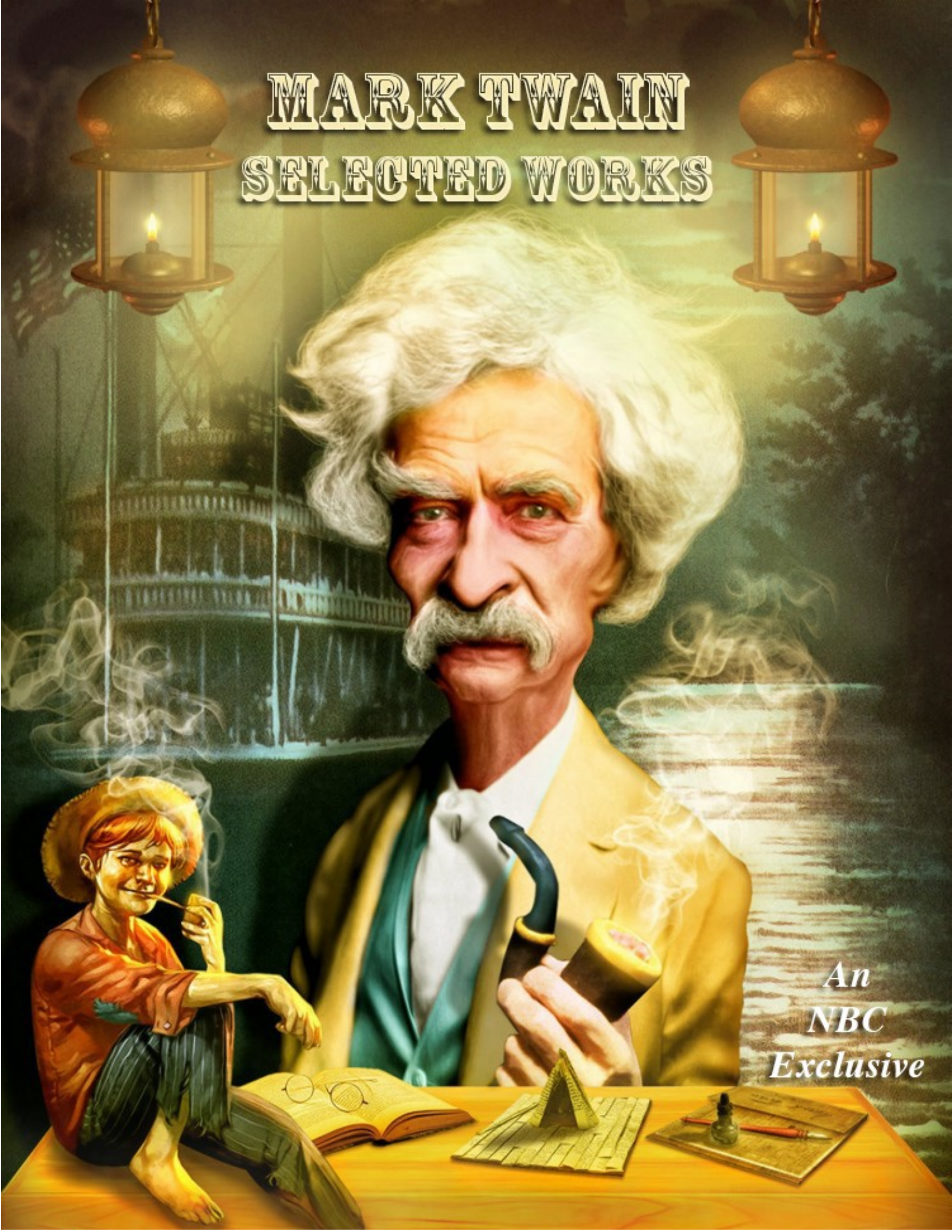


# MARK TWAIN SELECTED WORKS



*An  
NBC  
Exclusive*

# Mark Twain Selected Works

## An NBC Exclusive

Edited by Jason Dean

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# The Private History of a Campaign That Failed

By Mark Twain

You have heard from a great many people who did something in the war, is it not fair and right that you listen a little moment to one who started out to do something in it but didn't? Thousands entered the war, got just a taste of it, and then stepped out again permanently. These, by their very numbers, are respectable and therefore entitled to a sort of voice, not a loud one, but a modest one, not a boastful one but an apologetic one. They ought not be allowed much space among better people, people who did something. I grant that, but they ought at least be allowed to state why they didn't do anything and also to explain the process by which they didn't do anything. Surely this kind of light must have some sort of value.

Out west there was a good deal of confusion in men's minds during the first months of the great trouble, a good deal of unsettledness, of leaning first this way then that, and then the other way. It was hard for us to get our bearings. I call to mind an example of this. I was piloting on the Mississippi when the news came that South Carolina had gone out of the Union on the 20th of December, 1860. My pilot mate was a New Yorker. He was strong for the Union; so was I. But he would not listen to me with any patience, my loyalty was smirched, to his eye, because my father had owned slaves. I said in palliation of this dark fact that I had heard my father say, some years before he died, that slavery was a great wrong and he would free the solitary Negro he then owned if he could think it right to give away the property of the family when he was so straitened in means. My mate retorted that a mere impulse was nothing, anyone could pretend to a good impulse, and went on decrying my Unionism and libelling my ancestry. A month later the secession atmosphere had considerably thickened on the Lower Mississippi and I became a rebel; so did he. We were together in New Orleans the 26th of January, when Louisiana went out of the Union. He did his fair share of the rebel shouting but was opposed to letting me do mine. He said I came of bad stock, of a father who had been willing to set slaves free. In the following summer he was piloting a Union gunboat and shouting for the Union again and I was in the Confederate army. I held his note for some borrowed money. He was one of the most upright men I ever knew but he repudiated that note without hesitation because I was a rebel and the son of a man who owned slaves.

In that summer of 1861 the first wash of the wave of war broke upon the shores of Missouri. Our state was invaded by the Union forces. They took possession of St. Louis, Jefferson Barracks, and some other points. The governor, Calib Jackson, issued his proclamation calling out fifty thousand militia to repel the invader.

I was visiting in the small town where my boyhood had been spent, Hannibal, Marion County. Several of us got together in a secret place by night and formed ourselves into a military company. One Tom Lyman, a young fellow of a good deal of spirit but of no military experience, was made captain; I was made second lieutenant. We had no first lieutenant, I do not know why, it was so long ago. There were fifteen of us. By the advice of an

innocent connected with the organization we called ourselves the Marion Rangers. I do not remember that anyone found fault with the name. I did not, I thought it sounded quite well. The young fellow who proposed this title was perhaps a fair sample of the kind of stuff we were made of. He was young, ignorant, good natured, well meaning, trivial, full of romance, and given to reading chivalric novels and singing forlorn love ditties. He had some pathetic little nickel plated aristocratic instincts and detested his name, which was Dunlap, detested it partly because it was nearly as common in that region as Smith but mainly because it had a plebian sound to his ears. So he tried to ennoble it by writing it in this way; d'Unlap. That contented his eye but left his ear unsatisfied, for people gave the new name the same old pronunciation, emphasis on the front end of it. He then did the bravest thing that can be imagined, a thing to make one shiver when one remembers how the world is given to resenting shams and affectations, he began to write his name so; d'Un'Lap. And he waited patiently through the long storm of mud that was flung at his work of art and he had his reward at last, for he lived to see that name accepted and the emphasis put where he wanted it put by people who had known him all his life, and to whom the tribe of Dunlaps had been as familiar as the rain and the sunshine for forty years. So sure of victory at last is the courage that can wait. He said he had found by consulting some ancient French chronicles that the name was rightly and originally written d'Un'Lap and said that if it were translated into English it would mean Peterson, Lap, Latin or Greek, he said, for stone or rock, same as the French pierre, that is to say, Peter, d' of or from, un, a or one, hence d'Un'Lap, of or from a stone or a Peter, that is to say, one who is the son of a stone, the son of a peter, Peterson. Our militia company were not learned and the explanation confused them, so they called him Peterson Dunlap. He proved useful to us in his way, he named our camps for us and generally struck a name that was "no slouch" as the boys said.

That is one sample of us. Another was Ed Stevens, son of the town jeweller, trim built, handsome, graceful, neat as a cat, bright, educated, but given over entirely to fun. There was nothing serious in life to him. As far as he was concerned, this military expedition of ours was simply a holiday. I should say about half of us looked upon it in much the same way, not consciously perhaps, but unconsciously. We did not think, we were not capable of it. As for myself, I was full of unreasoning joy to be done with turning out of bed at midnight and four in the morning, for a while grateful to have a change, new scenes, new occupations, a new interest. In my thoughts that was as far as I went. I did not go into the details, as a rule, one doesn't at twenty four.

Another sample was Smith, the blacksmith's apprentice. This vast donkey had some pluck, of a slow and sluggish nature, but a soft heart. At one time he would knock a horse down for some impropriety and at another he would get homesick and cry. However, he had one ultimate credit to his account which some of us hadn't. He stuck to the war and was killed in battle at last.

Joe Bowers, another sample, was a huge, good natured, flax headed lubber, lazy, sentimental, full of harmless



brag, a grumbler by nature, an experience and industrious ambitious and often quite picturesque liar, and yet not a successful one for he had no intelligent training but was allowed to come up just anyways. This life was serious enough to him, and seldom satisfactory. But he was a good fellow anyway and the boys all liked him. He was made orderly sergeant, Stevens was made corporal.

These samples will answer and they are quite fair ones. Well, this herd of cattle started for the war. What could you expect of them? They did as well as they knew how, but really, what was justly expected of them? Nothing I should say. And that is what they did.

We waited for a dark night, for caution and secrecy were necessary, then toward midnight we stole in couples and from various directions to the Griggith place beyond town. From that place we set out together on foot. Hannibal lies at the extreme south eastern corner of Marion County, on the Mississippi river. Our objective point was the hamlet of New London, ten miles away in Ralls County.

The first hour was all fun, all idle nonsense and laughter. But that could not be kept up. The steady drudging became like work, the play had somehow oozed out of it, the stillness of the woods and the sombreness of the night began to throw a depressing influence over the spirits of the boys and presently the talking died out and each person shut himself up in his own thoughts. During the last half of the second hour nobody said a word.

Now we approached a log farmhouse where, according to reports, there was a guard of five Union soldiers. Lyman called a halt, and there, in the deep gloom of the overhanging branches, he began to whisper a plan of assault upon the house, which made the gloom more depressing than it was before. We realized with a cold suddenness that here was no jest--we were standing face to face with actual war. We were equal to the occasion. In our response there was no hesitation, no indecision. We said that if Lyman wanted to meddle with those soldiers he could go ahead and do it, but if he waited for us to follow him he would wait a long time.

Lyman urged, pleaded, tried to shame us into it, but it had no effect. Our course was plain in our minds, our minds were made up. We would flank the farmhouse, go out around. And that was what we did.

We struck into the woods and entered upon a rough time, stumbling over roots, getting tangled in vines and torn by briars. At last we reached an open place in a safe region and we sat down, blown and hot, to cool off and nurse our scratches and bruises. Lyman was annoyed but the rest of us were cheerful. We had flanked the farmhouse. We had made our first military movement and it was a success. We had nothing to fret about, we were feeling just the other way. Horse paly and laughing began again. The expedition had become a holiday frolic once more.

Then we had two more hours of dull trudging and ultimate silence and depression. Then about dawn, we straggled into New London, soiled, heel blistered, fagged with our little march, and all of us, except Stevens, in a sour and raspy humour and privately down on the war. We stacked our shabby old shotguns in Colonel Ralls's barn and then went in a body and breakfasted with that veteran of the Mexican war. Afterward he took us to a distant meadow, and there, in the shade of a tree, we listened to an old-fashioned speech from him, full of gunpowder and glory, full of that adjective piling, mixed metaphor and windy declamation which was regraded as eloquence in that ancient time and region and then he swore on a bible to be faithful to the State of Missouri and drive all invaders from her soil no matter whence they may come or under what flag they might march. This mixed us considerably and we could not just make out what service we were involved in, but Colonel Ralls, the practised politician and phrase juggler, was not similarly in doubt. He knew quite clearly he had invested us in the cause of the Southern Confederacy. He closed the solemnities by belting around me the sword which his neighbour, Colonel Brown, had worn at Buena Vista and Molino del Ray and he accompanied this act with another impressive blast.

