
been a tremendous task, and perhaps he never found the  
time for it.

We may regret to-day that he did not, for Mark Twain's  
article on  
the French author's Joan would have been at least  
unique.

Samuel Clemens could never accustom himself to the loss of his wife.

From the time of her death, marriage—which had brought him his

greatest joy in life—presented itself to him always with the thought

of bereavement, waiting somewhere just behind. The news of an

approaching wedding saddened him and there was nearly always a

somber tinge in his congratulations, of which the following to a

dear friend is an example:

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To Father Fitz-Simon, in Washington:

June 5,

'08.

DEAR FATHER FITZ-SIMON,—Marriage—yes, it is the supreme felicity of life, I concede it. And it is also the supreme tragedy of life. The deeper the love the surer the tragedy. And the more disconsolating when it comes.

And so I congratulate you. Not perfunctorily, not lukewarmly, but with a fervency and fire that no word in the dictionary is strong enough to convey. And in the same breath and with the same depth and sincerity, I grieve for you. Not for both of you and not for the one that shall go first, but for the one that is fated to be left behind. For that one there is no recompense.—For that one no recompense is possible.

There are times—thousands of times—when I can expose the half of my mind, and conceal the other half, but in the matter of the tragedy of marriage I feel too deeply for that, and I have to bleed it all out or shut it

all in. And so you must consider what I have been through, and am passing through and be charitable with me.

Make the most of the sunshine! and I hope it will last long—ever so long.

I do not really want to be present; yet for friendship's sake and because I honor you so, I would be there if I could.

Most sincerely your friend,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

The new home at Redding was completed in the spring of 1908, and on the 18th of June, when it was entirely fitted and furnished, Mark Twain entered it for the first time. He had never even seen the place nor carefully examined plans which John Howells had made for his house. He preferred the surprise of it, and the general avoidance of detail. That he was satisfied with the result will be seen in his letters. He named it at first "Innocence at Home"; later changing this title to "Stormfield."

The letter which follows is an acknowledgment of an interesting souvenir from the battle-field of Tewksbury (1471), and some relics of the Cavalier and Roundhead Regiments encamped at Tewksbury in 1643.

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To an English admirer:

CONNECTICUT,  
'08.

INNOCENCE AT HOME, REDDING,

Aug. 15,

DEAR SIR,—I highly prize the pipes, and shall intimate to people that "Raleigh" smoked them, and doubtless he did. After a little practice I shall be able to go further and say he did; they will then be the most interesting features of my library's decorations. The Horse-shoe is attracting a good deal of attention, because I have intimated that the conqueror's horse cast it; it will attract more when I get my hand in and say he cast it, I thank you for the pipes and the shoe; and also for the official guide, which I read through at a single sitting. If a person should say that about a book of mine I should regard it as good evidence of the book's interest.

Very truly yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

In his philosophy, What Is Man?, and now and again in his other writings, we find Mark Twain giving small credit to the human mind as an originator of ideas. The most original writer of his time, he took no credit for pure invention and allowed none to others. The mind, he declared, adapted, consciously or unconsciously; it did not create. In a letter which follows he elucidates this doctrine. The reference in it to the "captain" and to the kerosene, as the reader may remember, have to do with Captain "Hurricane" Jones and his theory of the miracles of "Isaac and of the prophets of Baal," as expounded in Some Rambling Notes of an Idle Excursion.

By a trick of memory Clemens gives The Little Duke as his suggestion for The Prince and the Pauper; he should have written The Prince and the Page, by the same author.



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To Rev. F. Y. Christ, in New York:

REDDING, CONN., Aug.,

'08.

DEAR SIR,—You say “I often owe my best sermons to a suggestion received in reading or from other exterior sources.” Your remark is not quite in accordance with the facts. We must change it to—“I owe all my thoughts, sermons and ideas to suggestions received from sources outside of myself.” The simplified English of this proposition is—“No man's brains ever originated an idea.” It is an astonishing thing that after all these ages the world goes on thinking the human brain machinery can originate a thought.

It can't. It never has done it. In all cases, little and big, the thought is born of a suggestion; and in all cases the suggestions come to the brain from the outside. The brain never acts except from exterior impulse.

A man can satisfy himself of the truth of this by a single process,—let him examine every idea that occurs to him in an hour; a day; in a week—in a lifetime if he please. He will always find that an outside something suggested the thought, something which he saw with his eyes or heard with his ears or perceived by his touch—not necessarily to-day, nor yesterday, nor last year, nor twenty years ago, but sometime or other. Usually the source of the suggestion is immediately traceable, but sometimes it isn't.

However, if you will examine every thought that occurs to you for the next two days, you will find that in at least nine cases out of ten you can put your finger on the outside suggestion—And that ought to convince you that No. 10 had that source too, although you cannot at present hunt it down and find it.

The idea of writing to me would have had to wait a long time if it waited until your brain originated it. It was born of an outside suggestion—Sir Thomas and my old Captain.

The hypnotist thinks he has invented a new thing—suggestion. This is very sad. I don't know where my captain got his kerosene idea. (It was forty-one years ago, and he is long ago dead.) But I know that it didn't originate in his head, but it was born from a suggestion from the outside.

Yesterday a guest said, "How did you come to think of writing 'The Prince and the Pauper?'" I didn't. The thought came to me from the outside—suggested by that pleasant and picturesque little history-book, Charlotte M. Yonge's "Little Duke," I doubt if Mrs. Burnett knows whence came to her the suggestion to write "Little Lord Fauntleroy," but I know; it came to her from reading "The Prince and the Pauper." In all my life I have never originated an idea, and neither has she, nor anybody else.

Man's mind is a clever machine, and can work up materials into ingenious fancies and ideas, but it can't create the material; none but the gods can do that. In Sweden I saw a vast machine receive a block of wood, and turn it into marketable matches in two minutes. It could do everything but make the wood. That is the kind of machine the human mind is. Maybe this is not a large compliment, but it is all I can afford.....

