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Life on the Mississippi



密西西比河上

Mark Twain

〔美〕 马克·吐温

出版说明

有史以来,无论东方西方,皆有这样一些人——他们仰望星空,环视人类,目极八荒,思接千载;他们探索真理,创立学说,预设问题,启迪众生。这样一种人,我们称之为人类精英;他们披发沥血写就的著述,我们视之为不朽经典。而正是这样的人和书,在影响和推进着全人类的整体进步。

在此之中,毫无疑问,西方文化迥异于中国传统文化。一个世纪前的先哲们,在国门初开之际,即深明此理,而将西学大量引入中国,对中国在 20 世纪的崛起和发展,确曾影响深远。然而,经典浩瀚,殊多沧海遗珠;虽有百年译述充栋,却仍多千秋巨著无觅于市。且译作虽佳,终不如原著之精准;而多语对照,则更能阐隐发幽,得前贤之精髓。因是,值此新世纪初年,我社为继承和弘扬世界文化遗产,促进中西文化交流和提高国人英文阅读水平,特推出“英语阅读文库”。

本文库呈完全开放状,不限时代,不限学科,不限国别,不限数量。凡中外知识界公认的名著皆可入选,所选皆为英文原版或他语英译之善本,旨在与国内业已出版的大批汉译名著交相辉映,并方便学子参照互读,丰富知识,拓宽视野,加深对西方历史与文化的理解。由于国际之别,众多原版好书国人买不到、借不到甚或买不起。本文库则尽量首选国内尚未推出且便于阅读的大众经典,精编精校,分批推出,意在让国人以国内版书价而拥有外版书,为后代求知者行一扇方便法门。

海南出版社

2001 年 4 月

THE "BODY OF THE NATION."

BUT *the basin of the Mississippi is the BODY OF THE NATION.* All the other parts are but members, important in themselves, yet more important in their relations to this. Exclusive of the Lake basin and of 300,000 square miles in Texas and New Mexico, which in many aspects form a part of it, this basin contains about 1,250,000 square miles. In extent it is the second great valley of the world, being exceeded only by that of the Amazon. The valley of the frozen Obi approaches it in extent; that of the La Plata comes next in space, and probably in habitable capacity, having about $\frac{2}{3}$ of its area; then comes that of the Yenisei, with about $\frac{1}{3}$; the Lena, Amoor, Hoang-ho, Yang-tse-kiang, and Nile, $\frac{1}{4}$; the Ganges, less than $\frac{1}{4}$; the Indus, less than $\frac{1}{4}$; the Euphrates, $\frac{1}{4}$; the Rhine, $\frac{1}{16}$. It exceeds in extent the whole of Europe, exclusive of Russia, Norway, and Sweden. *It would contain Austria four times, Germany or Spain five times, France six times, the British Islands or Italy ten times.* Conceptions formed from the river-basins of Western Europe are rudely shocked when we consider the extent of the valley of the Mississippi; nor are those formed from the sterile basins of the great rivers of Siberia, the lofty plateaus of Central Asia, or the mighty sweep of the swampy Amazon more adequate. Latitude, elevation, and rainfall all combine to render every part of the Mississippi Valley capable of supporting a dense population. *As a dwelling-place for civilized man it is by far the first upon our globe.* — EDITOR'S TABLE, *Harper's Magazine*, February, 1863.

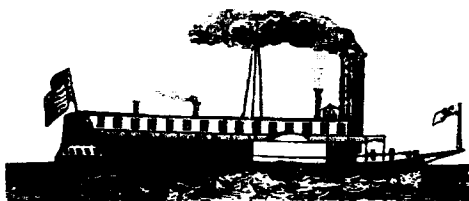
LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

BY

MARK TWAIN

AUTHOR OF "THE INNOCENTS ABROAD," "ROUGHING IT,"
"THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER," ETC.

WITH MORE THAN 300 ILLUSTRATIONS



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1883

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