

# THE EVOLUTION OF A GREAT AMERICAN HUMORIST

ALL THE WAY FROM PRINTER'S DEVIL TO SEPTUAGENARIAN BEAU BRUMMEL IN WHITE BROADCLOTH FOR EVENING AND WHITE FLANNEL FOR DAY ATTIRE



In 1870



In 1875



About 1876



In 1878



About 1886

## HUMORIST

Seven Years Ago



THOSE who knew Mark Twain as a boy—there are still a few of them in the flesh—can see clearly now—now, be it noted—that he possessed the earmarks of genius. It is a well recognized fact that between genius and congenial slowness of intellect there is only an almost indistinguishable line. Mark Twain's early associates almost without exception placed him on the wrong side of that faintly defined dividing line.

For his slow, shambling gait, his halting speech, his peculiar manner and queerer sayings made him an exception among the boys of the little Missouri hamlet of Hannibal, in which he was born as long ago as 1835. It is also remembered of him that at the period of his early youth he was so abnormally unattractive in person that he won the sobriquet of Brannface—a lank, ungainly lad with a bushy head of sorrel hair and a face so plentifully besprinkled with freckles that the original appearance of his skin was almost lost.

In the little log schoolhouse at Hannibal, in which the pupils were taught to "sing jogafray" and to recite the multiplication table with a united bravado that must have been an excellent thing for the lunk, Mark Twain received all the education he ever had from pedagogical sources. To attempt the history of the Mark Twain of that period would be a work of supererogation, for it is recorded in "Tom Sawyer" with a facility and grace of expression that no man may imitate. Although the author of that inimitable production has been chary of his identification of himself in the hero who has been the delight of such multitudes of boys of all ages, there are still living at Hannibal certain white haired men and women who are perfectly willing to vouch for the truth of the essential part of that wonderful recital.

After five years' experience in a local printery, the usual experience of a printer's devil who was believed to be endowed with no especial capacity for the business, Mark Twain was in-

broy printers to accompany them to St. Louis. The quartet obtained employment on the Christian Advocate, the official organ of the Methodist conference, and lived in an attic which soon became the "sky parlor" in the elastic vernacular of the four "razz-doots from Hannibal" as they were known in the office of the Advocate.

At this time Mark Twain was the only one of the quartet who was not an out and out humorist. Droll he could not help being, but his drollery passed for stupidity, and he was the butt of every joke the others chose to perpetrate. Once they roused him at 2 o'clock in the morning and sent him to the composing room on a forged order from the foreman to "set" a certain piece of work before daylight. That was the cheerful atmosphere in which the future laughmaker of all the nations passed some years of his novitiate.

### How It Happened.

How Mark Twain became a river pilot is told best in his own words. It is an account that is less conspicuously humorous than are most of the personal reminiscences told in his later life, but it is instinct with the true Mark Twain felicity of expression. This period of the great humorist's life has been shrouded in more or less obscurity, and it has often been affirmed that he never "followed the river" at all. The following statement, made in a recent autobiographical moment by the person most interested, must be regarded as authoritative.

"One day in the midwinter of 1856 or 1857—I think it was 1856—I was coming along the main street of Keokuk in the middle of the forenoon. It was bitter weather—so bitter that the street was deserted almost. A light dry snow was blowing here and there on the ground and on the pavement, swirling in this way and that way and making all sorts of beautiful figures, but very chill to look at. The wind blew a piece of paper past me, and it lodged against a wall of a house. Something about the look of it attracted my attention and I fastened it. It

was a fifty dollar bill, the only one I had ever seen, and the largest assemblage of money I had ever encountered in one spot.

"I advertised it in the papers and suffered more than a thousand dollars' worth of solicitude and fear and distress during the next few days lest the owner should see the advertisement and come and take my fortune away. As many as four days went by without an applicant; then I could endure this kind of misery no longer. I felt sure that another four could not go by in this safe and secure way. I felt that I must take that money out of danger. So I bought a ticket for Cincinnati and went to that city. I worked there several months in the printing office of Wrightson & Co. I had been reading Lieutenant Heron's account of his exploration of the Amazon and had been mightily attracted by what he said of coca. I made up my mind that I would go to the head waters of the Amazon and collect coca and trade in it and make a fortune.

