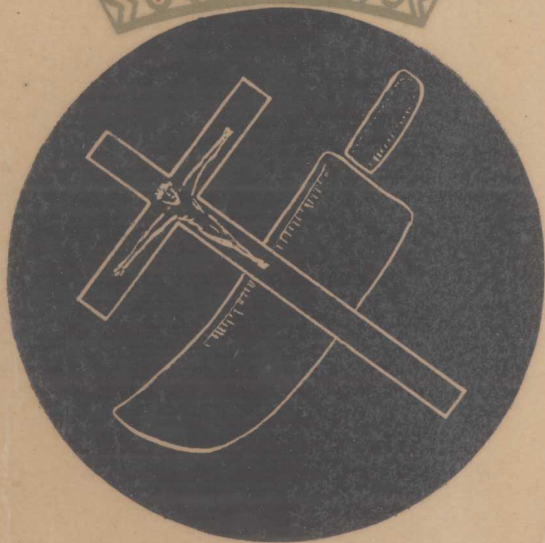


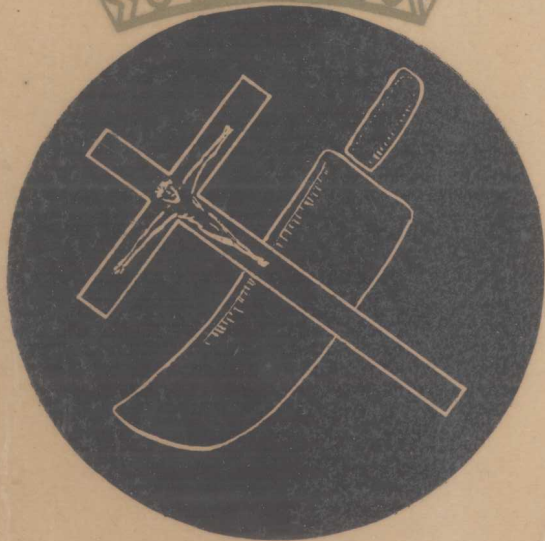
MARK TWAIN



**KING LEOPOLD'S
SOLILOQUY**

SEVEN SEAS BOOKS

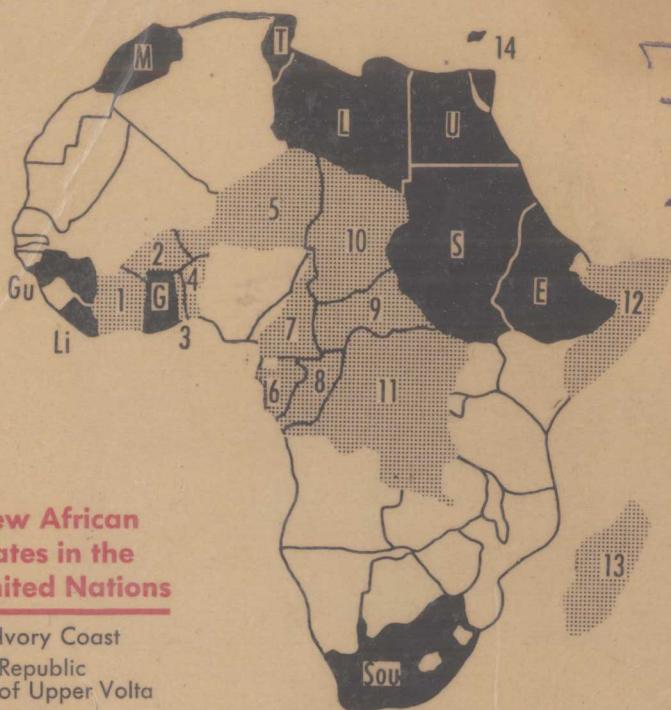
MARK TWAIN



**KING LEOPOLD'S
SOLILOQUY**

SEVEN SEAS BOOKS

African States in the United Nations



New African States in the United Nations

- 1 Ivory Coast
- 2 Republic of Upper Volta
- 3 Togo
- 4 Dahomey
- 5 Niger
- 6 Gabon
- 7 Cameroon
- 8 Congo Republic (formerly French)
- 9 Central African Republic
- 10 Chad
- 11 Republic of the Congo (formerly Belgian)
- 12 Somalia
- 13 Malagasy Republic
- 14 Cyprus