Your friend and well-wisher  
S. L. CLEMENS.

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To Mrs. H. H. Rogers, in Fair Hawn, Mass.:

12, 1908.

REDDING, CONN, Aug.

DEAR MRS. ROGERS, I believe I am the wellest man on the planet to-day, and good for a trip to Fair Haven (which I discussed with the Captain of the New Bedford boat, who pleasantly accosted me in the Grand Central August 5) but the doctor came up from New York day before yesterday, and gave positive orders that I must not stir from here before frost. It is

because I was threatened with a swoon, 10 or 12 days ago, and went to New York a day or two later to attend my nephew's funeral and got horribly exhausted by the heat and came back here and had a bilious collapse. In 24 hours I was as sound as a nut again, but nobody believes it but me.

This is a prodigiously satisfactory place, and I am so glad I don't have to go back to the turmoil and rush of New York. The house stands high and the horizons are wide, yet the seclusion is perfect. The nearest public road is half a mile away, so there is nobody to look in, and I don't have to wear clothes if I don't want to. I have been down stairs in night-gown and slippers a couple of hours, and have been photographed in that costume; but I will dress, now, and behave myself.

That doctor had half an idea that there is something the matter with my brain... Doctors do know so little and they do charge so much for it. I wish Henry Rogers would come here, and I wish you would come with him. You can't rest in that crowded place, but you could rest here, for sure! I would learn bridge, and entertain you, and rob you.

With love to you both,  
Ever yours,  
S. L. C.

In the foregoing letter we get the first intimation of Mark Twain's failing health. The nephew who had died was Samuel E. Moffett, son of Pamela Clemens. Moffett, who was a distinguished journalist—an editorial writer on Collier's Weekly, a man beloved by all who knew him—had been drowned in the surf off the Jersey beach.

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To W. D. Howells, Kittery Point, Maine:

Aug.

12, '08.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Won't you and Mrs. Howells and Mildred come and give us as many days as you can spare, and examine John's triumph? It is the most satisfactory house I am acquainted with, and the most satisfactorily situated.

But it is no place to work in, because one is outside of it all the time, while the sun and the moon are on duty. Outside of it in the loggia, where the breezes blow and the tall arches divide up the scenery and frame it.

It's a ghastly long distance to come, and I wouldn't travel such a distance to see anything short of a memorial museum, but if you can't come now you can at least come later when you return to New York, for the journey will be only an hour and a half per express-train. Things are gradually and steadily taking shape inside the house, and nature is taking care of the outside in her ingenious and wonderful fashion—and she is competent and asks no help and gets none. I have retired from New York for good, I have retired from labor for good, I have dismissed my stenographer and have entered upon a holiday whose other end is in the cemetery.

Yours ever,

MARK.

From a gentleman in Buffalo Clemens one day received a letter

inclosing an incompleated list of the world's "One Hundred Greatest

Men," men who had exerted "the largest visible influence on the life

and activities of the race." The writer asked that Mark Twain

examine the list and suggest names, adding "would you include Jesus,

as the founder of Christianity, in the list?"

To the list of statesmen Clemens added the name of Thomas Paine; to

the list of inventors, Edison and Alexander Graham

Bell. The  
question he answered in detail.

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To \_\_\_\_\_, Buffalo, N. Y.

Private. REDDING, CONN, Aug.  
28, '08.

DEAR SIR,—By “private,” I mean don't print any remarks of mine.

.....  
I like your list.

The “largest visible influence.”

These terms require you to add Jesus. And they doubly and trebly require you to add Satan. From A.D. 350 to A.D. 1850 these gentlemen exercised a vaster influence over a fifth part of the human race than was exercised over that fraction of the race by all other influences combined. Ninety-nine hundredths of this influence proceeded from Satan, the remaining fraction of it from Jesus. During those 1500 years the fear of Satan and Hell made 99 Christians where love of God and Heaven landed one. During those 1500 years, Satan's influence was worth very nearly a hundred times as much to the business as was the influence of all the rest of the Holy Family put together.

You have asked me a question, and I have answered it seriously and sincerely. You have put in Buddha—a god, with a following, at one time, greater than Jesus ever had: a god with perhaps a little better evidence of his godship than that which is offered for Jesus's. How then, in fairness, can you leave Jesus out? And if you put him in, how can you logically leave Satan out? Thunder is good, thunder is impressive; but it is the lightning that does the work.

Very truly yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

The "Children's Theatre" of the next letter was an institution of

the New York East Side in which Mark Twain was deeply interested.

The children were most, if not all, of Hebrew parentage, and the

performances they gave, under the direction of Alice M. Herts, were

really remarkable. It seemed a pity that lack of funds should have

brought this excellent educational venture to an untimely end.

The following letter was in reply to one inclosing a newspaper

clipping reporting a performance of *The Prince and the Pauper*, given

by Chicago school children.

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To Mrs. Hookway, in Chicago:

Sept., 1908.

DEAR MRS. HOOKWAY,—Although I am full of the spirit of work this morning, a rarity with me lately—I must steal a moment or two for a word in person: for I have been reading the eloquent account in the *Record-Herald* and am pleasurably stirred, to my deepest depths. The reading brings vividly back to me my pet and pride. The Children's Theatre of the East side, New York. And it supports and re-affirms what I have so often and strenuously said in public that a children's theatre is easily the most

valuable adjunct that any educational institution for the young can have, and that no otherwise good school is complete without it.

It is much the most effective teacher of morals and promoter of good conduct that the ingenuity of man has yet devised, for the reason that its lessons are not taught wearily by book and by dreary homily, but by visible and enthusing action; and they go straight to the heart, which is the rightest of right places for them. Book morals often get no further than the intellect, if they even get that far on their spectral and shadowy pilgrimage: but when they travel from a Children's Theatre they do not stop permanently at that halfway house, but go on home.