Then we formed in line of battle and marched four hours to a shady and pleasant piece of woods on the border of a far-reaching expanse of a flowery prairie. It was an enchanting region for war, our kind of war.

We pierced the forest about half a mile and took up a strong position with some low and rocky hills behind us, and a purling limpid creek in front. Straightaway half the command was in swimming and the other half fishing. The ass with the French name gave the position a romantic title but it was too long so the boys shortened and simplified it to Camp Ralls.

We occupied an old maple sugar camp whose half-rotted troughs were still propped against the trees. A long corn crib served for sleeping quarters for the battalion. On our left, half a mile away, were Mason's farm and house, and he was a friend to the cause. Shortly after noon the farmers began to arrive from several different directions with mules and horses for our use, and these they lent us for as long as the war might last, which, they judged, might be about three months. The animals were of all sizes all colours and all breeds. They were mainly young and frisky and nobody in the command could stay on them long at a time, for we were town boys and ignorant of horsemanship. The creature that fell to my share was a very small mule, and yet so quick and active he could throw me off without difficulty and it did this whenever I got on. Then it would bray, stretching its neck out, laying its ears back and spreading its jaws till you could see down to its works. If I took it by the bridle and tried to lead it off the grounds it would sit down and brace back and no one could ever budge it. However, I was not entirely destitute of military resources and I did presently manage to spoil this game, for I had seen many a steamboat aground in my time and knew a trick or two which even a grounded mule would be obliged to respect.

There was a well by the corn crib so I substituted thirty fathom of rope for the bridle and fetched him home with the windlass.

I will anticipate here sufficiently to say that we did learn to ride after some days' practice, but never well. We could not learn to like our animals. They were not choice ones and most of them had annoying peculiarities of one kind or another. Stevens's horse would carry him, when he was not noticing, under the huge excrescences which for on the trunks of oak trees and wipe him out of the saddle this way. Stevens got several bad hurts. Sergeant Bowers's horse was very large and tall, slim with long legs, and looked like a railroad bridge. His size enabled him to reach all about, and as far as he wanted to go, so he was always biting Bowers's legs. On the march, in the sun, Bowers slept a good deal and as soon as the horse recognized he was asleep he would reach around and bite him on the leg. His legs were black and blue with bites. This was the only thing that could make him swear, but this always did, whenever his horse bit him he swore, and of course, Stevens, who laughed at everything, laughed at this and would get into such convulsions over it as to lose his balance and fall off his horse, and then Bowers, already irritated by the pain of the horse bite, would resent the laughter with hard language, and there would be a quarrel so that horse made no end of trouble and bad blood in the command.

However, I will get back to where I was, our first afternoon in the sugar camp. The sugar troughs came very handy as horse troughs and we had plenty of corn to fill them with. I ordered Sergeant Bowers to feed my mule, but he said that if I reckoned he went to war to be a dry nurse to a mule it wouldn't take me very long to find out my mistake. I believed that this was insubordination but I was full of uncertainties about everything military so I let the matter pass and went and ordered Smith, the blacksmith's apprentice, to feed the mule, but he merely gave me a large, cold, sarcastic grin, such as an ostensibly seven year old horse gives you when you lift up his lip and find he is fourteen, and turned his back on me. I then went to the captain and asked if it were not right and proper and military for me to have an orderly. He said it was, but as there was only one orderly in the corps, it was but right he himself should have Bowers on his staff. Bowers said he wouldn't serve on anyone's staff and if anybody thought he could make him, let him try. So, of course, the matter had to be dropped, there was no other way.

Next, nobody would cook. It was considered a degradation so we had no dinner. We lazed the rest of the pleasant afternoon away, some dozing under trees, some smoking cob pipes and talking sweethearts and war, others playing games. By late supper time all hands were famished and to meet the difficulty, all hands turned to on an equal footing, and gathered wood, built fires, and cooked the evening meal. Afterward everything was smooth for a while then trouble broke out between the corporal and the sergeant, each claiming to rank the other. Nobody knew which was the higher office so Lyman had to settle the matter by making the rank of both officers equal. The commander of an ignorant crew like that has many troubles and vexations which probably do not occur in the regular army at all. However, with the song singing and yarn spinning around the campfire

everything presently became serene again, and by and by we raked the corn down one level in one end of the crib and all went to bed on it, tying a horse to the door so he would neigh if anyone tried to get in. (it was always my impression that was always what the horse was there for and I know it was the impression of at least one other of the command, for we talked about it at the time and admired the military ingenuity of the device, but when I was out west three years ago, I was told by Mr. A. G. Fuqua, a member of our company, that the horse was his, that the tying him at the door was a mere matter of forgetfulness and that to attribute it to intelligent invention was to give him quite too much credit. In support of his position, he called my attention to the suggestive fact that the artifice was not employed again. I had not thought of that before.)

We had some horsemanship drill every forenoon, then, afternoons, we rode off here and there in squads a few miles and visited the farmer's girls and had a youthful good time and got an honest dinner or supper, and then home again to camp, happy and content.

For a time, life was idly delicious. It was perfect. There was no war to mar it. Then came some farmers with an alarm one day. They said it was rumoured that the enemy were advancing in our direction from over Hyde's prairie. The result was a sharp stir among us and general consternation. It was a rude awakening from our pleasant trance. The rumour was but a rumour, nothing definite about it, so in the confusion we did not know which way to retreat. Lyman was not for retreating at all in these uncertain circumstances but he found that if he tried to maintain that attitude he would fare badly, for the command were in no humour to put up with insubordination. SO he yielded the point and called a council of war, to consist of himself and three other officers, but the privates made such a fuss about being left out we had to allow them to remain, for they were already present and doing most of the talking too. The question was, which way to retreat; but all were so flurried that nobody even seemed to have even a guess to offer. Except Lyman. He explained in a few calm words, that inasmuch as the enemy were approaching from over Hyde's prairie our course was simple. All we had to do was not retreat toward him, another direction would suit our purposes perfectly. Everybody saw in a moment how true this was and how wise, so Lyman got a great many compliments. It was now decided that we should fall back on Mason's farm.

It was after dark by this time and as we could not know how soon the enemy might arrive, it did not seem best to try to take the horses and things with us, so we only took the guns and ammunition, and started at once. The route was very rough and hilly and rocky, and presently the night grew very black and rain began to fall, so we had a troublesome time of it, struggling and stumbling along in the dark and soon some person slipped and fell, and then the next person behind stumbled over him and fell, and so did the rest, one after the other, and then Bowers came along with the keg of powder in his arms, while the command were all mixed together, arms and legs on the muddy slope, and so he fell, of course, with the keg and this started the whole detachment down the



hill in a body and they landed in a brook at the bottom in a pile and each that was undermost was pulling the hair, scratching and biting those that were on top of him and those that were being scratched and bitten scratching and biting the rest in their turn, and all saying they would die before they would ever go to war again if they ever got out of this brook this time and the invader might rot for all they cared, and the country along with him, and all such talk as that which was dismal to hear and take part in, in such smothered, low voices, and such a grisly dark place and so wet, and the enemy, maybe, coming along at any moment.

The keg of powder was lost, and the guns too; so the growling and complaining continued straight along while the brigade pawed around the pasty hill side and slopped around in the brook hunting for these things; consequently we lost considerable time at this, and then we heard a sound and held our breath and listened, and it seemed to be the enemy coming, though it could have been a cow, for it had a cough like a cow, but we did not wait but left a couple of guns behind and struck out for Mason's again as briskly as we could scramble along in the dark. But we got lost presently in among the rugged little ravines and wasted a deal of time finding the way again so it was after nine when we reached Mason's stile at last; and then before we could open our mouths to give the countersign several dogs came bounding over the fence with a great riot and noise, and each of them took a soldier by the slack of his trousers and began to back away with him. We could not shoot the dogs without endangering the persons they were attached to so we had to look on helpless at what was perhaps the most mortifying spectacle of the Civil War. There was light enough and to spare, for the Mason's had now run out on the porch with candles in tier hands. The old man and his son came and undid the dogs without difficulty, all but Bowers's; but they couldn't undo his dog, they didn't know his combination, he was of the bull kind and seemed to be set with a Yale time-lock, but they got him loose at last with some scalding water, of which Boweres got his share and returned thanks. Peterson Dunlap afterwards made up a fine name for this engagement and also for the night march which preceded it but both have long ago faded out of my memory.

We now went into the house and they began to ask us a world of questions, whereby it presently came out that we did not know anything concerning who or what we were running from; so the old gentleman made himself very frank and said we were a curious breed of soldiers and guessed we could be depended on to end up the war in time, because the no governor could afford the expense of the shoe leather we should cost it trying to follow us around.

"Marion Rangers! Good name, b'gosh," said he. And wanted to why we hadn't had a picket guard at the place where the road entered the prairie, and why we hadn't sent out a scouting party to spy out the enemy and bring us an account of his strength, and so on, before jumping up and stampeding out of a strong position upon a mere vague rumour, and so on and so forth, till he made us all feel shabbier than the dogs had done, not so half enthusiastically welcome. So we went to bed shamed and low spirited, except Stevens. Soon Stevens began to

devise a garment for Bowers which could be made to automatically display his battle scars to the grateful or conceal them from the envious, according to his occasions, but Bowers was in no humour for this, so there was a fight and when it was over Stevens had some battle scars of his own to think about.

Then we got a little sleep. But after all we had gone through, our activities were not over for the night, for about two o'clock in the morning we heard a shout of warning from down the lane, accompanied by a chorus from all the dogs, and in a moment everybody was up and flying around to find out what the alarm was about. The alarmist was a horseman who gave notice that a detachment of Union soldiers was on its way from Hannibal with orders to capture and hang any bands like our which it could find. Farmer Mason was in a flurry this time himself. He hurried us out of the house with all haste, and sent one of his negroes with us to show us where to hide ourselves and our telltale guns among the ravines half a mile away,. It was raining heavily.

We struck down the lane, then across some rocky pasture land which offered good advantages for stumbling; consequently we were down in the mud most of the time, and every time a man went down he black guarded the war and everybody connected with it, and gave himself the master dose of all for being so foolish as to go into it. At last we reached the wooded mouth of a ravine, and there we huddled ourselves under the streaming trees and sent the negro back home. It was a dismal and heart breaking time. We were like to be drowned with the rain, deafened with the howling wind and the booming thunder, and blinded by the lightning. It was indeed a wild night. The drenching we were getting was misery enough, but a deeper misery still was the reflection that the halter might end us before we were a day older. A death of this shameful sort had not occurred to us as being among the possibilities of war. It took the romance all out of the campaign and turned our dreams of glory into a repulsive nightmare. As for doubting that so barbarous an order had been given, not one of us did that.

The long night wore itself out at last, and then the Negro came to us with the news that the alarm had manifestly been a false one and that breakfast would soon be ready. Straightaway we were light-hearted again and the world was bright and full of life, as full of hope and promise as ever; for we were young then. How long ago that was! Twenty four years.

The mongrel child of philology named the night's refuge Camp Devastation and no soul objected. The Masons gave us a Missouri country breakfast in Missourian abundance, and we needed it. Hot biscuits, hot wheat bread, prettily crossed in a lattice pattern on top, hot corn pone, fried chicken, bacon, coffee, eggs, milk, buttermilk etc. and the world may be confidently challenged to furnish the equal of such a breakfast, as it is cooked in the South.

We stayed several days at Mason's and after all these years the memory of the stillness and dullness and

lifelessness of that slumberous farmhouse still oppresses my spirit as with a sense of the presence of death and mourning. There was nothing to do. Nothing to think about. There was no interest in life. The male part of the household were away in the fields all day, the women were busy and out of our sight, There was no sound but the plaintive wailing of a spinning wheel forever moaning out from some distant room, the most lonesome sound in nature, a sound steeped and sodden with homesickness and the emptiness of life. The family went to bed about dark every night and as we were not invited to intrude any new customs we naturally followed theirs. Those nights were a hundred years long to youths accustomed to being up till twelve. We lay awake and miserable till that hour ovariotomy and grew old and decrepit waiting through the still eternities for the clock strikes. This was no place for town boys. So at last it was with something very like joy that we received word that the enemy were on out track again. With a new birth of the old warrior spirit, we sprang to our places in line of battle and fell back on Camp Ralls.

