

MARK TWAIN

TOM SAWYER AND TOM SAWYER *Abroad* *Detective*

Introduction by
Dr. Beryl Rowland

COMPLETE
AND UNABRIDGED



TOM SAWYER
Abroad

AND

TOM SAWYER
Detective

MARK TWAIN



AIRMONT

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MARK TWAIN

Introduction

In 1878 a hobo was traveling by rail from Cincinnati to Washington, D.C. He had no ticket but he did possess a short note from Mark Twain, whom he had never met. When he showed this letter to the conductor, the conductor said smilingly: "That will do. I like Twain." With the same letter he obtained free hospitality, but eventually he had to surrender part of it to another conductor who wanted Twain's signature for his wife.

"My wife is a great admirer of Mr. Clemens," explained the conductor. "Give me his autograph, or signature, and I will pass you through safe and sound."

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), better known as Mark Twain, enjoyed a popularity, almost a veneration, which Men of Letters rarely experience. This was because his art was oral as well as literary. He was one of the outstanding pioneer types, the "funny man," and he brought his humor to the people not only through his writings but by means of lectures which he gave in many parts of the country. For years, he was a most spectacular entertainer, a genial, confident figure with a shock of white hair, a spotless

white suit, a black cigar, and a quip suited to the occasion. His humor was of the type which pioneer society seemed to need in order to keep a psychic equilibrium. It was Western, the kind described by Albert B. Paine in his biography of Twain:

It grew out of a distinct condition—the battle with the frontier. The fight was so desperate, to take it seriously was to surrender. Women laughed that they might not weep; men, when they could no longer swear. “Western Humor” was the result. It is the freshest, wildest humor in the world, but there is tragedy behind it.

Samuel Clemens was born in the village of Florida, Missouri, but spent most of his early life in the frontier town of Hannibal, the steamboat stop which was later to be the starting point for his masterpiece, *Huckleberry Finn*. His father considered himself to be something of an aristocrat, but the income he received from practicing law, from trading in various commodities and from dealing in real estate was little enough to support a growing family. In 1847 he died and Sam, at twelve, was apprenticed to the printer's trade. Like many other American writers such as Poe, Whitman, and Hemingway, his basic training was to be in journalism. He set type, reported, edited, wrote features for newspapers from coast to coast. He also followed the native tradition of the writer as man of action and traveler. He saw the Eastern cities as a journeyman printer; he explored the steamboats of the Mississippi as a cub reporter; he briefly became secretary to Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada; he went to California and Honolulu as miner, printer, and journalist. His first successful book, *The Innocents Abroad*, published in 1869, was the result of an assignment for a San Francisco newspaper, the *Alta California*, which sent him on one of the Quaker City's earliest Mediterranean cruises to Europe and Palestine.

A year later he married Olivia Langdon, daughter of a wealthy coal dealer and mine owner of Elmira, New York.

The father-in-law, impressed by Twain's whimsical charm, gave the couple a splendid house in Buffalo on fashionable Delaware Avenue. The roving reporter was transformed almost overnight into a respected citizen.

"My princess has come down to dinner," Twain wrote shortly after his wedding, "(bless me, isn't it cosy, nobody but just us two, and three servants to wait on us and respectfully call us Mr. and Mrs. Clemens instead of Sam and Livy.) It took me many a year to work up to where I can put on style, but now I'll do it."

Roughing It (1872) was in the genre of the humorous, journalistic travelogue. His first attempt at full-length fiction was an unsuccessful work, *The Gilded Age* (1873), written in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner. Then in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), three books which are virtually parts of one great work, he was able to combine both genres and to insure for himself a permanent place in American Letters. It is for this masterpiece, which culminates in a folk epic of the eternal quest for personal maturity and for meaning to life, that Twain is most widely known today.

Everything he published succeeded: *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), in which a prince exchanges places with a subject and learns at first hand of poverty and misery in Elizabethan England, and *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (1889). In the novels, however, underneath the humor, is a mordant view of human failings, a foreshadowing of the pessimism which was to dominate his later life.

An unwise investment made Twain bankrupt in 1885, and at the age of sixty, in ill-health, he started on a world lecture tour to pay off his creditors. Other personal tragedy followed. He wrote incessantly with a vision which at times seems remarkably similar to that of his contemporary Thomas Hardy—a view, never very popular, that man is helpless in the grip of the inexorable forces of the universe.

This somber view is reflected in Twain's later short stories. Man, completely determined by heredity and environment, is significant. Perhaps existence is only a dream.

The two Tom-Huck sequels, *Tom Sawyer Abroad* and *Tom Sawyer, Detective*, are livelier works than some critics would have us believe. Huck Finn is the narrator in both, and at times the narration has the colloquial vigor and dramatic quality of the earlier masterpiece. In the first of these works, Tom and Huck take a journey in a balloon. Their destination is England, but after a hilarious nightmare ride they land in Africa, instead.