"I left New Orleans in the steamer Paul Jones with this great idea filling my mind. One of the pilots of that boat was Horace Bixby. Little by little I got acquainted with him, and pretty soon I was doing a lot of steering for him in his daylight watches. When I got to New Orleans I inquired about ships leaving for Para and discovered that there weren't any and learned that there probably wouldn't be any during that century. It had not occurred to me to inquire about these particulars before leaving Cincinnati, so there I was. I couldn't get to the Amazon. I had no friends in New Orleans and no money to speak of. I went to Horace Bixby and asked him to make a pilot out of me. He said he would do it for a hundred dollars cash in advance. So I steered for him up to St. Louis, borrowed the money from my brother-in-law and closed the bargain. I had acquired this brother-in-law several years before. This was William A. Moffett, a merchant, a Virginian—a fine man in every way. Within eighteen months I became a competent pilot, and I served that of-

fice until the Mississippi river traffic was brought to a standstill by the breaking out of the civil war."

### More Interesting Than Ever.

It is only the coming generations that will be taught the story of the evolution of the greatest American humorist, the long and fascinating process which has fashioned out of the crude little specimen of humanity launched in an obscure Missouri village over seventy years ago the most polished wit and sagacious funny man of his age. All his contemporaries know the story of the transformation of the homespun clad and markedly unprepossessing lad into the stately whitehaired septuagenarian who has solved the problem of fulfilling all the requirements of the most exacting social usages without relinquishing an atom of his laugh producing power. His is the genius that easily might override all purely social conventions, but Mark Twain shows not the slightest inclination to make use of his immunity. It is only in the matter of color that he betrays a disposition to exercise his right. Instead of the somber habiliments to which man has doomed himself and his successors—not forever, let us hope—he has chosen spotless white, soft flannel for day wear and snowy broadcloth for evening.

It is his present that concerns us, that interests and fascinates us. Every move he makes from now until the end will be fraught with burning interest. When he goes to England a little later in the season to receive the doctorate which Oxford, wishing to do herself an especial honor, will confer on him, we shall want to be kept posted as to everything that happens from the moment Mark Twain sets foot on British soil until he is safe at home again. We shall not only want to know all this, but we shall want to have it told in his inimitable way.

### A Recent Outbreak.

Mark Twain, it seems, is vice president of the Robert Fulton Memorial association, an organization which is charged with the duty of raising some

fit memorial to the man who is responsible for steam navigation on water. Last year the humorist was asked by the association to deliver a lecture for the benefit of the memorial enterprise, which was in need of funds. Those having the matter in charge made him an offer of \$1,000 if he would deliver a lecture in Carnegie hall, New York. Mark Twain replied that he had ceased talking for money and that he did not care to resume such a questionable habit after he had actually reformed. He admitted that he loved to hear himself talk because he got so much instruction and moral upheaval out of it. He said he thought it was time for him to make an end to public speaking on the lecture platform.

He received an avalanche of letters from all quarters imploring him to reconsider his determination. One of them was from General Frederick D.

Grant, begging him to change his mind. The old humorist replied:

"I mean the pay platform. I shan't retire from the gratis platform until after I am buried and courtesy requires me to keep still and not disturb the others. What shall I talk about? My idea is this: To instruct the audience about Robert Fulton, and—tell me—was that his real name or was it his nom de plume?"

"However, never mind, it is not important. I can skip it, and the house will think I knew all about it and forgot. Could you find out for me if he was one of the signers of the Declaration, and which one? But if it is any trouble let it alone, and I can skip it. Was he out with Paul Jones? Will you ask Horace Porter? And ask him if he brought both of them home."

"These will be very interesting facts if they can be established, but never-

mind, don't trouble Porter, I can establish them anyway. The way I look at it, they are historical gems—gems of the very first water."

"Well, that is my idea, as I have said. First excite the audience with a spoonful of information about Fulton, and then quiet them down with a barrel of illustrations drawn by memory from my books, and if you don't say anything the house will think they never heard it before, because people don't really read your books; they only say they do to keep you from feeling bad. "Next, excite the house with another spoonful of Fultonian fact, then tranquilize them with another barrel of illustration, and so on all through the evening, and if you are discreet and don't tell that the illustrations don't illustrate anything they won't notice it. I will send them home as well informed about Robert Fulton as I am myself. Don't be afraid, I know all about audiences. They believe everything you say—except when you are telling the truth."

"P. S.—Mark all the advertisements 'Private and Confidential,' otherwise the people won't read them."

GEORGE H. PICARD.

## MILLARD COUNTY LAND

Offers the best investment in the state.

I have several tracts of the best land in Millard county. The soil is excellent, there is an abundance of water and pure Lithia water for culinary purposes is plentiful. Some farms are already improved and stocked. I will sell either improved or unimproved at very low prices for a short time. Values are rapidly advancing. Write me for full information, or come and see for yourself. Get off at Oasis and you will be met at train and shown every courtesy.