The children's theatre is the only teacher of morals and conduct and high ideals that never bores the pupil, but always leaves him sorry when the lesson is over. And as for history, no other teacher is for a moment comparable to it: no other can make the dead heroes of the world rise up and shake the dust of the ages from their bones and live and move and breathe and speak and be real to the looker and listener: no other can make the study of the lives and times of the illustrious dead a delight, a splendid interest, a passion; and no other can paint a history-lesson in colors that will stay, and stay, and never fade.

It is my conviction that the children's theatre is one of the very, very great inventions of the twentieth century; and that its vast educational value—now but dimly perceived and but vaguely understood—will presently come to be recognized. By the article which I have been reading I find the same things happening in the Howland School that we have become familiar with in our Children's Theatre (of which I am President, and sufficiently vain of the distinction.) These things among others;

1. The educating history-study does not stop with the little players, but the whole school catches the infection and revels in it.

2. And it doesn't even stop there; the children carry it home and infect the family with it—even the parents and grandparents; and the whole household fall to studying history, and bygone manners and customs and costumes with eager interest. And this interest is carried along to the studying of costumes in old book-plates; and beyond that to the selecting of fabrics and the making of clothes. Hundreds of our children learn, the plays by listening without book, and by making notes; then the listener goes home and plays the piece—all the parts! to the family. And the

family are glad and proud; glad to listen to the explanations and analyses, glad to learn, glad to be lifted to planes above their dreary workaday lives. Our children's theatre is educating 7,000 children—and their families. When we put on a play of Shakespeare they fall to studying it diligently; so that they may be qualified to enjoy it to the limit when the piece is staged.

3. Your Howland School children do the construction-work, stage-decorations, etc. That is our way too. Our young folks do everything that is needed by the theatre, with their own hands; scene-designing, scene-painting, gas-fitting, electric work, costume-designing—costume making, everything and all things indeed—and their orchestra and its leader are from their own ranks.

The article which I have been reading, says—speaking of the historical play produced by the pupils of the Howland School—

“The question naturally arises, What has this drama done for those who so enthusiastically took part?—The touching story has made a year out of the Past live for the children as could no chronology or bald statement of historical events; it has cultivated the fancy and given to the imagination strength and purity; work in composition has ceased to be drudgery, for when all other themes fall flat a subject dealing with some aspect of the drama presented never fails to arouse interest and a rapid pushing of pens over paper.”

That is entirely true. The interest is not confined to the drama's story, it spreads out all around the period of the story, and gives to all the outlying and unrelated happenings of that period a fascinating interest—an interest which does not fade out with the years, but remains always fresh, always inspiring, always welcome. History-facts dug by the job, with sweat and tears out of a dry and spiritless text-book—but never mind, all who have suffered know what that is...

I remain, dear madam,  
Sincerely yours,  
S. L.

CLEMENS.

Mark Twain had a special fondness for cats. As a boy he always



owned one and it generally had a seat beside him at the table.

There were cats at Quarry Farm and at Hartford, and in the house at

Redding there was a gray mother-cat named Tammany, of which he was

especially fond. Kittens capering about were his chief delight.

In a letter to a Chicago woman he tells how those of Tammany

assisted at his favorite game.

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To Mrs. Mabel Larkin Patterson, in Chicago:

CONNECTICUT,

2, '08.

REDDING,

Oct.

DEAR MRS. PATTERSON,—The contents of your letter are very pleasant and very welcome, and I thank you for them, sincerely. If I can find a photograph of my “Tammany” and her kittens, I will enclose it in this.

One of them likes to be crammed into a corner-pocket of the billiard table—which he fits as snugly as does a finger in a glove and then he watches the game (and obstructs it) by the hour, and spoils many a shot by putting out his paw and changing the direction of a passing ball. Whenever a ball is in his arms, or so close to him that it cannot be played upon without risk of hurting him, the player is privileged to remove it to anyone of the 3 spots that chances to be vacant.

Ah, no, my lecturing days are over for good and all.

Sincerely yours,

S. L.

CLEMENS.

The letter to Howells which follows was written a short time before  
the passage of the copyright extension bill, which rendered Mark  
Twain's new plan, here mentioned, unneeded—at least for the time.

---

To W. D. Howells, in New York:

Monday, Oct. 26,  
'08.

Oh, I say! Where are you hiding, and why are you hiding? You promised to come here and you didn't keep your word. (This sounds like astonishment—but don't be misled by that.)

Come, fire up again on your fiction-mill and give us another good promise. And this time keep it—for it is your turn to be astonished. Come and stay as long as you possibly can. I invented a new copyright extension scheme last Friday, and sat up all night arranging its details. It will interest you. Yesterday I got it down on paper in as compact a form as I could. Harvey and I have examined the scheme, and to-morrow or next day he will send me a couple of copyright-experts to arrange about getting certain statistics for me.

Authors, publishers and the public have always been damaged by the copyright laws. The proposed amendment will advantage all three—the public most of all. I think Congress will pass it and settle the vexed question permanently.

I shall need your assent and the assent of about a dozen other authors. Also the assent of all the large firms of the 300 publishers. These authors

and publishers will furnish said assent I am sure. Not even the pirates will be able to furnish a serious objection, I think.

Come along. This place seemed at its best when all around was summer-green; later it seemed at its best when all around was burning with the autumn splendors; and now once more it seems at its best, with the trees naked and the ground a painter's palette.

Yours ever,  
MARK.

Clemens was a great admirer of the sea stories of W. W. Jacobs and generally kept one or more of this author's volumes in reach of his bed, where most of his reading was done. The acknowledgment that follows was sent when he had finished Salthaven.

---

To W. W. Jacobs, in England:

REDDING, CONN,

28, '08.

Oct.