Captain Lyman had taken a hint from Mason's talk, and he now gave orders that our camp should be guarded from surprise by the posting of pickets. I was ordered to place a picket at the forks of the road in Hyde's prairie. Night shut down black and threatening. I told Sergeant Bowers to out to that place and stay till midnight, and, just as I was expecting, he said he wouldn't do it. I tried to get others to go but all refused. Some excused themselves on account of the weather, but the rest were frank enough to say they wouldn't go in any kind of weather. This kind of thing sounds odd now, and impossible, but there was no surprise in it at the time. On the contrary, it seemed a perfectly natural thing to do. There were scores of little camps scattered over missouri where the same thing was happening. These camps were composed of young men who had been born and reared to a sturdy independence and who did not know what it meant to be ordered around by Tom, Dick, and Harry, who they had known familiarly all their lives in the village or the farm. It is quite within the probabilities that this same thing was happening all over the South. James Redpath recognized the justice of this assumption and furnished the following instance in support of it. During a short stay in East Tennessee he was in a citizen colonel' s tent one day talking, when a big private appeared at the door and, without salute or other circumlocution, said to the colonel;

"Say, Jim, I'm a goin' home for a few days."

"What for?"

"Well, I hain't b'en there for a right smart while and I'd like to see how things is comin' on."

"How long are you gonna be gone?"

"Bout two weeks."

"Well, don't be gone longer than that and get back sooner if you can."

That was all, and the citizen officer resumed his conversation where the private had broken it off. This was in the first months of the war of course. The camps in our part of Missouri were under Brigadier-General Thomas H. Harris. He was a townsman of ours, a first rate fellow and well liked, but we had all familiarly known him as the soles and modest-salaried operator in the telegraph office, where he had to send about one despatch a week in ordinary times and two when there was a rush of business. Consequently, when he appeared in our midst one day on the wing, and delivered a military command of some sort in a large military fashion, nobody was surprised at the response which he got from the assembled soldiery.

"Oh, now what'll you take to don't, Tom Harris?"

It was quite the natural thing. One might justly imagine that we were hopeless material for the war. And so we seemed in our ignorant state, but there were those among us who afterward learned the grim trade, learned to obey like machines, became valuable soldiers, fought all through the war, and came out at the end with excellent records. One of the very boys who refused to go out on picket duty that night and called me an ass for thinking he would expose himself to danger in such a foolhardy way, had become distinguished for intrepidity before he was a year older.

I did secure my picket that night, not by authority but by diplomacy. I got Bowers to go by agreeing to exchange ranks with him for the time being and go along and stand the watch with him as his subordinate. We stayed out there a couple of dreary hours in the pitchy darkness and the rain, with nothing to modify the dreariness but Bower's monotonous growling at the war and the weather, then we began to nod and presently found it next to impossible to stay in the saddle, so we gave up the tedious job and went back to the camp without interruption or objection from anybody and the enemy could have done the same, for there were no sentries. Everybody was asleep, at midnight there was nobody to send out another picket so none was sent. We never tried to establish a watch at night again, as far as I remember, but we generally kept a picket out in the daytime.

In that camp the whole command slept on the corn in the big corn crib and there was usually a general row before morning, for the place was full of rats and they would scramble over the boys' bodies and faces, annoying and irritating everybody, and now and then they would bite someone's toe, and the person who owned the toe would start up and magnify his english and begin to throw corn in the dark. The ears were half as heavy as bricks and when they struck they hurt. The persons struck would respond and inside of five minutes everyman would

be locked in a death grip with his neighbour. There was a grievous deal of blood shed in the corn crib but this was all that was spilt while I was in the war. No, that is not quite true. But for one circumstance it would have been all.

Our scares were frequent. Every few days rumours would come that the enemy were approaching. In these cases we always fell back on some other camp of ours; we never stayed where we were. But the rumours always turned out to be false, so at last we even began to grow indifferent to them. One night a negro was sent to our corn crib with the same old warning, the enemy was hovering in our neighbourhood. We all said let him hover. We resolved to stay still and be comfortable. It was a fine warlike resolution, and no doubt we all felt the stir of it in our veins--for a moment. We had been having a very jolly time, that was full of horseplay and schoolboy hilarity, but that cooled down and presently the fast waning fire of forced jokes and forced laughs died out altogether and the company became silent. Silent and nervous. And soon uneasy--worried and apprehensive. We had said we would stay and we were committed. We could have been persuaded to go but there was nobody brave enough to suggest it. An almost noiseless movement began in the dark by a general but unvoiced impulse. When the movement was completed, each man knew that he was not the only person who had crept to the front wall and had his eye at a crack between the logs. No, we were all there, all there with our hearts in our throats and staring out towards the sugar-troughs where the forest footpath came through. It was late and there was a deep woodsy stillness everywhere. There was a veiled moonlight which was only just strong enough to enable us to mark the general shapes of objects. Presently a muffled sound caught our ears and we recognized the hoof-beats of a horse or horses. And right away, a figure appeared in the forest path; it could have been made of smoke, its mass had such little sharpness of outline. It was a man on horseback, and it seemed to me that there were others behind him. I got a hold of a gun in the dark, and pushed it through a crack between the logs, hardly knowing what I was doing, I was so dazed with fright. Somebody said "Fire!" I pulled the trigger, I seemed to see a hundred flashes and a hundred reports, then I saw the man fall down out of the saddle. My first feeling was of surprised gratification; my first impulse was an apprentice-sportsman's impulse to run and pick up his game. Somebody said, hardly audibly, "Good, we've got him. Wait for the rest!" But the rest did not come. There was not a sound, not the whisper of a leaf; just the perfect stillness, an uncanny kind of stillness which was all the more uncanny on account of the damp, earthy, late night smells now rising and pervading it. Then, wondering, we crept out stealthily and approached the man. When we got to him, the moon revealed him distinctly. He was laying on his back with his arms abroad, his mouth was open and his chest was heaving with long gasps, and his white shirt front was splashed with blood. The thought shot through me that I was a murderer, that I had killed a man, a man who had never done me any harm. That was the coldest sensation that ever went through my marrow. I was down by him in a moment, helplessly stroking his forehead, and I would have given anything then, my own life freely, to make him again what he had been five minutes before. And all the boys seemed to be feeling the same way; they hung over him, full of pitying interest, and tried all they could to help him, and said all sorts of regretful things. They had forgotten all about the enemy, they thought only of this one forlorn unit of

the foe. Once my imagination persuaded me that the dying man gave me a reproachful look out of the shadow of his eyes, and it seemed to me that I could rather that he had stabbed me than he had done that. He muttered and mumbled like a dreamer in his sleep about his wife and his child, and, I thought with a new despair, "This thing that I have done does not end with him; it falls upon them too, and they never did me any harm, any more than he."

In a little while the man was dead. He was killed in war, killed in fair and legitimate war, killed in battles as you may say, and yet he was as sincerely mourned by the opposing force as if he had been their brother. The boys stood there a half-hour sorrowing over him and recalling the details of the tragedy, and wondering who he might be and if he was a spy, and saying if they had it to do over again, they would not hurt him unless he attacked them first. It soon turned out that mine was not the only shot fired; there were five others, a division of the guilt which was a great relief to me since it in some degree lightened and diminished the burden I was carrying. There were six shots fired at once but I was not in my right mind at the time, and my heated imagination had magnified my one shot into a volley.

The mans was not in uniform and was not armed. He was a stranger in the country, that was all we ever found out about him. The thought of hi got to preying on me every night, I could not get rid of it. I could not drive it away, the taking of that unoffending life seemed such a wanton thing. And it seemed an epitome of war, that all war must just be the killing of strangers against whom you feel no personal animosity, strangers who in other circumstances you would help if you found them in trouble, and who would help you if you needed it. My campaign was spoiled. It seemed to me that I was not rightly equipped for this awful business, that war was intended for men and I for a child's nurse. I resolved to retire from this avocation of sham soldier-ship while I could retain some remanent of my self-respect. These morbid thoughts clung to me against reason, for at the bottom I did not believe I had touched this man. The law of probabilities decreed me guiltless of his blood for in all my small experiences with guns, I had not hit anything I had tried to hit, and I knew I had done my best to hit him. Yet there was no solace in the thought. Against a diseased imagination, demonstration goes for nothing.

The rest of my war experience was of a piece with what I have already told of it. We kept monotonously falling back upon one camp or another and eating up the farmers and their families. They ought to have shot us; on the contrary they were as hospitably kind and courteous to us as if we had deserved it. In one of these camps we found Ab Grimes, an upper Mississippi pilot who afterwards became famous as a daredevil rebel spy, whose career bristled with desperate adventures. The loom and style of his comrades suggested that they had not come into the war to play and their deeds made good the conjecture later. They were fine horsemen and good revolver shots, but their favourite arm was the lasso. Each had one at his pommel, and could snatch a man out of his saddle with it ovariotomy, on a full gallop, at any reasonable distance.



In another camp, the chief was a fierce and profane old black-smith of sixty and he had furnished his twenty recruits with gigantic, home-made bowie-knives, to be swung with two hands like the machetes of the Isthmus. It was a grisly spectacle to see that earnest band practising their murderous cuts and slashes under the eye of that remorseless old fanatic.

The last camp which we fell back on was in a hollow near the village of Florida where I was born, in Monroe County. Here we were warned one day that a Union Colonel was sweeping down on us with a whole regiment at his heels. This looked decidedly serious. Our boys went apart and consulted; then we went back and told the other companies present that the war was a disappointment to us and we were going to disband. They were getting ready themselves to fall back on some place or another, and we were only waiting for General Tom Harris, who was expected to arrive at any moment, so they tried to persuade us to wait a little while but the majority of us said no, we were accustomed to falling back and didn't need any of Harris's help, we could get along perfectly without him and save time too. So, about half of our fifteen men, including myself, mounted, and left on the instant; the others yielded to persuasion, and stayed--stayed through the war.

An hour later we met General Harris on the road, with two or three people in his company, his staff probably, but we could not tell; none of them were in uniform; uniforms had not come into vogue among us yet. Harris ordered us back, but we told him there was a Union colonel coming with a whole regiment in his wake and it looked as if there was going to be a disturbance, so we had concluded to go home. He raged a little bit, but it was of no use, our minds were made up. We had done our share, killed one man, exterminated one army, such as it was; let him go and kill the rest and that would end the war. I did not see that brisk young general again until last year; he was wearing white hair and whiskers.

In time I came to learn that the Union colonel whose coming frightened me out of the war and crippled the Southern cause to that extent; General Grant. I came within a few hours of seeing him when he was as unknown as I was myself; at a time when anybody could have said, "Grant--Ulysses S Grant? I do not remember hearing the name before." It seems difficult to realize there was once a time when such a remark could be rationally made, but there was, I was within a few miles of the place and the occasion too, though proceeding in the other direction.

The thoughtful will not throw this war paper of mine lightly aside as being valueless. It has this value; it is not an unfair picture of what went on in may a militia camp in the first months of the rebellion, when the green recruits were without discipline, without the steadying and heartening influence of trained leaders, when all their circumstances were new and strange and charged with exaggerated terrors, and before the invaluable experience

of actual collision in the field had turned them from rabbits into soldiers. If this side of the picture of that early day has not before been put into history, then history has been, to that degree incomplete, for it had and has its rightful place there. There was more Bull Run material scattered through the early camps of this country than exhibited itself at Bull Run. And yet, it learned its trade presently and helped to fight the great battles later. I could have become a soldier myself if I had waited. I had got part of it learned, I knew more about retreating than the man that invented retreating.

# Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven

By Mark Twain

## CHAPTER I

Well, when I had been dead about thirty years I begun to get a little anxious. Mind you, had been whizzing through space all that time, like a comet. \_Like\_ a comet! Why, Peters, I laid over the lot of them! Of course there warn't any of them going my way, as a steady thing, you know, because they travel in a long circle like the loop of a lasso, whereas I was pointed as straight as a dart for the Hereafter; but I happened on one every now and then that was going my way for an hour or so, and then we had a bit of a brush together. But it was generally pretty one-sided, because I sailed by them the same as if they were standing still. An ordinary comet don't make more than about 200,000 miles a minute. Of course when I came across one of that sort—like Encke's and Halley's comets, for instance—it warn't anything but just a flash and a vanish, you see. You couldn't rightly call it a race. It was as if the comet was a gravel-train and I was a telegraph despatch. But after I got outside of our astronomical system, I used to flush a comet occasionally that was something \_like\_. \_We\_ haven't got any such comets—ours don't begin. One night I was swinging along at a good round gait, everything taut and trim, and the wind in my favor—I judged I was going about a million miles a minute—it might have been more, it couldn't have been less—when I flushed a most uncommonly big one about three points off my starboard bow. By his stern lights I judged he was bearing about northeast-and-by-north-half-east. Well, it was so near my course that I wouldn't throw away the chance; so I fell off a point, steadied my helm, and went for him. You should have heard me whiz, and seen the electric fur fly! In about a minute and a half I was fringed out with an electrical nimbus that flamed around for miles and miles and lit up all space like broad day. The comet was burning blue in the distance, like a sickly torch, when I first sighted him, but he begun to grow bigger and bigger as I crept up on him. I slipped up on him so fast that when I had gone about 150,000,000 miles I was close enough to be swallowed up in the phosphorescent glory of his wake, and I couldn't see anything for the

glare. Thinks I, it won't do to run into him, so I shunted to one side and tore along. By and by I closed up abreast of his tail. Do you know what it was like? It was like a gnat closing up on the continent of America. I forged along. By and by I had sailed along his coast for a little upwards of a hundred and fifty million miles, and then I could see by the shape of him that I hadn't even got up to his waistband yet. Why, Peters, we don't know anything about comets, down here. If you want to see comets that are comets, you've got to go outside of our solar system—where there's room for them, you understand. My friend, I've seen comets out there that couldn't even lay down inside the orbits of our noblest comets without their tails hanging over.

Well, I boomed along another hundred and fifty million miles, and got up abreast his shoulder, as you may say. I was feeling pretty fine, I tell you; but just then I noticed the officer of the deck come to the side and hoist his glass in my direction. Straight off I heard him sing out—"Below there, ahoy! Shake her up, shake her up! Heave on a hundred million billion tons of brimstone!"

"Ay-ay, sir!"

"Pipe the stabboard watch! All hands on deck!"

"Ay-ay, sir!"

"Send two hundred thousand million men aloft to shake out royals and sky-scrapers!"

"Ay-ay, sir!"

"Hand the stuns'ls! Hang out every rag you've got! Clothe her from stem to rudder-post!"

"Ay-ay, sir!"

In about a second I begun to see I'd woke up a pretty ugly customer, Peters. In less than ten seconds that comet was just a blazing cloud of red-hot canvas. It was piled up into the heavens clean out of sight—the old thing seemed to swell out and occupy all space; the sulphur smoke from the furnaces—oh, well, nobody can describe the way it rolled and tumbled up into the skies, and nobody can half describe the way it smelt. Neither can anybody begin to describe the way that monstrous craft begun to crash along. And such another powwow—thousands of bo's'n's whistles screaming at once, and a crew like the populations of a hundred thousand worlds like ours all swearing at once. Well, I never heard the like of it before.

We roared and thundered along side by side, both doing our level best, because I'd never struck a comet before that could lay over me, and so I was bound to beat this one or break something. I judged I had some reputation in space, and I calculated to keep it. I noticed I wasn't gaining as fast, now, as I was before, but still I was gaining. There was a power of excitement on board the comet. Upwards of a hundred billion passengers swarmed up from below and rushed to the side and begun to bet on the race. Of course this careened her and damaged her speed. My, but wasn't the mate mad! He jumped at that crowd, with his trumpet in his hand, and sung out—

“Amidships! amidships, you—! {9} or I'll brain the last idiot of you!”

Well, sir, I gained and gained, little by little, till at last I went skimming sweetly by the magnificent old conflagration's nose. By this time the captain of the comet had been roused out, and he stood there in the red glare for'ard, by the mate, in his shirt-sleeves and slippers, his hair all rats' nests and one suspender hanging, and how sick those two men did look! I just simply couldn't help putting my thumb to my nose as I glided away and singing out:

“Ta-ta! ta-ta! Any word to send to your family?”

Peters, it was a mistake. Yes, sir, I've often regretted that—it was a mistake. You see, the captain had given up the race, but that remark was too tedious for him—he couldn't stand it. He turned to the mate, and says he—

“Have we got brimstone enough of our own to make the trip?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Sure?”

“Yes, sir—more than enough.”

“How much have we got in cargo for Satan?”

“Eighteen hundred thousand billion quintillions of kazarks.”

“Very well, then, let his boarders freeze till the next comet comes. Lighten ship! Lively, now, lively, men! Heave the whole cargo overboard!”

Peters, look me in the eye, and be calm. I found out, over there, that a kazark is exactly the bulk of a \_hundred and sixty-nine worlds like ours\_! They hove all that load overboard. When it fell it wiped out a considerable raft of stars just as clean as if they'd been candles and somebody blew them out. As for the race, that was at an end. The minute she was lightened the comet swung along by me the same as if I was anchored. The captain stood on the stern, by the after-davits, and put his thumb to his nose and sung out—

“Ta-ta! ta-ta! Maybe \_you've\_ got some message to send your friends in the Everlasting Tropics!”

Then he hove up his other suspender and started for'ard, and inside of three-quarters of an hour his craft was only a pale torch again in the



distance. Yes, it was a mistake, Peters—that remark of mine. I don't reckon I'll ever get over being sorry about it. I'd 'a' beat the bully of the firmament if I'd kept my mouth shut.

\* \* \* \* \*

But I've wandered a little off the track of my tale; I'll get back on my course again. Now you see what kind of speed I was making. So, as I said, when I had been tearing along this way about thirty years I begun to get uneasy. Oh, it was pleasant enough, with a good deal to find out, but then it was kind of lonesome, you know. Besides, I wanted to get somewhere. I hadn't shipped with the idea of cruising forever. First off, I liked the delay, because I judged I was going to fetch up in pretty warm quarters when I got through; but towards the last I begun to feel that I'd rather go to—well, most any place, so as to finish up the uncertainty.

Well, one night—it was always night, except when I was rushing by some star that was occupying the whole universe with its fire and its glare—light enough then, of course, but I necessarily left it behind in a minute or two and plunged into a solid week of darkness again. The stars ain't so close together as they look to be. Where was I? Oh yes; one night I was sailing along, when I discovered a tremendous long row of blinking lights away on the horizon ahead. As I approached, they begun to tower and swell and look like mighty furnaces. Says I to myself—

“By George, I've arrived at last—and at the wrong place, just as I expected!”

Then I fainted. I don't know how long I was insensible, but it must have been a good while, for, when I came to, the darkness was all gone and there was the loveliest sunshine and the balmiest, fragrantest air in its place. And there was such a marvellous world spread out before me—such a glowing, beautiful, bewitching country. The things I took for furnaces were gates, miles high, made all of flashing jewels, and they pierced a

wall of solid gold that you couldn't see the top of, nor yet the end of, in either direction. I was pointed straight for one of these gates, and a-coming like a house afire. Now I noticed that the skies were black with millions of people, pointed for those gates. What a roar they made, rushing through the air! The ground was as thick as ants with people, too—billions of them, I judge.

I lit. I drifted up to a gate with a swarm of people, and when it was my turn the head clerk says, in a business-like way—

“Well, quick! Where are you from?”

“San Francisco,” says I.

“San Fran—\_what\_?” says he.

“San Francisco.”

He scratched his head and looked puzzled, then he says—

“Is it a planet?”

By George, Peters, think of it! “\_Planet\_?” says I; “it’s a city. And moreover, it’s one of the biggest and finest and—”

“There, there!” says he, “no time here for conversation. We don’t deal in cities here. Where are you from in a \_general\_ way?”

“Oh,” I says, “I beg your pardon. Put me down for California.”

I had him \_again\_, Peters! He puzzled a second, then he says, sharp and irritable—

“I don’t know any such planet—is it a constellation?”

“Oh, my goodness!” says I. “Constellation, says you? No—it’s a State.”

“Man, we don’t deal in States here. \_Will\_ you tell me where you are from \_in\_ general—at large\_, don’t you understand?”

“Oh, now I get your idea,” I says. “I’m from America,—the United States of America.”

Peters, do you know I had him \_again\_? If I hadn’t I’m a clam! His face was as blank as a target after a militia shooting-match. He turned to an under clerk and says—

“Where is America? \_What\_ is America?”

The under clerk answered up prompt and says—

“There ain’t any such orb.”

“\_Orb\_?” says I. “Why, what are you talking about, young man? It ain’t an orb; it’s a country; it’s a continent. Columbus discovered it; I reckon likely you’ve heard of \_him\_, anyway. America—why, sir, America—”

“Silence!” says the head clerk. “Once for all, where—are—you—\_from\_?”

“Well,” says I, “I don’t know anything more to say—unless I lump things, and just say I’m from the world.”

“Ah,” says he, brightening up, “now that’s something like! \_What\_ world?”

Peters, he had \_me\_, that time. I looked at him, puzzled, he looked at me, worried. Then he burst out—

“Come, come, what world?”

Says I, “Why, \_the\_ world, of course.”

“\_The\_ world!” he says. “H’m! there’s billions of them! . . . Next!”

That meant for me to stand aside. I done so, and a sky-blue man with seven heads and only one leg hopped into my place. I took a walk. It just occurred to me, then, that all the myriads I had seen swarming to that gate, up to this time, were just like that creature. I tried to run across somebody I was acquainted with, but they were out of acquaintances of mine just then. So I thought the thing all over and finally sidled back there pretty meek and feeling rather stumped, as you may say.

“Well?” said the head clerk.

“Well, sir,” I says, pretty humble, “I don’t seem to make out which world it is I’m from. But you may know it from this—it’s the one the Saviour saved.”

He bent his head at the Name. Then he says, gently—

“The worlds He has saved are like to the gates of heaven in number—none can count them. What astronomical system is your world in?—perhaps that may assist.”

“It’s the one that has the sun in it—and the moon—and Mars”—he shook his head at each name—hadn’t ever heard of them, you see—“and Neptune—and Uranus—and Jupiter—”

“Hold on!” says he—“hold on a minute! Jupiter . . . Jupiter . . . Seems to me we had a man from there eight or nine hundred years ago—but people from that system very seldom enter by this gate.” All of a sudden he begun to look me so straight in the eye that I thought he was going to bore through me. Then he says, very deliberate, “Did you come \_straight

here\_ from your system?”

“Yes, sir,” I says—but I blushed the least little bit in the world when I said it.

He looked at me very stern, and says—

“That is not true; and this is not the place for prevarication. You wandered from your course. How did that happen?”

Says I, blushing again—

“I’m sorry, and I take back what I said, and confess. I raced a little with a comet one day—only just the least little bit—only the tiniest lit—”

“So—so,” says he—and without any sugar in his voice to speak of.

I went on, and says—

“But I only fell off just a bare point, and I went right back on my course again the minute the race was over.”

“No matter—that divergence has made all this trouble. It has brought you to a gate that is billions of leagues from the right one. If you had gone to your own gate they would have known all about your world at once and there would have been no delay. But we will try to accommodate you.”  
He turned to an under clerk and says—

“What system is Jupiter in?”

“I don’t remember, sir, but I think there is such a planet in one of the little new systems away out in one of the thinly worlded corners of the universe. I will see.”

He got a balloon and sailed up and up and up, in front of a map that was as big as Rhode Island. He went on up till he was out of sight, and by and by he came down and got something to eat and went up again. To cut a long story short, he kept on doing this for a day or two, and finally he came down and said he thought he had found that solar system, but it might be fly-specks. So he got a microscope and went back. It turned out better than he feared. He had roused out our system, sure enough. He got me to describe our planet and its distance from the sun, and then he says to his chief—

“Oh, I know the one he means, now, sir. It is on the map. It is called the Wart.”

Says I to myself, “Young man, it wouldn’t be wholesome for you to go down \_there\_ and call it the Wart.”

Well, they let me in, then, and told me I was safe forever and wouldn’t have any more trouble.