African States Previously Admitted to United Nations

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------|
| Gu | Guinea |
| Li | Liberia |
| G | Ghana |
| S | Sudan |
| Sou | Union of South Africa |
| M | Morocco |
| T | Tunisia |
| L | Libya |
| U | United Arab Republic |
| E | Ethiopia |

SEVEN SEAS BOOKS

A Collection of Works by Writers in the English Language



MARK TWAIN

KING LEOPOLD'S SOLILOQUY

MARK TWAIN

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KING LEOPOLD'S
SOLILOQUY

SEVEN SEAS PUBLISHERS
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"IT IS I"

Leopold II is the absolute Master of the whole of the internal and external activity of the Independent State of the Congo. The organization of justice, the army, the industrial

and commercial regimes are established freely by himself. He would say, and with greater accuracy than did Louis XIV, "The State, it is I." *Prof. F. Cattier, Brussels University.* Let us repeat after so many others what has become a platitude, the success of the African work is the work of a sole directing will, without being hampered by the hesitation of timorous politicians, carried out under his sole respon-

sibility - intelligent, thoughtful, conscious of the perils and the advantages, discounting with an admirable prescience the great results of a near future." *M. Alfred Poskine in "Bilans Congolais."*

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INTRODUCTION

If after more than half a century a man's words still have the force of dynamite, you' cannot call him a clown. They tried that in his lifetime; they tried to bury him under that caption for fifty years after his death; but Mark Twain the fighter refused to stay buried, and his pen, sharp and merciless, is still a weapon.

Mark Twain took seriously the writer's duty to be the conscience of his time. He risked fortune, success, the applause of the press and the favors of the government; he turned his humor into stinging satire; and the harder certain of his contemporaries attempted to type him a funny man, the angrier he became.

Yes, the man who made millions laugh was an angry man because he was a seeing man. He saw what went on in the world around him, and he refused to blind himself or encrust his heart with complacency. He saw who was enemy and who was friend; he sided with the Filipinos who were butchered by the U. S. Army; with the Chinese massacred by the troops of Russia's Czar and Germany's Kaiser, Britain's King and America's President; with the Negroes lynched by church-going, God-fearing white Southern hypocrites; and with the

workers bled and exploited everywhere. He hit, and he hit hard; nor did he cringe when the stuff started flying.

He would have been invaluable for us today, for our fight. We could use Mark Twain's pen!

In fact, we do use it – now.

Mark Twain's pen rips a large, jagged tear into a blanket of silence. The men who ruled the Congo in Mark Twain's time liked silence – as do their successors of today. Such men operate best in the dark, and nothing disturbs them more than the sudden light of truth. That's why Mark Twain's political writings have largely been "forgotten"; that's why "King Leopold's Soliloquy" isn't contained in any edition of his works we know of and why this is the first reprint since the original publication, 1905, in Boston and, 1906, in England.

The conspiracy of silence began almost immediately after the book appeared. The impact of "King Leopold's Soliloquy" had been terrific. By December, 1905, Henry I. Kowalsky, one of the Belgian King's agents in the United States, reports to his boss of the strong anti-Leopold movement that has sprung up. "Monster petitions have been circulated and signed," he writes, "the industry of the opposition is very manifest, and I can assure you that you cannot afford to turn a deaf ear to what

I am saying." And though every quip coming from Mark Twain made headlines in the American press, on this issue the newspapers remained silent. Their discretion becomes understandable when we learn that, in 1906, King Leopold permitted a few Americans to buy into his Congo business: Messrs. J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Thomas Fortune Ryan, and Daniel Guggenheim. Their money has been in the Congo business ever since.