DEAR MR. JACOBS,—It has a delightful look. I will not venture to say how delightful, because the words would sound extravagant, and would thereby lose some of their strength and to that degree misrepresent me. It is my conviction that Dialstone Lane holds the supremacy over all purely humorous books in our language, but I feel about Salthaven as the Cape Cod poet feels about Simon Hanks:

"The Lord knows all things, great and small,  
With doubt he's not perplexed:  
'Tis Him alone that knows it all  
But Simon Hanks comes next."

The poet was moved by envy and malice and jealousy, but I am not: I place Salthaven close up next to Dialstone because I think it has a fair and honest right to that high position. I have kept the other book moving; I shall begin to hand this one around now.

And many thanks to you for remembering me.

This house is out in the solitudes of the woods and the hills, an hour and a half from New York, and I mean to stay in it winter and summer the rest of my days. I beg you to come and help occupy it a few days the next time you visit the U.S.

Sincerely yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

One of the attractions of Stormfield was a beautiful mantel in the billiard room, presented by the Hawaiian Promotion Committee. It had not arrived when the rest of the house was completed, but came in time to be set in place early in the morning of the owner's seventy-third birthday. It was made of a variety of Hawaiian woods, and was the work of a native carver, F. M. Otremba. Clemens was deeply touched by the offering from those "western isles"—the memory of which was always so sweet to him.

---

To Mr. Wood, in Hawaii:

Nov.

30, '08.

DEAR MR. WOOD,—The beautiful mantel was put in its place an hour ago, and its friendly “Aloha” was the first uttered greeting my 73rd birthday received. It is rich in color, rich in quality, and rich in decoration, therefore it exactly harmonizes with the taste for such things which was born in me and which I have seldom been able to indulge to my content. It will be a great pleasure to me, daily renewed, to have under my eye this lovely reminder of the loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean, and I beg to thank the Committee for providing me that pleasure.

Sincerely Yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

## **XLVII. LETTERS, 1909. TO HOWELLS AND OTHERS. LIFE AT STORMFIELD. COPYRIGHT EXTENSION. DEATH OF JEAN CLEMENS**

Clemens remained at Stormfield all that winter. New York was sixty miles away and he did not often care to make the journey. He was constantly invited to this or that public gathering, or private party, but such affairs had lost interest for him. He preferred the quiet of his luxurious home with its beautiful outlook, while for entertainment he found the billiard afternoons sufficient. Guests

came from the city, now and again, for week-end visits,  
and if he  
ever was restless or lonely he did not show it.

Among the invitations that came was one from General O.  
O. Howard  
asking him to preside at a meeting to raise an endowment  
fund for a  
Lincoln Memorial University at Cumberland Gap,  
Tennessee. Closing  
his letter, General Howard said, "Never mind if you did  
fight on the  
other side."

---

To General O. O. Howard:

STORMFIELD, REDDING,  
CONNECTICUT,  
Jan, 12, '09.

DEAR GENERAL HOWARD,—You pay me a most gratifying  
compliment in asking me to preside, and it causes me very real regret that  
I am obliged to decline, for the object of the meeting appeals strongly to  
me, since that object is to aid in raising the \$500,000 Endowment Fund for  
Lincoln Memorial University. The Endowment Fund will be the most  
fitting of all the memorials the country will dedicate to the memory of  
Lincoln, serving, as it will, to uplift his very own people.

I hope you will meet with complete success, and I am sorry I cannot be  
there to witness it and help you rejoice. But I am older than people think,  
and besides I live away out in the country and never stir from home,  
except at geological intervals, to fill left-over engagements in mesozoic  
times when I was younger and indiscreeter.

You ought not to say sarcastic things about my “fighting on the other side.” General Grant did not act like that. General Grant paid me compliments. He bracketed me with Zenophon—it is there in his Memoirs for anybody to read. He said if all the confederate soldiers had followed my example and adopted my military arts he could never have caught enough of them in a bunch to inconvenience the Rebellion. General Grant was a fair man, and recognized my worth; but you are prejudiced, and you have hurt my feelings.

But I have an affection for you, anyway.  
MARK TWAIN.

One of Mark Twain's friends was Henniker-Heaton, the so-called “Father of Penny Postage” between England and America. When, after long years of effort, he succeeded in getting the rate established, he at once bent his energies in the direction of cheap cable service and a letter from him came one day to Stormfield concerning his new plans. This letter happened to be over-weight, which gave Mark Twain a chance for some amusing exaggerations at his expense.

---

To Henniker-Heaton, in London:

CONNECTICUT,

STORMFIELD, REDDING,

Jan. 18, 1909.

DEAR HENNIKER-HEATON,—I do hope you will succeed to your heart's desire in your cheap-cablegram campaign, and I feel sure you will. Indeed your cheap-postage victory, achieved in spite of a quarter-century of determined opposition, is good and rational prophecy that you will. Wireless, not being as yet imprisoned in a Chinese wall of private cash and high-placed and formidable influence, will come to your aid and make your new campaign briefer and easier than the other one was.

Now then, after uttering my serious word, am I privileged to be frivolous for a moment? When you shall have achieved cheap telegraphy, are you going to employ it for just your own selfish profit and other people's pecuniary damage, the way you are doing with your cheap postage? You get letter-postage reduced to 2 cents an ounce, then you mail me a 4-ounce letter with a 2-cent stamp on it, and I have to pay the extra freight at this end of the line. I return your envelope for inspection. Look at it. Stamped in one place is a vast "T," and under it the figures "40," and under those figures appears an "L," a sinister and suspicious and mysterious L. In another place, stamped within a circle, in offensively large capitals, you find the words "DUE 8 CENTS." Finally, in the midst of a desert space up nor-noreastard from that circle you find a figure "3" of quite unnecessarily aggressive and insolent magnitude—and done with a blue pencil, so as to be as conspicuous as possible. I inquired about these strange signs and symbols of the postman. He said they were P. O. Department signals for his instruction.

"Instruction for what?"

"To get extra postage."

"Is it so? Explain. Tell me about the large T and the 40."

"It's short for Take 40—or as we postmen say, grab 40"

"Go on, please, while I think up some words to swear with."