RICHARD PARKER.

Address Hinckley, Millard Co., Utah.

### A TURKISH LAW.

From Bagdad a Bible society's agent reports that in the last consignment of British Bibles which he received there all the maps had been torn out which showed anything about Armenia. The dragoman of the British consulate at Bagdad explained that the name of Armenia on a map is forbidden in Turkey.

### A FIRE DEPARTMENT SURGEON.

Dr. Lillian M. Thomas has the proud distinction of being the only female surgeon attached to a fire department in the world. She is a regularly qualified member of the New York fire department, and she has proved herself



to be competent to fulfill the duties of the position. Dr. Thomas is slight and girlish, but she claims no exemption on account of her sex. Clad in rubber coat, cap and boots, she is as proof against the hardships of her position as is the sturdiest fireman.

### NEWSPAPER STATISTICS.

The number of newspapers issued in the United States is almost incredible. There are 19,600,000 copies issued every week day and 11,500,000 on Sundays. Advertisers pay \$150,000,000 yearly for space in American dailies.

### It is Said.

The lead in cheap pencils is sometimes made of coke.

The tree frogs of South America sing as musically as birds.

Sheep, in time of famine, eat the wool from one another's backs.

Game cocks sometimes take to catching mice, which they devour greedily.

Fox hunting is the most expensive of all sports, the maintenance of a fine pack of hounds, with horses, huntmen and whippers-in, costing \$7,000 a week.

Eagles' Day, June 19th, Salt Palace.

### EXCURSIONS TO SAN FRANCISCO

June 9 & 16, inclusive, via Oregon Short Line. See agents for rates and particulars.

## Nasal CATARRH

Ely's Cream Balm

cleanses, soothes and heals the diseased membrane. It cures catarrh and drives away a cold in the head quickly.

Cream Balm is placed into the nostrils, spreads over the membrane and is absorbed. Relief is immediate and a cure follows. It is not drying—does not produce sneezing. Large Size, 50 cents at Drug-gists or by mail; Trial Size, 10 cents.

ELY BROTHERS, 26 Warren Street, New York.

### EYE STRAIN AND EYE PAIN.

Red or Painful eyes are frequently the result of excessive strain. Good glasses invariably give instant relief. Ever tested and advice given without charge.

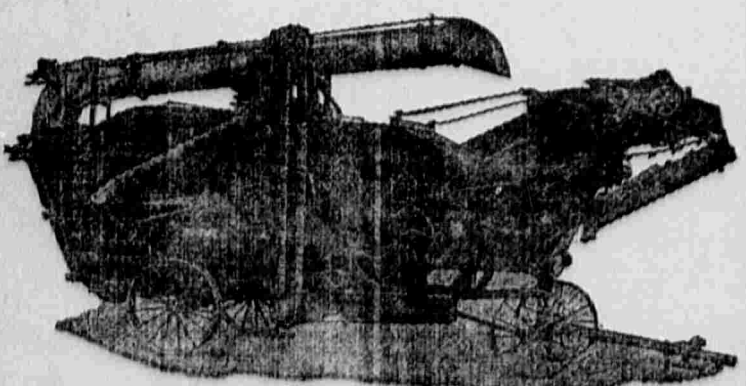
J. H. KNICKERBOCKER, O. D., Practical Optician, 143 Main St.

### Watches! Jewelry!

If your watch stops or does not give satisfaction send it to an Expert Watchmaker; work sent by mail or express will receive prompt attention. JAMES MARTIN, Jeweler, American Fork, Utah.

## REEVES' COMPOUND SEPARATOR

Has Double Separation.



This machine has special devices for saving and cleaning grain not found in other separators—write for special catalog—and don't fail to see this fast thrasher before buying.

We build the Reeves Cross-Compound Double-Cylinder Engines.

Reeves & Co., Denver, Col.

# THE NEW GAS SERVICE

Will enable you to cook better, quicker, cleaner and actually cheaper with Gas than you can by any other method. Gas is the ideal fuel and it costs but very little to have it put in your house. Our magnificent new plant is now completed and gas manufacture

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By all means select your Ranges and make applications for meters AT ONCE, or we will not be able to get you connected up by the time Gas is ready for you to use. We have a complete line of Gas Ranges and they are sold and installed at cost.

### FIFTEEN CARLOADS

Have already been received and four more are on the way. If you are anxious to be among the first to use Gas, don't neglect to come to our office right away and leave your orders, or phone for our representative to call on you.

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