Then they turned from me and went on with their work, the same as if they considered my case all complete and shipshape. I was a good deal surprised at this, but I was diffident about speaking up and reminding them. I did so hate to do it, you know; it seemed a pity to bother them, they had so much on their hands. Twice I thought I would give up and let the thing go; so twice I started to leave, but immediately I thought what a figure I should cut stepping out amongst the redeemed in such a rig, and that made me hang back and come to anchor again. People got to eying me—clerks, you know—wondering why I didn’t get under way. I couldn’t stand this long—it was too uncomfortable. So at last I plucked up courage and tipped the head clerk a signal. He says—

“What! you here yet? What’s wanting?”

Says I, in a low voice and very confidential, making a trumpet with my hands at his ear—



“I beg pardon, and you mustn’t mind my reminding you, and seeming to meddle, but hain’t you forgot something?”

He studied a second, and says—

“Forgot something? . . . No, not that I know of.”

“Think,” says I.

He thought. Then he says—

“No, I can’t seem to have forgot anything. What is it?”

“Look at me,” says I, “look me all over.”

He done it.

“Well?” says he.

“Well,” says I, “you don’t notice anything? If I branched out amongst the elect looking like this, wouldn’t I attract considerable attention?—wouldn’t I be a little conspicuous?”

“Well,” he says, “I don’t see anything the matter. What do you lack?”

“Lack! Why, I lack my harp, and my wreath, and my halo, and my hymn-book, and my palm branch—I lack everything that a body naturally requires up here, my friend.”

Puzzled? Peters, he was the worst puzzled man you ever saw. Finally he says—

“Well, you seem to be a curiosity every way a body takes you. I never

heard of these things before.”

I looked at the man awhile in solid astonishment; then I says—

“Now, I hope you don’t take it as an offence, for I don’t mean any, but really, for a man that has been in the Kingdom as long as I reckon you have, you do seem to know powerful little about its customs.”

“Its customs!” says he. “Heaven is a large place, good friend. Large empires have many and diverse customs. Even small dominions have, as you doubtless know by what you have seen of the matter on a small scale in the Wart. How can you imagine I could ever learn the varied customs of the countless kingdoms of heaven? It makes my head ache to think of it. I know the customs that prevail in those portions inhabited by peoples that are appointed to enter by my own gate—and hark ye, that is quite enough knowledge for one individual to try to pack into his head in the thirty-seven millions of years I have devoted night and day to that study. But the idea of learning the customs of the whole appalling expanse of heaven—O man, how insanely you talk! Now I don’t doubt that this odd costume you talk about is the fashion in that district of heaven you belong to, but you won’t be conspicuous in this section without it.”

I felt all right, if that was the case, so I bade him good-day and left. All day I walked towards the far end of a prodigious hall of the office, hoping to come out into heaven any moment, but it was a mistake. That hall was built on the general heavenly plan—it naturally couldn’t be small. At last I got so tired I couldn’t go any farther; so I sat down to rest, and begun to tackle the queerest sort of strangers and ask for information, but I didn’t get any; they couldn’t understand my language, and I could not understand theirs. I got dreadfully lonesome. I was so down-hearted and homesick I wished a hundred times I never had died. I turned back, of course. About noon next day, I got back at last and was on hand at the booking-office once more. Says I to the head clerk—

“I begin to see that a man’s got to be in his own Heaven to be happy.”

“Perfectly correct,” says he. “Did you imagine the same heaven would suit all sorts of men?”

“Well, I had that idea—but I see the foolishness of it. Which way am I to go to get to my district?”

He called the under clerk that had examined the map, and he gave me general directions. I thanked him and started; but he says—

“Wait a minute; it is millions of leagues from here. Go outside and stand on that red wishing-carpet; shut your eyes, hold your breath, and wish yourself there.”

“I’m much obliged,” says I; “why didn’t you dart me through when I first arrived?”

“We have a good deal to think of here; it was your place to think of it and ask for it. Good-by; we probably sha’n’t see you in this region for a thousand centuries or so.”

“In that case, \_o revoor\_,” says I.

I hopped onto the carpet and held my breath and shut my eyes and wished I was in the booking-office of my own section. The very next instant a voice I knew sung out in a business kind of a way—

“A harp and a hymn-book, pair of wings and a halo, size 13, for Cap’n Eli Stormfield, of San Francisco!—make him out a clean bill of health, and let him in.”

I opened my eyes. Sure enough, it was a Pi Ute Injun I used to know in Tulare County; mighty good fellow—I remembered being at his funeral, which consisted of him being burnt and the other Injuns gauming their faces with his ashes and howling like wildcats. He was powerful glad to

see me, and you may make up your mind I was just as glad to see him, and feel that I was in the right kind of a heaven at last.

Just as far as your eye could reach, there was swarms of clerks, running and bustling around, tricking out thousands of Yanks and Mexicans and English and Arabs, and all sorts of people in their new outfits; and when they gave me my kit and I put on my halo and took a look in the glass, I could have jumped over a house for joy, I was so happy. “Now this is something like!” says I. “Now,” says I, “I’m all right—show me a cloud.”

Inside of fifteen minutes I was a mile on my way towards the cloud-banks and about a million people along with me. Most of us tried to fly, but some got crippled and nobody made a success of it. So we concluded to walk, for the present, till we had had some wing practice.

We begun to meet swarms of folks who were coming back. Some had harps and nothing else; some had hymn-books and nothing else; some had nothing at all; all of them looked meek and uncomfortable; one young fellow hadn’t anything left but his halo, and he was carrying that in his hand; all of a sudden he offered it to me and says—

“Will you hold it for me a minute?”

Then he disappeared in the crowd. I went on. A woman asked me to hold her palm branch, and then she disappeared. A girl got me to hold her harp for her, and by George, she disappeared; and so on and so on, till I was about loaded down to the guards. Then comes a smiling old gentleman and asked me to hold his things. I swabbed off the perspiration and says, pretty tart—

“I’ll have to get you to excuse me, my friend,—I ain’t no hat-rack.”

About this time I begun to run across piles of those traps, lying in the road. I just quietly dumped my extra cargo along with them. I looked around, and, Peters, that whole nation that was following me were loaded

down the same as I'd been. The return crowd had got them to hold their things a minute, you see. They all dumped their loads, too, and we went on.

When I found myself perched on a cloud, with a million other people, I never felt so good in my life. Says I, "Now this is according to the promises; I've been having my doubts, but now I am in heaven, sure enough." I gave my palm branch a wave or two, for luck, and then I tautened up my harp-strings and struck in. Well, Peters, you can't imagine anything like the row we made. It was grand to listen to, and made a body thrill all over, but there was considerable many tunes going on at once, and that was a drawback to the harmony, you understand; and then there was a lot of Injun tribes, and they kept up such another war-whooping that they kind of took the tuck out of the music. By and by I quit performing, and judged I'd take a rest. There was quite a nice mild old gentleman sitting next me, and I noticed he didn't take a hand; I encouraged him, but he said he was naturally bashful, and was afraid to try before so many people. By and by the old gentleman said he never could seem to enjoy music somehow. The fact was, I was beginning to feel the same way; but I didn't say anything. Him and I had a considerable long silence, then, but of course it warn't noticeable in that place. After about sixteen or seventeen hours, during which I played and sung a little, now and then—always the same tune, because I didn't know any other—I laid down my harp and begun to fan myself with my palm branch. Then we both got to sighing pretty regular. Finally, says he—

"Don't you know any tune but the one you've been pegging at all day?"

"Not another blessed one," says I.

"Don't you reckon you could learn another one?" says he.

"Never," says I; "I've tried to, but I couldn't manage it."

"It's a long time to hang to the one—eternity, you know."

“Don’t break my heart,” says I; “I’m getting low-spirited enough already.”

After another long silence, says he—

“Are you glad to be here?”

Says I, “Old man, I’ll be frank with you. This \_ain’t\_ just as near my idea of bliss as I thought it was going to be, when I used to go to church.”

Says he, “What do you say to knocking off and calling it half a day?”

“That’s me,” says I. “I never wanted to get off watch so bad in my life.”

So we started. Millions were coming to the cloud-bank all the time, happy and hosannahing; millions were leaving it all the time, looking mighty quiet, I tell you. We laid for the new-comers, and pretty soon I’d got them to hold all my things a minute, and then I was a free man again and most outrageously happy. Just then I ran across old Sam Bartlett, who had been dead a long time, and stopped to have a talk with him. Says I—

“Now tell me—is this to go on forever? Ain’t there anything else for a change?”

Says he—

“I’ll set you right on that point very quick. People take the figurative language of the Bible and the allegories for literal, and the first thing they ask for when they get here is a halo and a harp, and so on. Nothing that’s harmless and reasonable is refused a body here, if he asks it in the right spirit. So they are outfitted with these things without a

word. They go and sing and play just about one day, and that's the last you'll ever see them in the choir. They don't need anybody to tell them that that sort of thing wouldn't make a heaven—at least not a heaven that a sane man could stand a week and remain sane. That cloud-bank is placed where the noise can't disturb the old inhabitants, and so there ain't any harm in letting everybody get up there and cure himself as soon as he comes.

“Now you just remember this—heaven is as blissful and lovely as it can be; but it's just the busiest place you ever heard of. There ain't any idle people here after the first day. Singing hymns and waving palm branches through all eternity is pretty when you hear about it in the pulpit, but it's as poor a way to put in valuable time as a body could contrive. It would just make a heaven of warbling ignoramuses, don't you see? Eternal Rest sounds comforting in the pulpit, too. Well, you try it once, and see how heavy time will hang on your hands. Why, Stormfield, a man like you, that had been active and stirring all his life, would go mad in six months in a heaven where he hadn't anything to do. Heaven is the very last place to come to \_rest\_ in,—and don't you be afraid to bet on that!”

Says I—

“Sam, I'm as glad to hear it as I thought I'd be sorry. I'm glad I come, now.”

Says he—

“Cap'n, ain't you pretty physically tired?”

Says I—

“Sam, it ain't any name for it! I'm dog-tired.”

“Just so—just so. You've earned a good sleep, and you'll get it. You've

earned a good appetite, and you'll enjoy your dinner. It's the same here as it is on earth—you've got to earn a thing, square and honest, before you enjoy it. You can't enjoy first and earn afterwards. But there's this difference, here: you can choose your own occupation, and all the powers of heaven will be put forth to help you make a success of it, if you do your level best. The shoemaker on earth that had the soul of a poet in him won't have to make shoes here."

"Now that's all reasonable and right," says I. "Plenty of work, and the kind you hanker after; no more pain, no more suffering—"

"Oh, hold on; there's plenty of pain here—but it don't kill. There's plenty of suffering here, but it don't last. You see, happiness ain't a \_thing in itself\_—it's only a \_contrast\_ with something that ain't pleasant. That's all it is. There ain't a thing you can mention that is happiness in its own self—it's only so by contrast with the other thing. And so, as soon as the novelty is over and the force of the contrast dulled, it ain't happiness any longer, and you have to get something fresh. Well, there's plenty of pain and suffering in heaven—consequently there's plenty of contrasts, and just no end of happiness."

Says I, "It's the sensiblest heaven I've heard of yet, Sam, though it's about as different from the one I was brought up on as a live princess is different from her own wax figger."

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Along in the first months I knocked around about the Kingdom, making friends and looking at the country, and finally settled down in a pretty likely region, to have a rest before taking another start. I went on making acquaintances and gathering up information. I had a good deal of talk with an old bald-headed angel by the name of Sandy McWilliams. He was from somewhere in New Jersey. I went about with him, considerable. We used to lay around, warm afternoons, in the shade of a rock, on some meadow-ground that was pretty high and out of the marshy slush of his



cranberry-farm, and there we used to talk about all kinds of things, and smoke pipes. One day, says I—

“About how old might you be, Sandy?”

“Seventy-two.”

“I judged so. How long you been in heaven?”

“Twenty-seven years, come Christmas.”

“How old was you when you come up?”

“Why, seventy-two, of course.”

“You can’t mean it!”

“Why can’t I mean it?”

“Because, if you was seventy-two then, you are naturally ninety-nine now.”

“No, but I ain’t. I stay the same age I was when I come.”

“Well,” says I, “come to think, there’s something just here that I want to ask about. Down below, I always had an idea that in heaven we would all be young, and bright, and spry.”

“Well, you can be young if you want to. You’ve only got to wish.”

“Well, then, why didn’t you wish?”