"Due 8 means, grab 8 more."

"Continue."

"The blue-pencil 3 was an afterthought. There aren't any stamps for afterthoughts; the sums vary, according to inspiration, and they whirl in the one that suggests itself at the last moment. Sometimes they go several times higher than this one. This one only means hog 3 cents more. And so if you've got 51 cents about you, or can borrow it—"



“Tell me: who gets this corruption?”

“Half of it goes to the man in England who ships the letter on short postage, and the other half goes to the P.O.D. to protect cheap postage from inaugurating a deficit.”

“\_\_\_\_\_”

“I can't blame you; I would say it myself in your place, if these ladies were not present. But you see I'm only obeying orders, I can't help myself.”

“Oh, I know it; I'm not blaming you. Finally, what does that L stand for?”

“Get the money, or give him L. It's English, you know.”

“Take it and go. It's the last cent I've got in the world—.”

After seeing the Oxford pageant file by the grand stand, picture after picture, splendor after splendor, three thousand five hundred strong, the most moving and beautiful and impressive and historically-instructive show conceivable, you are not to think I would miss the London pageant of next year, with its shining host of 15,000 historical English men and women dug from the misty books of all the vanished ages and marching in the light of the sun—all alive, and looking just as they were used to look! Mr. Lascelles spent yesterday here on the farm, and told me all about it. I shall be in the middle of my 75th year then, and interested in pageants for personal and prospective reasons.

I beg you to give my best thanks to the Bath Club for the offer of its hospitalities, but I shall not be able to take advantage of it, because I am to be a guest in a private house during my stay in London.

Sincerely yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

It was in 1907 that Clemens had seen the Oxford Pageant—during the week when he had been awarded his doctor's degree. It gave him the greatest delight, and he fully expected to see the next one, planned for 1910.

In the letter to Howells which follows we get another glimpse of Mark Twain's philosophy of man, the irresponsible machine.

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To W. D. Howells, in New York:

CONN.,  
'09.

STORMFIELD, REDDING,  
Jan. 18,

DEAR HOWELLS,—I have to write a line, lazy as I am, to say how your Poe article delighted me; and to say that I am in agreement with substantially all you say about his literature. To me his prose is unreadable—like Jane Austin's. No, there is a difference. I could read his prose on salary, but not Jane's. Jane is entirely impossible. It seems a great pity that they allowed her to die a natural death.

Another thing: you grant that God and circumstances sinned against Poe, but you also grant that he sinned against himself—a thing which he couldn't do and didn't do.

It is lively up here now. I wish you could come.

Yrs ever,  
MARK

---

To W. D. Howells, in New York:

CONNECTICUT,  
Apl. 17, '09.  
with pencil].

STORMFIELD, REDDING,  
3 in the morning,  
[Written

My pen has gone dry and the ink is out of reach. Howells, Did you write me day-before-day before yesterday, or did I dream it? In my mind's eye I most vividly see your hand-write on a square blue envelop in the mailpile. I have hunted the house over, but there is no such letter. Was it an illusion?

I am reading Lowell's letter, and smoking. I woke an hour ago and am reading to keep from wasting the time. On page 305, vol. I. I have just margined a note:

“Young friend! I like that! You ought to see him now.”

It seemed startlingly strange to hear a person call you young. It was a brick out of a blue sky, and knocked me groggy for a moment. Ah me, the pathos of it is, that we were young then. And he—why, so was he, but he didn't know it. He didn't even know it 9 years later, when we saw him approaching and you warned me, saying, “Don't say anything about age—he has just turned fifty, and thinks he is old and broods over it.”

[Well, Clara did sing! And you wrote her a dear letter.]

Time to go to sleep.

Yours ever,

MARK.

---

To Daniel Kiefer:

date.]

[No

DANL KIEFER ESQ. DEAR SIR,—I should be far from willing to have a political party named after me.

I would not be willing to belong to a party which allowed its members to have political aspirations or to push friends forward for political preferment.

Yours very truly,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The copyright extension, for which the author had been working so long, was granted by Congress in 1909, largely as the result of that afternoon in Washington when Mark Twain had "received" in "Uncle Joe" Cannon's private room, and preached the gospel of copyright until the daylight faded and the rest of the Capitol grew still. Champ Clark was the last to linger that day and they had talked far into the dusk. Clark was powerful, and had fathered the bill. Now he wrote to know if it was satisfactory.

---

To Champ Clark, in Washington:

STORMFIELD, REDDING, CONN.,

June 5, '09.

DEAR CHAMP CLARK—Is the new copyright law acceptable to me? Emphatically, yes! Clark, it is the only sane, and clearly defined, and just and righteous copyright law that has ever existed in the United States.

Whosoever will compare it with its predecessors will have no trouble in arriving at that decision.

The bill which was before the committee two years ago when I was down there was the most stupefying jumble of conflicting and apparently irreconcilable interests that was ever seen; and we all said "the case is hopeless, absolutely hopeless—out of this chaos nothing can be built." But we were in error; out of that chaotic mass this excellent bill has been instructed; the warring interests have been reconciled, and the result is as comely and substantial a legislative edifice as lifts its domes and towers and protective lightning rods out of the statute book, I think. When I think of that other bill, which even the Deity couldn't understand, and of this one which even I can understand, I take off my hat to the man or men who devised this one. Was it R. U. Johnson? Was it the Author's League? Was it both together? I don't know, but I take off my hat, anyway. Johnson has written a valuable article about the new law—I enclose it.

At last—at last and for the first time in copyright history we are ahead of England! Ahead of her in two ways: by length of time and by fairness to all interests concerned. Does this sound like shouting? Then I must modify it: all we possessed of copyright-justice before the fourth of last March we owed to England's initiative.