Mark Twain could hardly have been surprised at this. He knew the nature of the forces against whom he had arraigned himself. He was intensely aware of the changes in his country which the end of the nineteenth century had seen effected. In March, 1899, the *New York World* could report, "More industrial trusts and monopolistic 'combines' were formed in 1898 than in the entire quarter of a century since the Standard Oil Company, parent and pattern of American monopoly, first began to destroy competition in illuminating oil."

Along with monopoly came its grab for other lands, came imperialism. Mark Twain not only knew the term, he knew the workings of the thing, its essence. In his book "Following the Equator," published 1897, Twain writes, "In many countries we have chained the savage and starved him to death . . . in many countries we have burned the

savage at the stake . . . we have hunted the savage and his little children and their mother with dogs and guns . . . in many countries we have taken the savage's land from him, and made him our slave, and lashed him every day, and broken his pride and made death his only friend, and overworked him till he dropped in his tracks . . ." And, "There are many humorous things in the world; among them the white man's notion that he is less savage than other savages."

Mark Twain knew imperialism. And he knew its corroding influence on democracy in America, on his own people. "Money is the supreme idea," he writes to his friend Twichell. "Money-lust has always existed, but not in the history of the world was it ever a craze, a madness, until your time and mine." And he adds that it has made his own America "hard, sordid, ungentle, dishonest, oppressive."

Mark Twain did not learn about imperialism from books. He knew Gorki and befriended him; but he did not know Lenin or Lenin's thoughts on the subject. Mark Twain observed certain trends and reached conclusions from what he saw. He traveled widely and noted imperialism in operation abroad; within the borders of his country he saw imperialism's reflection in the treatment of Chinese and Negroes.

And he heard the cant of imperialism, the verbiage which later on, almost word for word, he was to let drip from King Leopold's lips in the "Soliloquy." He heard President McKinley declaim, in 1899, to a delegation of Methodists, "... there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best by them as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died."

So Mark Twain took his stand. "I am an anti-imperialist," he stated to the press. That was in the fall of 1900, upon his return to the United States. "I am opposed to having the eagle put his talons on any other land."

It seems strange, then, that in this book against Leopold of Belgium, one of the biggest brigands ever spawned by imperialism, Mark Twain never uses the word. Instead, he concentrates on the person, on the king: including the revelation of details of Leopold's private life. Had Twain forgotten the general truth over the horrors of the special case? Had he been carried away by that fascination with, and contempt for, nobility and royalty which bob up in his works, from "Huckleberry Finn" with its *Duke of Bilgewater* and the wanderin', exiled, trampled-on, and sufferin' rightful King of France,

through "The American Claimant," "The Prince and the Pauper," "Joan of Arc," "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," and on to the two great soliloquies he wrote, the "Czar's" and "King Leopold's"?

Mark Twain, always a man of strong loves and hates, never lets emotion carry him away from the rules of his craft. "King Leopold's Soliloquy," though written at white heat, also shows the conscious use of structure, the proper dosage of ideas, the calculated effect of repetition, the relentless drive at the exact points the author wishes to make. Mark Twain the artist remains an artist even when a propagandist; Twain artfully chooses to flail King Leopold the individual, in the flesh, concrete, rather than some abstractism, knowing that in hitting Leopold he strikes the straightest blow at the ism he hates.

Mark Twain didn't pick his target lightly. When in the fall of 1904 Mr. E. D. Morel, head of the Congo Reform Association in England, asked Mark Twain to lend his pen "for the cause of the Congo natives," the request reached a man ready and willing. On Thanksgiving Day of the same year, Mark Twain had let off steam with a piece he never published, entitled "A Thanksgiving Sentiment." His sentiment that day was, "We have much to be thankful for. Our free Republic being the