“I did. They all do. You’ll try it, some day, like enough; but you’ll get tired of the change pretty soon.”

“Why?”

“Well, I’ll tell you. Now you’ve always been a sailor; did you ever try some other business?”

“Yes, I tried keeping grocery, once, up in the mines; but I couldn’t stand it; it was too dull—no stir, no storm, no life about it; it was like being part dead and part alive, both at the same time. I wanted to be one thing or t’other. I shut up shop pretty quick and went to sea.”

“That’s it. Grocery people like it, but you couldn’t. You see you wasn’t used to it. Well, I wasn’t used to being young, and I couldn’t seem to take any interest in it. I was strong, and handsome, and had curly hair,—yes, and wings, too!—gay wings like a butterfly. I went to picnics and dances and parties with the fellows, and tried to carry on and talk nonsense with the girls, but it wasn’t any use; I couldn’t take to it—fact is, it was an awful bore. What I wanted was early to bed and early to rise, and something to \_do\_; and when my work was done, I wanted to sit quiet, and smoke and think—not tear around with a parcel of giddy young kids. You can’t think what I suffered whilst I was young.”

“How long was you young?”

“Only two weeks. That was plenty for me. Laws, I was so lonesome! You see, I was full of the knowledge and experience of seventy-two years; the deepest subject those young folks could strike was only \_a-b-c\_ to me. And to hear them argue—oh, my! it would have been funny, if it hadn’t been so pitiful. Well, I was so hungry for the ways and the sober talk I was used to, that I tried to ring in with the old people, but they wouldn’t have it. They considered me a conceited young upstart, and gave me the cold shoulder. Two weeks was a-plenty for me. I was glad to get back my bald head again, and my pipe, and my old drowsy reflections in the shade of a rock or a tree.”

“Well,” says I, “do you mean to say you’re going to stand still at seventy-two, forever?”

“I don’t know, and I ain’t particular. But I ain’t going to drop back to twenty-five any more—I know that, mighty well. I know a sight more than I did twenty-seven years ago, and I enjoy learning, all the time, but I don’t seem to get any older. That is, bodily—my mind gets older, and stronger, and better seasoned, and more satisfactory.”

Says I, “If a man comes here at ninety, don’t he ever set himself back?”

“Of course he does. He sets himself back to fourteen; tries it a couple of hours, and feels like a fool; sets himself forward to twenty; it ain’t much improvement; tries thirty, fifty, eighty, and finally ninety—finds he is more at home and comfortable at the same old figure he is used to than any other way. Or, if his mind begun to fail him on earth at eighty, that’s where he finally sticks up here. He sticks at the place where his mind was last at its best, for there’s where his enjoyment is best, and his ways most set and established.”

“Does a chap of twenty-five stay always twenty-five, and look it?”

“If he is a fool, yes. But if he is bright, and ambitious and industrious, the knowledge he gains and the experiences he has, change his ways and thoughts and likings, and make him find his best pleasure in the company of people above that age; so he allows his body to take on that look of as many added years as he needs to make him comfortable and proper in that sort of society; he lets his body go on taking the look of age, according as he progresses, and by and by he will be bald and wrinkled outside, and wise and deep within.”

“Babies the same?”

“Babies the same. Laws, what asses we used to be, on earth, about these things! We said we’d be always young in heaven. We didn’t say how

young—we didn't think of that, perhaps—that is, we didn't all think alike, anyway. When I was a boy of seven, I suppose I thought we'd all be twelve, in heaven; when I was twelve, I suppose I thought we'd all be eighteen or twenty in heaven; when I was forty, I begun to go back; I remember I hoped we'd all be about thirty years old in heaven. Neither a man nor a boy ever thinks the age he has is exactly the best one—he puts the right age a few years older or a few years younger than he is. Then he makes that ideal age the general age of the heavenly people. And he expects everybody to stick at that age—stand stock-still—and expects them to enjoy it!—Now just think of the idea of standing still in heaven! Think of a heaven made up entirely of hoop-rolling, marble-playing cubs of seven years!—or of awkward, diffident, sentimental immaturities of nineteen!—or of vigorous people of thirty, healthy-minded, brimming with ambition, but chained hand and foot to that one age and its limitations like so many helpless galley-slaves! Think of the dull sameness of a society made up of people all of one age and one set of looks, habits, tastes and feelings. Think how superior to it earth would be, with its variety of types and faces and ages, and the enlivening attrition of the myriad interests that come into pleasant collision in such a variegated society.”

“Look here,” says I, “do you know what you’re doing?”

“Well, what am I doing?”

“You are making heaven pretty comfortable in one way, but you are playing the mischief with it in another.”

“How d’you mean?”

“Well,” I says, “take a young mother that’s lost her child, and—”

“Sh!” he says. “Look!”

It was a woman. Middle-aged, and had grizzled hair. She was walking

slow, and her head was bent down, and her wings hanging limp and droopy; and she looked ever so tired, and was crying, poor thing! She passed along by, with her head down, that way, and the tears running down her face, and didn't see us. Then Sandy said, low and gentle, and full of pity:

“\_She's\_ hunting for her child! No, \_found\_ it, I reckon. Lord, how she's changed! But I recognized her in a minute, though it's twenty-seven years since I saw her. A young mother she was, about twenty two or four, or along there; and blooming and lovely and sweet? oh, just a flower! And all her heart and all her soul was wrapped up in her child, her little girl, two years old. And it died, and she went wild with grief, just wild! Well, the only comfort she had was that she'd see her child again, in heaven—‘never more to part,’ she said, and kept on saying it over and over, ‘never more to part.’ And the words made her happy; yes, they did; they made her joyful, and when I was dying, twenty-seven years ago, she told me to find her child the first thing, and say she was coming—‘soon, soon, \_very\_ soon, she hoped and believed!’”

“Why, it's pitiful, Sandy.”

He didn't say anything for a while, but sat looking at the ground, thinking. Then he says, kind of mournful:

“And now she's come!”

“Well? Go on.”

“Stormfield, maybe she hasn't found the child, but \_I\_ think she has. Looks so to me. I've seen cases before. You see, she's kept that child in her head just the same as it was when she jounced it in her arms a little chubby thing. But here it didn't elect to \_stay\_ a child. No, it elected to grow up, which it did. And in these twenty-seven years it has learned all the deep scientific learning there is to learn, and is

studying and studying and learning and learning more and more, all the time, and don't give a damn for anything \_but\_ learning; just learning, and discussing gigantic problems with people like herself."

"Well?"

"Stormfield, don't you see? Her mother knows \_cranberries\_, and how to tend them, and pick them, and put them up, and market them; and not another blamed thing! Her and her daughter can't be any more company for each other \_now\_ than mud turtle and bird o' paradise. Poor thing, she was looking for a baby to jounce; \_I\_ think she's struck a disapp'intment."

"Sandy, what will they do—stay unhappy forever in heaven?"

"No, they'll come together and get adjusted by and by. But not this year, and not next. By and by."

## **CHAPTER II**

I had been having considerable trouble with my wings. The day after I helped the choir I made a dash or two with them, but was not lucky. First off, I flew thirty yards, and then fouled an Irishman and brought him down—brought us both down, in fact. Next, I had a collision with a Bishop—and bowled him down, of course. We had some sharp words, and I felt pretty cheap, to come banging into a grave old person like that, with a million strangers looking on and smiling to themselves.

I saw I hadn't got the hang of the steering, and so couldn't rightly tell where I was going to bring up when I started. I went afoot the rest of the day, and let my wings hang. Early next morning I went to a private place to have some practice. I got up on a pretty high rock, and got a good start, and went swooping down, aiming for a bush a little over three hundred yards off; but I couldn't seem to calculate for the wind, which was about two points abaft my beam. I could see I was going considerable

to looard of the bush, so I worked my starboard wing slow and went ahead strong on the port one, but it wouldn't answer; I could see I was going to broach to, so I slowed down on both, and lit. I went back to the rock and took another chance at it. I aimed two or three points to starboard of the bush—yes, more than that—enough so as to make it nearly a head-wind. I done well enough, but made pretty poor time. I could see, plain enough, that on a head-wind, wings was a mistake. I could see that a body could sail pretty close to the wind, but he couldn't go in the wind's eye. I could see that if I wanted to go a-visiting any distance from home, and the wind was ahead, I might have to wait days, maybe, for a change; and I could see, too, that these things could not be any use at all in a gale; if you tried to run before the wind, you would make a mess of it, for there isn't anyway to shorten sail—like reefing, you know—you have to take it \_all\_ in—shut your feathers down flat to your sides. That would \_land\_ you, of course. You could lay to, with your head to the wind—that is the best you could do, and right hard work you'd find it, too. If you tried any other game, you would founder, sure.

I judge it was about a couple of weeks or so after this that I dropped old Sandy McWilliams a note one day—it was a Tuesday—and asked him to come over and take his manna and quails with me next day; and the first thing he did when he stepped in was to twinkle his eye in a sly way, and say,—

“Well, Cap, what you done with your wings?”

I saw in a minute that there was some sarcasm done up in that rag somewheres, but I never let on. I only says,—

“Gone to the wash.”

“Yes,” he says, in a dry sort of way, “they mostly go to the wash—about this time—I've often noticed it. Fresh angels are powerful neat. When do you look for 'em back?”

“Day after to-morrow,” says I.

He winked at me, and smiled.

Says I,—

“Sandy, out with it. Come—no secrets among friends. I notice you don’t ever wear wings—and plenty others don’t. I’ve been making an ass of myself—is that it?”

“That is about the size of it. But it is no harm. We all do it at first. It’s perfectly natural. You see, on earth we jump to such foolish conclusions as to things up here. In the pictures we always saw the angels with wings on—and that was all right; but we jumped to the conclusion that that was their way of getting around—and that was all wrong. The wings ain’t anything but a uniform, that’s all. When they are in the field—so to speak,—they always wear them; you never see an angel going with a message anywhere without his wings, any more than you would see a military officer presiding at a court-martial without his uniform, or a postman delivering letters, or a policeman walking his beat, in plain clothes. But they ain’t to fly with! The wings are for show, not for use. Old experienced angels are like officers of the regular army—they dress plain, when they are off duty. New angels are like the militia—never shed the uniform—always fluttering and floundering around in their wings, butting people down, flapping here, and there, and everywhere, always imagining they are attracting the admiring eye—well, they just think they are the very most important people in heaven. And when you see one of them come sailing around with one wing tipped up and t’other down, you make up your mind he is saying to himself: ‘I wish Mary Ann in Arkansaw could see me now. I reckon she’d wish she hadn’t shook me.’ No, they’re just for show, that’s all—only just for show.”

“I judge you’ve got it about right, Sandy,” says I.

“Why, look at it yourself,” says he. “You ain’t built for wings—no man



is. You know what a grist of years it took you to come here from the earth—and yet you were booming along faster than any cannon-ball could go. Suppose you had to fly that distance with your wings—wouldn't eternity have been over before you got here? Certainly. Well, angels have to go to the earth every day—millions of them—to appear in visions to dying children and good people, you know—it's the heft of their business. They appear with their wings, of course, because they are on official service, and because the dying persons wouldn't know they were angels if they hadn't wings—but do you reckon they fly with them? It stands to reason they don't. The wings would wear out before they got half-way; even the pin-feathers would be gone; the wing frames would be as bare as kite sticks before the paper is pasted on. The distances in heaven are billions of times greater; angels have to go all over heaven every day; could they do it with their wings alone? No, indeed; they wear the wings for style, but they travel any distance in an instant by wishing. The wishing-carpet of the Arabian Nights was a sensible idea—but our earthly idea of angels flying these awful distances with their clumsy wings was foolish.

“Our young saints, of both sexes, wear wings all the time—blazing red ones, and blue and green, and gold, and variegated, and rainbowed, and ring-streaked-and-striped ones—and nobody finds fault. It is suitable to their time of life. The things are beautiful, and they set the young people off. They are the most striking and lovely part of their outfit—a halo don't begin.”

“Well,” says I, “I've tucked mine away in the cupboard, and I allow to let them lay there till there's mud.”

“Yes—or a reception.”

“What's that?”

“Well, you can see one to-night if you want to. There's a barkeeper from Jersey City going to be received.”

“Go on—tell me about it.”