Truly Yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Because Mark Twain amused himself with certain aspects of Christian Science, and was critical of Mrs. Eddy, there grew up a wide impression that he jeered at the theory of mental healing; when, as a matter of fact, he was one of its earliest converts, and never lost faith in its power. The letter which follows is an excellent exposition of his attitude toward the institution of Christian Science and the founder of the church in America.

---

To J. Wylie Smith, Glasgow, Scotland:

7, 1909

"STORMFIELD," August

DEAR SIR,—My view of the matter has not changed. To wit, that Christian Science is valuable; that it has just the same value now that it had when Mrs. Eddy stole it from Quimby; that its healing principle (its most valuable asset) possesses the same force now that it possessed a million years ago before Quimby was born; that Mrs. Eddy... organized that force, and is entitled to high credit for that. Then, with a splendid sagacity she hitched it to... a religion, the surest of all ways to secure friends for it, and support. In a fine and lofty way—figuratively speaking—it was a tramp stealing a ride on the lightning express. Ah, how did that ignorant village-born peasant woman know the human being so well? She has no more intellect than a tadpole—until it comes to business then she is a marvel! Am I sorry I wrote the book? Most certainly not. You say you have 500 (converts) in Glasgow. Fifty years from now, your posterity will not count them by the hundred, but by the thousand. I feel absolutely sure of this.

Very truly yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Clemens wrote very little for publication that year, but he enjoyed writing for his own amusement, setting down the things that boiled, or bubbled, within him: mainly chapters on the inconsistencies of human deportment, human superstition and human creeds. The "Letters from the Earth" referred to in the following, were supposed to have

been written by an immortal visitant from some far realm to a friend, describing the absurdities of mankind. It is true, as he said, that they would not do for publication, though certainly the manuscript contains some of his most delicious writing. Miss Wallace, to whom the next letter is written, had known Mark Twain in Bermuda, and, after his death, published a dainty volume entitled Mark Twain in the Happy Island.

“STORMFIELD,” REDDING,  
CONNECTICUT,  
13, '09.

Nov.

DEAR BETSY,—I've been writing “Letters from the Earth,” and if you will come here and see us I will—what? Put the MS in your hands, with the places to skip marked? No. I won't trust you quite that far. I'll read messages to you. This book will never be published—in fact it couldn't be, because it would be felony to soil the mails with it, for it has much Holy Scripture in it of the kind that... can't properly be read aloud, except from the pulpit and in family worship. Paine enjoys it, but Paine is going to be damned one of these days, I suppose.

The autumn splendors passed you by? What a pity. I wish you had been here. It was beyond words! It was heaven and hell and sunset and rainbows and the aurora all fused into one divine harmony, and you couldn't look at it and keep the tears back. All the hosannahing strong gorgeousnesses have gone back to heaven and hell and the pole, now, but no matter; if you could look out of my bedroom window at this moment, you would choke up; and when you got your voice you would say: This is not real, this is a dream. Such a singing together, and such a whispering together, and such a snuggling together of cosy soft colors, and such kissing and caressing, and such pretty blushing when the sun breaks out and catches those dainty weeds at it—you remember that weed-garden of mine?—and then—then the far hills sleeping in a dim blue trance—oh, hearing about it is nothing, you should be here to see it.

Good! I wish I could go on the platform and read. And I could, if it could be kept out of the papers. There's a charity-school of 400 young girls in Boston that I would give my ears to talk to, if I had some more; but—oh, well, I can't go, and it's no use to grieve about it.

This morning Jean went to town; also Paine; also the butler; also Katy; also the laundress. The cook and the maid, and the boy and the roustabout and Jean's coachman are left—just enough to make it lonesome, because they are around yet never visible. However, the Harpers are sending Leigh up to play billiards; therefore I shall survive.



Affectionately,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Early in June that year, Clemens had developed unmistakable symptoms of heart trouble of a very serious nature. It was angina pectoris, and while to all appearances he was as well as ever and usually felt so, he was periodically visited by severe attacks of acute "breast pains" which, as the months passed, increased in frequency and severity. He was alarmed and distressed—not on his own account, but because of his daughter Jean—a handsome girl, who had long been subject to epileptic seizures. In case of his death he feared that Jean would be without permanent anchorage, his other daughter, Clara—following her marriage to Ossip Gabrilowitsch in October—having taken up residence abroad.

This anxiety was soon ended. On the morning of December 24th, Jean Clemens was found dead in her apartment. She was not drowned in her bath, as was reported, but died from heart exhaustion, the result of her malady and the shock of cold water.

[Questionable diagnosis! D.W. M.D.]

The blow to her father was terrible, but heavy as it was, one may perhaps understand that her passing in that swift, painless way must have afforded him a measure of relief.

---

To Mrs. Gabrilowitsch, in Europe:

CONN.,  
'09.

REDDING,  
Dec. 29,

O, Clara, Clara dear, I am so glad she is out of it and safe—safe! I am not melancholy; I shall never be melancholy again, I think. You see, I was in such distress when I came to realize that you were gone far away and no one stood between her and danger but me—and I could die at any moment, and then—oh then what would become of her! For she was wilful, you know, and would not have been governable.

You can't imagine what a darling she was, that last two or three days; and how fine, and good, and sweet, and noble-and joyful, thank Heaven!—and how intellectually brilliant. I had never been acquainted with Jean before. I recognized that.

But I mustn't try to write about her—I can't. I have already poured my heart out with the pen, recording that last day or two.

I will send you that—and you must let no one but Ossip read it.

Good-bye.

I love you so!  
And Ossip.  
FATHER.

The writing mentioned in the last paragraph was his article 'The Death of Jean,' his last serious writing, and one of the world's most beautiful examples of elegiac prose.—[Harper's Magazine, Dec., 1910,] and later in the volume, 'What Is Man and Other Essays.'