In the second work, Tom and Huck return to the Arkansas village. The crime which engages the attention of the amateur sleuths involves both murder and theft, and Tom's uncle himself confesses to the capital crime. The ending has a dramatic twist. In the final courtroom drama, Tom, by his use of psychology and careful observation, proves himself to be a true detective. Twain claimed that his tale was based on a criminal trial in Sweden, including the public confession of the accused man. His assurance is interesting, because the story itself is complicated and unusual.

Twain's humorous short stories belong mainly to the early period. He showed complete mastery of this kind of writing in "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" (later named "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"), which was published in the *New York Saturday Press* in 1865, and he frequently inserted short fictional stories into non-fictional works. These tales are the folklore of the frontier, the tall story told with a poker face and a Southern drawl, created with an art which is oral as well as literary.

A familiar figure in these tales is the naïve observer, the good-natured dupe. At Niagara Falls, on the Canadian side, he is pitched into the rapids by some irate merchants from Limerick whom he mistakes for noble Red Men. At Jersey City he mislays a royal Siamese White Elephant which he has undertaken to deliver to the Queen of England, and he engages the most inept and most expensive detectives in New

York to find it. Breathless with admiration, he records the sleuthing operations which are to bilk him of his entire resources. Sometimes we feel that we follow the wildly improbable events simply to find out when the fool will wake up, face facts. Often it is the speaking voice which impels us on. The "once upon a time" is told in a language which convinces us that it did really happen. It is to this kind of art that many archetypal stories owe their continued existence. Through them, we get new insight into life; a feeling of well-being, too, because the hilarious misfortunes seem to stem from follies which we ourselves are incapable of committing.

BERYL ROWLAND
York University.

TOM SAWYER ABROAD

CHAPTER 1—Tom Seeks New Adventures

Do you reckon Tom Sawyer was satisfied after all them adventures? I mean the adventures we had down the river, and the time we set the darky Jim free and Tom got shot in the leg. No, he wasn't. It only just p'isoned him for more. That was all the effect it had. You see, when we three came back up the river in glory, as you may say, from that long travel, and the village received us with a torchlight procession and speeches, and everybody hurrah'd and shouted, it made us heroes, and that was what Tom Sawyer had always been hankering to be.

For a while he *was* satisfied. Everybody made much of him, and he tilted up his nose and stepped around the town as though he owned it. Some called him Tom Sawyer the Traveler, and that just swelled him up fit to bust. You see he laid over me and Jim considerable, because we only went down the river on a raft and came back by the steamboat, but Tom went by the steamboat both ways. The boys envied me and Jim a good deal, but land! they just knuckled to the dirt before TOM.

Well, I don't know; maybe he might have been satisfied if it hadn't been for old Nat Parsons, which was postmaster, and powerful long and slim, and kind o' good-hearted and silly, and bald-headed, on account of his age, and about the talkiest old cretur I ever see. For as much as thirty years he'd been the only man in the village that had a reputation—I mean a reputation for being a traveler, and of course he was mortal proud of it, and it was reckoned that in the course of that thirty years he had told about that journey over a million times and enjoyed it every time. And now comes along a boy not quite fifteen, and sets everybody ad-

miring and gawking over *his* travels, and it just give the poor old man the high strikes. It made him sick to listen to Tom, and to hear the people say "My land!" "Did you ever!" "My goodness sakes alive!" and all such things, but he couldn't pull away from it, any more than a fly that's got its hind leg fast in the molasses. And always when Tom come to a rest, the poor old cretur would chip in on *his* same old travels and work them for all they were worth; but they were pretty faded, and didn't go for much, and it was pitiful to see. And then Tom would take another innings, and then the old man again—and so on, and so on, for an hour and more, each trying to beat out the other.

You see, Parsons' travels happened like this: When he first got to be postmaster and was green in the business, there come a letter for somebody he didn't know, and there wasn't any such person in the village. Well, he didn't know what to do, nor how to act, and there the letter stayed, and stayed, week in and week out, till the bare sight of it gave him a conniption. The postage wasn't paid on it, and that was another thing to worry about. There wasn't any way to collect that ten cents, and he reckoned the gov'ment would hold him responsible for it and maybe turn him out besides, when they found he hadn't collected it. Well, at last he couldn't stand it any longer. He couldn't sleep nights, he couldn't eat, he was thinned down to a shadder, yet he dasn't ask anybody's advice, for the very person he asked for advice might go back on him and let the gov'ment know about the letter. He had the letter buried under the floor, but that did no good; if he happened to see a person standing over the place it'd give him the cold shivers, and loaded him up with suspicions, and he would sit up that night till the town was still and dark, and then he would sneak there and get it out and bury it in another place. Of course, people got to avoiding him and shaking their heads and whispering, because, the way he was looking and acting, they judged he had killed somebody or done something terrible, they didn't know what, and if he had been a stranger they would've lynched him.

Well, as I was saying, it got so he couldn't stand it any longer; so he made up his mind to pull out for Washington,