“This barkeeper got converted at a Moody and Sankey meeting, in New York, and started home on the ferry-boat, and there was a collision and he got drowned. He is of a class that think all heaven goes wild with joy when a particularly hard lot like him is saved; they think all heaven turns out hosannahing to welcome them; they think there isn’t anything talked about in the realms of the blest but their case, for that day. This barkeeper thinks there hasn’t been such another stir here in years, as his coming is going to raise.—And I’ve always noticed this peculiarity about a dead barkeeper—he not only expects all hands to turn out when he arrives, but he expects to be received with a torchlight procession.”

“I reckon he is disappointed, then.”

“No, he isn’t. No man is allowed to be disappointed here. Whatever he wants, when he comes—that is, any reasonable and unsacrilegious thing—he can have. There’s always a few millions or billions of young folks around who don’t want any better entertainment than to fill up their lungs and swarm out with their torches and have a high time over a barkeeper. It tickles the barkeeper till he can’t rest, it makes a charming lark for the young folks, it don’t do anybody any harm, it don’t cost a rap, and it keeps up the place’s reputation for making all comers happy and content.”

“Very good. I’ll be on hand and see them land the barkeeper.”

“It is manners to go in full dress. You want to wear your wings, you know, and your other things.”

“Which ones?”

“Halo, and harp, and palm branch, and all that.”

“Well,” says I, “I reckon I ought to be ashamed of myself, but the fact is I left them laying around that day I resigned from the choir. I haven’t got a rag to wear but this robe and the wings.”

“That’s all right. You’ll find they’ve been raked up and saved for you. Send for them.”

“I’ll do it, Sandy. But what was it you was saying about unsacrilegious things, which people expect to get, and will be disappointed about?”

“Oh, there are a lot of such things that people expect and don’t get. For instance, there’s a Brooklyn preacher by the name of Talmage, who is laying up a considerable disappointment for himself. He says, every now and then in his sermons, that the first thing he does when he gets to heaven, will be to fling his arms around Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and kiss them and weep on them. There’s millions of people down there on earth that are promising themselves the same thing. As many as sixty thousand people arrive here every single day, that want to run straight to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and hug them and weep on them. Now mind you, sixty thousand a day is a pretty heavy contract for those old people. If they were a mind to allow it, they wouldn’t ever have anything to do, year in and year out, but stand up and be hugged and wept on thirty-two hours in the twenty-four. They would be tired out and as wet as muskrats all the time. What would heaven be, to them? It would be a mighty good place to get out of—you know that, yourself. Those are kind and gentle old Jews, but they ain’t any fonder of kissing the emotional highlights of Brooklyn than you be. You mark my words, Mr. T.’s endearments are going to be declined, with thanks. There are limits to the privileges of the elect, even in heaven. Why, if Adam was to show himself to every new comer that wants to call and gaze at him and strike him for his autograph, he would never have time to do anything else but just that. Talmage has said he is going to give Adam some of his attentions, as well as A., I. and J. But he will have to change his mind about that.”

“Do you think Talmage will really come here?”

“Why, certainly, he will; but don’t you be alarmed; he will run with his own kind, and there’s plenty of them. That is the main charm of heaven—there’s all kinds here—which wouldn’t be the case if you let the preachers tell it. Anybody can find the sort he prefers, here, and he just lets the others alone, and they let him alone. When the Deity builds a heaven, it is built right, and on a liberal plan.”

Sandy sent home for his things, and I sent for mine, and about nine in the evening we begun to dress. Sandy says,—

“This is going to be a grand time for you, Stormy. Like as not some of the patriarchs will turn out.”

“No, but will they?”

“Like as not. Of course they are pretty exclusive. They hardly ever show themselves to the common public. I believe they never turn out except for an eleventh-hour convert. They wouldn’t do it then, only earthly tradition makes a grand show pretty necessary on that kind of an occasion.”

“Do they an turn out, Sandy?”

“Who?—all the patriarchs? Oh, no—hardly ever more than a couple. You will be here fifty thousand years—maybe more—before you get a glimpse of all the patriarchs and prophets. Since I have been here, Job has been to the front once, and once Ham and Jeremiah both at the same time. But the finest thing that has happened in my day was a year or so ago; that was Charles Peace’s reception—him they called ‘the Bannercross Murderer’—an Englishman. There were four patriarchs and two prophets on the Grand Stand that time—there hasn’t been anything like it since Captain Kidd came; Abel was there—the first time in twelve hundred years. A report got around that Adam was coming; well, of course, Abel was enough to

bring a crowd, all by himself, but there is nobody that can draw like Adam. It was a false report, but it got around, anyway, as I say, and it will be a long day before I see the like of it again. The reception was in the English department, of course, which is eight hundred and eleven million miles from the New Jersey line. I went, along with a good many of my neighbors, and it was a sight to see, I can tell you. Flocks came from all the departments. I saw Esquimaux there, and Tartars, Negroes, Chinamen—people from everywhere. You see a mixture like that in the Grand Choir, the first day you land here, but you hardly ever see it again. There were billions of people; when they were singing or hosannahing, the noise was wonderful; and even when their tongues were still the drumming of the wings was nearly enough to burst your head, for all the sky was as thick as if it was snowing angels. Although Adam was not there, it was a great time anyway, because we had three archangels on the Grand Stand—it is a seldom thing that even one comes out.”

“What did they look like, Sandy?”

“Well, they had shining faces, and shining robes, and wonderful rainbow wings, and they stood eighteen feet high, and wore swords, and held their heads up in a noble way, and looked like soldiers.”

“Did they have halos?”

“No—anyway, not the hoop kind. The archangels and the upper-class patriarchs wear a finer thing than that. It is a round, solid, splendid glory of gold, that is blinding to look at. You have often seen a patriarch in a picture, on earth, with that thing on—you remember it?—he looks as if he had his head in a brass platter. That don’t give you the right idea of it at all—it is much more shining and beautiful.”

“Did you talk with those archangels and patriarchs, Sandy?”

“Who—I\_? Why, what can you be thinking about, Stormy? I ain’t worthy to speak to such as they.”

“Is Talmage?”

“Of course not. You have got the same mixed-up idea about these things that everybody has down there. I had it once, but I got over it. Down there they talk of the heavenly King—and that is right—but then they go right on speaking as if this was a republic and everybody was on a dead level with everybody else, and privileged to fling his arms around anybody he comes across, and be hail-fellow-well-met with all the elect, from the highest down. How tangled up and absurd that is! How are you going to have a republic under a king? How are you going to have a republic at all, where the head of the government is absolute, holds his place forever, and has no parliament, no council to meddle or make in his affairs, nobody voted for, nobody elected, nobody in the whole universe with a voice in the government, nobody asked to take a hand in its matters, and nobody \_allowed\_ to do it? Fine republic, ain’t it?”

“Well, yes—it \_is\_ a little different from the idea I had—but I thought I might go around and get acquainted with the grandees, anyway—not exactly splice the main-brace with them, you know, but shake hands and pass the time of day.”

“Could Tom, Dick and Harry call on the Cabinet of Russia and do that?—on Prince Gortschakoff, for instance?”

“I reckon not, Sandy.”

“Well, this is Russia—only more so. There’s not the shadow of a republic about it anywhere. There are ranks, here. There are viceroys, princes, governors, sub-governors, sub-sub-governors, and a hundred orders of nobility, grading along down from grand-ducal archangels, stage by stage, till the general level is struck, where there ain’t any titles. Do you know what a prince of the blood is, on earth?”

“No.”

“Well, a prince of the blood don’t belong to the royal family exactly, and he don’t belong to the mere nobility of the kingdom; he is lower than the one, and higher than t’other. That’s about the position of the patriarchs and prophets here. There’s some mighty high nobility here—people that you and I ain’t worthy to polish sandals for—and \_they\_ ain’t worthy to polish sandals for the patriarchs and prophets. That gives you a kind of an idea of their rank, don’t it? You begin to see how high up they are, don’t you? just to get a two-minute glimpse of one of them is a thing for a body to remember and tell about for a thousand years. Why, Captain, just think of this: if Abraham was to set his foot down here by this door, there would be a railing set up around that foot-track right away, and a shelter put over it, and people would flock here from all over heaven, for hundreds and hundreds of years, to look at it. Abraham is one of the parties that Mr. Talmage, of Brooklyn, is going to embrace, and kiss, and weep on, when he comes. He wants to lay in a good stock of tears, you know, or five to one he will go dry before he gets a chance to do it.”

“Sandy,” says I, “I had an idea that \_I\_ was going to be equals with everybody here, too, but I will let that drop. It don’t matter, and I am plenty happy enough anyway.”

“Captain, you are happier than you would be, the other way. These old patriarchs and prophets have got ages the start of you; they know more in two minutes than you know in a year. Did you ever try to have a sociable improving-time discussing winds, and currents and variations of compass with an undertaker?”

“I get your idea, Sandy. He couldn’t interest me. He would be an ignoramus in such things—he would bore me, and I would bore him.”

“You have got it. You would bore the patriarchs when you talked, and when they talked they would shoot over your head. By and by you would say, ‘Good morning, your Eminence, I will call again’—but you wouldn’t.

Did you ever ask the slush-boy to come up in the cabin and take dinner with you?"

"I get your drift again, Sandy. I wouldn't be used to such grand people as the patriarchs and prophets, and I would be sheepish and tongue-tied in their company, and mighty glad to get out of it. Sandy, which is the highest rank, patriarch or prophet?"

"Oh, the prophets hold over the patriarchs. The newest prophet, even, is of a sight more consequence than the oldest patriarch. Yes, sir, Adam himself has to walk behind Shakespeare."

"Was Shakespeare a prophet?"

"Of course he was; and so was Homer, and heaps more. But Shakespeare and the rest have to walk behind a common tailor from Tennessee, by the name of Billings; and behind a horse-doctor named Sakka, from Afghanistan. Jeremiah, and Billings and Buddha walk together, side by side, right behind a crowd from planets not in our astronomy; next come a dozen or two from Jupiter and other worlds; next come Daniel, and Sakka and Confucius; next a lot from systems outside of ours; next come Ezekiel, and Mahomet, Zoroaster, and a knife-grinder from ancient Egypt; then there is a long string, and after them, away down toward the bottom, come Shakespeare and Homer, and a shoemaker named Marais, from the back settlements of France."

"Have they really rung in Mahomet and all those other heathens?"

"Yes—they all had their message, and they all get their reward. The man who don't get his reward on earth, needn't bother—he will get it here, sure."

"But why did they throw off on Shakespeare, that way, and put him away down there below those shoe-makers and horse-doctors and knife-grinders—a lot of people nobody ever heard of?"



“That is the heavenly justice of it—they warn’t rewarded according to their deserts, on earth, but here they get their rightful rank. That tailor Billings, from Tennessee, wrote poetry that Homer and Shakespeare couldn’t begin to come up to; but nobody would print it, nobody read it but his neighbors, an ignorant lot, and they laughed at it. Whenever the village had a drunken frolic and a dance, they would drag him in and crown him with cabbage leaves, and pretend to bow down to him; and one night when he was sick and nearly starved to death, they had him out and crowned him, and then they rode him on a rail about the village, and everybody followed along, beating tin pans and yelling. Well, he died before morning. He wasn’t ever expecting to go to heaven, much less that there was going to be any fuss made over him, so I reckon he was a good deal surprised when the reception broke on him.”

“Was you there, Sandy?”

“Bless you, no!”

“Why? Didn’t you know it was going to come off?”

“Well, I judge I did. It was the talk of these realms—not for a day, like this barkeeper business, but for twenty years before the man died.”

“Why the mischief didn’t you go, then?”

“Now how you talk! The like of me go meddling around at the reception of a prophet? A mudsill like me trying to push in and help receive an awful grandee like Edward J. Billings? Why, I should have been laughed at for a billion miles around. I shouldn’t ever heard the last of it.”

“Well, who did go, then?”