## **XLVIII. LETTERS OF 1910. LAST TRIP TO BERMUDA. LETTERS TO PAINE. THE LAST LETTER.**

Mark Twain had returned from a month's trip to Bermuda a few days

before Jean died. Now, by his physician's advice, he went back to

those balmy islands. He had always loved them, since his first trip

there with Twichell thirty-three years earlier, and at "Bay House,"

the residence of Vice-Consul Allen, where he was always a welcome

guest, he could have the attentions and care and comforts of a home.

Taking Claude, the butler, as his valet, he sailed January 5th, and

presently sent back a letter in which he said, "Again I am leading

the ideal life, and am immeasurably content."

By his wish, the present writer and his family were keeping the

Stormfield house open for him, in order that he might be able to

return to its comforts at any time. He sent frequent letters—one

or two by each steamer—but as a rule they did not concern matters

of general interest. A little after his arrival, however, he wrote

concerning an incident of his former visit—a trivial matter—but

one which had annoyed him. I had been with him in Bermuda on the

earlier visit, and as I remember it, there had been some slight

oversight on his part in the matter of official etiquette—something

which doubtless no one had noticed but himself.

---

To A. B. Paine, in Redding:

BAY HOUSE, Jan.

11, 1910.

DEAR PAINE,—... There was a military lecture last night at the Officer's Mess, prospect, and as the lecturer honored me with a special and urgent invitation and said he wanted to lecture to me particularly, I being "the greatest living master of the platform-art," I naturally packed Helen and her mother into the provided carriage and went.

As soon as we landed at the door with the crowd the Governor came to me at once and was very cordial, and apparently as glad to see me as he said he was. So that incident is closed. And pleasantly and entirely satisfactorily. Everything is all right, now, and I am no longer in a clumsy and awkward situation.

I "met up" with that charming Colonel Chapman, and other officers of the regiment, and had a good time.

Commandant Peters of the "Carnegie" will dine here tonight and arrange a private visit for us to his ship, the crowd to be denied access.

Sincerely Yours,

S. L. C.

"Helen" of this letter was Mr. and Mrs. Allen's young daughter,

a favorite companion of his walks and drives. "Loomis" and "Lark,"

mentioned in the letters which follow, were Edward E. Loomis—his

nephew by marriage—named by Mark Twain as one of the trustees of

his estate, and Charles T. Lark, Mark Twain's attorney.

---

To A. B. Paine, in Redding:

HAMILTON, Jan.

21, '10.

DEAR PAINE,—Thanks for your letter, and for its contenting news of the situation in that foreign and far-off and vaguely-remembered country where you and Loomis and Lark and other beloved friends are.

I have a letter from Clara this morning. She is solicitous, and wants me well and watchfully taken care of. My, she ought to see Helen and her parents and Claude administer that trust!

Also she says: "I hope to hear from you or Mr. Paine very soon."

I am writing her, and I know you will respond to your part of her prayer. She is pretty desolate now, after Jean's emancipation—the only kindness God ever did that poor unoffending child in all her hard life.

Ys ever

S. L. C.

Send Clara a copy of Howells's gorgeous letter. I want a copy of my article that he is speaking of.

The "gorgeous letter" was concerning Mark Twain's article, "The

Turning-point in My Life" which had just appeared in one of the

Harper publications. Howells wrote of it, "While your wonderful

words are warm in my mind yet, I want to tell you what you know

already: that you never wrote anything greater, finer, than that

turning-point paper of yours."

From the early Bermuda letters we may gather that Mark Twain's days were enjoyable enough, and that his malady was not giving him serious trouble, thus far. Near the end of January he wrote: "Life continues here the same as usual. There isn't a flaw in it. Good times, good home, tranquil contentment all day and every day, without a break. I shouldn't know how to go about bettering my situation." He did little in the way of literary work, probably finding neither time nor inclination for it. When he wrote at all it was merely to set down some fanciful drolleries with no thought of publication.

---

To Prof. William Lyon Phelps, Yale College:

HAMILTON, March

12.

DEAR PROFESSOR PHELPS,—I thank you ever so much for the book —[Professor Phelps's Essays on Modern Novelists.]—which I find charming—so charming indeed, that I read it through in a single night, and did not regret the lost night's sleep. I am glad if I deserve what you have said about me: and even if I don't I am proud and well contented, since you think I deserve it.

Yes, I saw Prof. Lounsbury, and had a most pleasant time with him. He ought to have staid longer in this little paradise—partly for his own sake, but mainly for mine.

I knew my poor Jean had written you. I shall not have so dear and sweet a secretary again.

Good health to you, and all good fortune attend you.

Sincerely yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

He would appear to have written not many letters besides those to

Mrs. Gabrilowitsch and to Stormfield, but when a little girl sent

him a report of a dream, inspired by reading *The Prince and the*

*Pauper*, he took the time and trouble to acknowledge it, realizing,

no doubt, that a line from him would give the child happiness.

---

To Miss Sulamith, in New York:

"BAY HOUSE," BERMUDA, March 21,  
1910.

DEAR MISS SULAMITH,—I think it is a remarkable dream for a girl of 13 to have dreamed, in fact for a person of any age to have dreamed, because it moves by regular grade and sequence from the beginning to the end, which is not the habit of dreams. I think your report of it is a good piece of work, a clear and effective statement of the vision.

I am glad to know you like the "Prince and the Pauper" so well and I believe with you that the dream is good evidence of that liking. I think I may say, with your sister that I like myself best when I am serious.

Sincerely yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Through February, and most of March, letters and reports from him were about the same. He had begun to plan for his return, and concerning amusements at Stormfield for the entertainment of the neighbors, and for the benefit of the library which he had founded soon after his arrival in Redding. In these letters he seldom mentioned the angina pains that had tortured him earlier. But once, when he sent a small photograph of himself, it seemed to us that his face had become thin and that he had suffered. Certainly his next letter was not reassuring.

---

To A. B. Paine, in Redding:

DEAR PAINE,—We must look into the magic-lantern business. Maybe the modern lantern is too elaborate and troublesome for back-settlement use, but we can inquire. We must have some kind of a show at “Stormfield” to entertain the countryside with.

We are booked to sail in the “Bermudian” April 23rd, but don't tell anybody, I don't want it known. I may have to go sooner if the pain in my breast doesn't mend its ways pretty considerably. I don't want to die here for this is an unkind place for a person in that condition. I should have to lie in the undertaker's cellar until the ship would remove me and it is dark down there and unpleasant.

The Colliers will meet me on the pier and I may stay with them a week or two before going home. It all depends on the breast pain—I don't want to die there. I am growing more and more particular about the place.



With love,  
S. L. C.

This letter had been written by the hand of his "secretary," Helen

Allen: writing had become an effort to him. Yet we did not suspect

how rapidly the end was approaching and only grew vaguely alarmed.

A week later, however, it became evident that his condition was critical.

DEAR PAINE,—.... I have been having a most uncomfortable time for the past 4 days with that breast-pain, which turns out to be an affection of the heart, just as I originally suspected. The news from New York is to the effect that non-bronchial weather has arrived there at last, therefore if I can get my breast trouble in traveling condition I may sail for home a week or two earlier than has heretofore been proposed:

Yours as ever  
S. L. CLEMENS,  
(per H. S. A.)

In this letter he seems to have forgotten that his trouble had been

pronounced an affection of the heart long before he left America,

though at first it had been thought that it might be gastritis.

The same mail brought a letter from Mr. Allen explaining fully the

seriousness of his condition. I sailed immediately for Bermuda,

arriving there on the 4th of April. He was not suffering at the

moment, though the pains came now with alarming frequency and

violence. He was cheerful and brave. He did not complain. He gave

no suggestion of a man whose days were nearly ended.

A part of the Stormfield estate had been a farm, which

he had given  
to Jean Clemens, where she had busied herself raising  
some live  
stock and poultry. After her death he had wished the  
place to be  
sold and the returns devoted to some memorial purpose.  
The sale had  
been made during the winter and the price received had  
been paid in  
cash. I found him full of interest in all affairs, and  
anxious to  
discuss the memorial plan. A day or two later he  
dictated the  
following letter—the last he would ever send.

It seemed fitting that this final word from one who had  
so long  
given happiness to the whole world should record a  
special gift to  
his neighbors.

---

To Charles T. Lark, in New York:

BERMUDA.

HAMILTON,

1910.

April 6,

DEAR MR. LARK,—I have told Paine that I want the money derived from the sale of the farm, which I had given, but not conveyed, to my daughter Jean, to be used to erect a building for the Mark Twain Library of Redding, the building to be called the Jean L. Clemens Memorial Building.

I wish to place the money \$6,000.00 in the hands of three trustees,—Paine and two others: H. A. Lounsbury and William E. Hazen, all of Redding, these trustees to form a building Committee to decide on the size

and plan of the building needed and to arrange for and supervise the work in such a manner that the fund shall amply provide for the building complete, with necessary furnishings, leaving, if possible, a balance remaining, sufficient for such repairs and additional furnishings as may be required for two years from the time of completion.

Will you please draw a document covering these requirements and have it ready by the time I reach New York (April 14th).

Very sincerely,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

We sailed on the 12th of April, reaching New York on the 14th, as he had planned. A day or two later, Mr. and Mrs. Gabrilowitsch, summoned from Italy by cable, arrived. He suffered very little after reaching Stormfield, and his mind was comparatively clear up to the last day. On the afternoon of April 21st he sank into a state of coma, and just at sunset he died. Three days later, at Elmira, New York, he was laid beside Mrs. Clemens and those others who had preceded him.

#### THE LAST DAY AT STORMFIELD

By BLISS CARMAN.

At Redding, Connecticut,  
The April sunrise pours  
Over the hardwood ridges  
Softening and greening now  
In the first magic of Spring.

The wild cherry-trees are in bloom,  
The bloodroot is white underfoot,  
The serene early light flows on,

Touching with glory the world,  
And flooding the large upper room

Where a sick man sleeps.  
Slowly he opens his eyes,  
After long weariness, smiles,  
And stretches arms overhead,  
While those about him take heart.

With his awakening strength,  
(Morning and spring in the air,  
The strong clean scents of earth,  
The call of the golden shaft,  
Ringing across the hills)  
He takes up his heartening book,  
Opens the volume and reads,  
A page of old rugged Carlyle,  
The dour philosopher  
Who looked askance upon life,  
Lurid, ironical, grim,  
Yet sound at the core.  
But weariness returns;  
He lays the book aside  
With his glasses upon the bed,  
And gladly sleeps. Sleep,  
Blessed abundant sleep,  
Is all that he needs.

And when the close of day  
Reddens upon the hills  
And washes the room with rose,  
In the twilight hush  
The Summoner comes to him  
Ever so gently, unseen,

Touches him on the shoulder;  
And with the departing sun  
Our great funning friend is gone.

How he has made us laugh!  
A whole generation of men  
Smiled in the joy of his wit.  
But who knows whether he was not  
Like those deep jesters of old  
Who dwelt at the courts of Kings,  
Arthur's, Pendragon's, Lear's,  
Plying the wise fool's trade,  
Making men merry at will,  
Hiding their deeper thoughts  
Under a motley array,—  
Keen-eyed, serious men,

Watching the sorry world,  
The gaudy pageant of life,  
With pity and wisdom and love?

Fearless, extravagant, wild,  
His caustic merciless mirth  
Was leveled at pompous shams.  
Doubt not behind that mask  
There dwelt the soul of a man,  
Resolute, sorrowing, sage,  
As sure a champion of good  
As ever rode forth to fray.

Haply—who knows?—somewhere  
In Avalon, Isle of Dreams,  
In vast contentment at last,  
With every grief done away,  
While Chaucer and Shakespeare wait,  
And Moliere hangs on his words,  
And Cervantes not far off  
Listens and smiles apart,  
With that incomparable drawl  
He is jesting with Dagonet now.

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