“Mighty few people that you and I will ever get a chance to see, Captain. Not a solitary commoner ever has the luck to see a reception of a

prophet, I can tell you. All the nobility, and all the patriarchs and prophets—every last one of them—and all the archangels, and all the princes and governors and viceroys, were there,—and \_no\_ small fry—not a single one. And mind you, I’m not talking about only the grandees from \_our\_ world, but the princes and patriarchs and so on from \_all\_ the worlds that shine in our sky, and from billions more that belong in systems upon systems away outside of the one our sun is in. There were some prophets and patriarchs there that ours ain’t a circumstance to, for rank and illustriousness and all that. Some were from Jupiter and other worlds in our own system, but the most celebrated were three poets, Saa, Bo and Soof, from great planets in three different and very remote systems. These three names are common and familiar in every nook and corner of heaven, clear from one end of it to the other—fully as well known as the eighty Supreme Archangels, in fact—where as our Moses, and Adam, and the rest, have not been heard of outside of our world’s little corner of heaven, except by a few very learned men scattered here and there—and they always spell their names wrong, and get the performances of one mixed up with the doings of another, and they almost always locate them simply \_in our solar system\_, and think that is enough without going into little details such as naming the particular world they are from. It is like a learned Hindoo showing off how much he knows by saying Longfellow lives in the United States—as if he lived all over the United States, and as if the country was so small you couldn’t throw a brick there without hitting him. Between you and me, it does gravel me, the cool way people from those monster worlds outside our system snub our little world, and even our system. Of course we think a good deal of Jupiter, because our world is only a potato to it, for size; but then there are worlds in other systems that Jupiter isn’t even a mustard-seed to—like the planet Goobra, for instance, which you couldn’t squeeze inside the orbit of Halley’s comet without straining the rivets. Tourists from Goobra (I mean parties that lived and died there—natives) come here, now and then, and inquire about our world, and when they find out it is so little that a streak of lightning can flash clear around it in the eighth of a second, they have to lean up against something to laugh. Then they screw a glass into their eye and go to examining us, as if we were a curious kind of foreign bug, or something of that sort. One

of them asked me how long our day was; and when I told him it was twelve hours long, as a general thing, he asked me if people where I was from considered it worth while to get up and wash for such a day as that. That is the way with those Goobra people—they can't seem to let a chance go by to throw it in your face that their day is three hundred and twenty-two of our years long. This young snob was just of age—he was six or seven thousand of his days old—say two million of our years—and he had all the puppy airs that belong to that time of life—that turning-point when a person has got over being a boy and yet ain't quite a man exactly. If it had been anywhere else but in heaven, I would have given him a piece of my mind. Well, anyway, Billings had the grandest reception that has been seen in thousands of centuries, and I think it will have a good effect. His name will be carried pretty far, and it will make our system talked about, and maybe our world, too, and raise us in the respect of the general public of heaven. Why, look here—Shakespeare walked backwards before that tailor from Tennessee, and scattered flowers for him to walk on, and Homer stood behind his chair and waited on him at the banquet. Of course that didn't go for much there, amongst all those big foreigners from other systems, as they hadn't heard of Shakespeare or Homer either, but it would amount to considerable down there on our little earth if they could know about it. I wish there was something in that miserable spiritualism, so we could send them word. That Tennessee village would set up a monument to Billings, then, and his autograph would outsell Satan's. Well, they had grand times at that reception—a small-fry noble from Hoboken told me all about it—Sir Richard Duffer, Baronet."

"What, Sandy, a nobleman from Hoboken? How is that?"

"Easy enough. Duffer kept a sausage-shop and never saved a cent in his life because he used to give all his spare meat to the poor, in a quiet way. Not tramps,—no, the other sort—the sort that will starve before they will beg—honest square people out of work. Dick used to watch hungry-looking men and women and children, and track them home, and find out all about them from the neighbors, and then feed them and find them

work. As nobody ever saw him give anything to anybody, he had the reputation of being mean; he died with it, too, and everybody said it was a good riddance; but the minute he landed here, they made him a baronet, and the very first words Dick the sausage-maker of Hoboken heard when he stepped upon the heavenly shore were, ‘Welcome, Sir Richard Duffer!’ It surprised him some, because he thought he had reasons to believe he was pointed for a warmer climate than this one.”

\* \* \* \* \*

All of a sudden the whole region fairly rocked under the crash of eleven hundred and one thunder blasts, all let off at once, and Sandy says,—

“There, that’s for the barkeep.”

I jumped up and says,—

“Then let’s be moving along, Sandy; we don’t want to miss any of this thing, you know.”

“Keep your seat,” he says; “he is only just telegraphed, that is all.”

“How?”

“That blast only means that he has been sighted from the signal-station. He is off Sandy Hook. The committees will go down to meet him, now, and escort him in. There will be ceremonies and delays; they won’t be coming up the Bay for a considerable time, yet. It is several billion miles away, anyway.”

“I could have been a barkeeper and a hard lot just as well as not,” says I, remembering the lonesome way I arrived, and how there wasn’t any committee nor anything.

“I notice some regret in your voice,” says Sandy, “and it is natural

enough; but let bygones be bygones; you went according to your lights, and it is too late now to mend the thing.”

“No, let it slide, Sandy, I don’t mind. But you’ve got a Sandy Hook \_here\_, too, have you?”

“We’ve got everything here, just as it is below. All the States and Territories of the Union, and all the kingdoms of the earth and the islands of the sea are laid out here just as they are on the globe—all the same shape they are down there, and all graded to the relative size, only each State and realm and island is a good many billion times bigger here than it is below. There goes another blast.”

“What is that one for?”

“That is only another fort answering the first one. They each fire eleven hundred and one thunder blasts at a single dash—it is the usual salute for an eleventh-hour guest; a hundred for each hour and an extra one for the guest’s sex; if it was a woman we would know it by their leaving off the extra gun.”

“How do we know there’s eleven hundred and one, Sandy, when they all go off at once?—and yet we certainly do know.”

“Our intellects are a good deal sharpened up, here, in some ways, and that is one of them. Numbers and sizes and distances are so great, here, that we have to be made so we can \_feel\_ them—our old ways of counting and measuring and ciphering wouldn’t ever give us an idea of them, but would only confuse us and oppress us and make our heads ache.”

After some more talk about this, I says: “Sandy, I notice that I hardly ever see a white angel; where I run across one white angel, I strike as many as a hundred million copper-colored ones—people that can’t speak English. How is that?”

“Well, you will find it the same in any State or Territory of the American corner of heaven you choose to go to. I have shot along, a whole week on a stretch, and gone millions and millions of miles, through perfect swarms of angels, without ever seeing a single white one, or hearing a word I could understand. You see, America was occupied a billion years and more, by Injuns and Aztecs, and that sort of folks, before a white man ever set his foot in it. During the first three hundred years after Columbus’s discovery, there wasn’t ever more than one good lecture audience of white people, all put together, in America—I mean the whole thing, British Possessions and all; in the beginning of our century there were only 6,000,000 or 7,000,000—say seven; 12,000,000 or 14,000,000 in 1825; say 23,000,000 in 1850; 40,000,000 in 1875. Our death-rate has always been 20 in 1000 per annum. Well, 140,000 died the first year of the century; 280,000 the twenty-fifth year; 500,000 the fiftieth year; about a million the seventy-fifth year. Now I am going to be liberal about this thing, and consider that fifty million whites have died in America from the beginning up to to-day—make it sixty, if you want to; make it a hundred million—it’s no difference about a few millions one way or t’other. Well, now, you can see, yourself, that when you come to spread a little dab of people like that over these hundreds of billions of miles of American territory here in heaven, it is like scattering a ten-cent box of homoeopathic pills over the Great Sahara and expecting to find them again. You can’t expect us to amount to anything in heaven, and we \_don’t\_—now that is the simple fact, and we have got to do the best we can with it. The learned men from other planets and other systems come here and hang around a while, when they are touring around the Kingdom, and then go back to their own section of heaven and write a book of travels, and they give America about five lines in it. And what do they say about us? They say this wilderness is populated with a scattering few hundred thousand billions of red angels, with now and then a curiously complected \_diseased\_ one. You see, they think we whites and the occasional nigger are Injuns that have been bleached out or blackened by some leprous disease or other—for some peculiarly rascally \_sin\_, mind you. It is a mighty sour pill for us all, my friend—even the modestest of us, let alone the other kind, that think they are going to be received like a long-lost government bond, and hug Abraham into the bargain. I

haven't asked you any of the particulars, Captain, but I judge it goes without saying—if my experience is worth anything—that there wasn't much of a hooraw made over you when you arrived—now was there?"

"Don't mention it, Sandy," says I, coloring up a little; "I wouldn't have had the family see it for any amount you are a mind to name. Change the subject, Sandy, change the subject."

"Well, do you think of settling in the California department of bliss?"

"I don't know. I wasn't calculating on doing anything really definite in that direction till the family come. I thought I would just look around, meantime, in a quiet way, and make up my mind. Besides, I know a good many dead people, and I was calculating to hunt them up and swap a little gossip with them about friends, and old times, and one thing or another, and ask them how they like it here, as far as they have got. I reckon my wife will want to camp in the California range, though, because most all her departed will be there, and she likes to be with folks she knows."

"Don't you let her. You see what the Jersey district of heaven is, for whites; well, the Californian district is a thousand times worse. It swarms with a mean kind of leather-headed mud-colored angels—and your nearest white neighbor is likely to be a million miles away. \_What a man mostly misses\_, \_in heaven\_, \_is company\_—company of his own sort and color and language. I have come near settling in the European part of heaven once or twice on that account."

"Well, why didn't you, Sandy?"

"Oh, various reasons. For one thing, although you \_see\_ plenty of whites there, you can't understand any of them, hardly, and so you go about as hungry for talk as you do here. I like to look at a Russian or a German or an Italian—I even like to look at a Frenchman if I ever have the luck to catch him engaged in anything that ain't indelicate—but \_looking\_ don't cure the hunger—what you want is talk."

“Well, there’s England, Sandy—the English district of heaven.”

“Yes, but it is not so very much better than this end of the heavenly domain. As long as you run across Englishmen born this side of three hundred years ago, you are all right; but the minute you get back of Elizabeth’s time the language begins to fog up, and the further back you go the foggier it gets. I had some talk with one Langland and a man by the name of Chaucer—old-time poets—but it was no use, I couldn’t quite understand them, and they couldn’t quite understand me. I have had letters from them since, but it is such broken English I can’t make it out. Back of those men’s time the English are just simply foreigners, nothing more, nothing less; they talk Danish, German, Norman French, and sometimes a mixture of all three; back of them, they talk Latin, and ancient British, Irish, and Gaelic; and then back of these come billions and billions of pure savages that talk a gibberish that Satan himself couldn’t understand. The fact is, where you strike one man in the English settlements that you can understand, you wade through awful swarms that talk something you can’t make head nor tail of. You see, every country on earth has been overlaid so often, in the course of a billion years, with different kinds of people and different sorts of languages, that this sort of mongrel business was bound to be the result in heaven.”

“Sandy,” says I, “did you see a good many of the great people history tells about?”

“Yes—plenty. I saw kings and all sorts of distinguished people.”

“Do the kings rank just as they did below?”

“No; a body can’t bring his rank up here with him. Divine right is a good-enough earthly romance, but it don’t go, here. Kings drop down to the general level as soon as they reach the realms of grace. I knew Charles the Second very well—one of the most popular comedians in the



English section—draws first rate. There are better, of course—people that were never heard of on earth—but Charles is making a very good reputation indeed, and is considered a rising man. Richard the Lion-hearted is in the prize-ring, and coming into considerable favor. Henry the Eighth is a tragedian, and the scenes where he kills people are done to the very life. Henry the Sixth keeps a religious-book stand.”

“Did you ever see Napoleon, Sandy?”

“Often—sometimes in the Corsican range, sometimes in the French. He always hunts up a conspicuous place, and goes frowning around with his arms folded and his field-glass under his arm, looking as grand, gloomy and peculiar as his reputation calls for, and very much bothered because he don’t stand as high, here, for a soldier, as he expected to.”

“Why, who stands higher?”

“Oh, a \_lot\_ of people \_we\_ never heard of before—the shoemaker and horse-doctor and knife-grinder kind, you know—clodhoppers from goodness knows where that never handled a sword or fired a shot in their lives—but the soldiery was in them, though they never had a chance to show it. But here they take their right place, and Cæsar and Napoleon and Alexander have to take a back seat. The greatest military genius our world ever produced was a brick-layer from somewhere back of Boston—died during the Revolution—by the name of Absalom Jones. Wherever he goes, crowds flock to see him. You see, everybody knows that if he had had a chance he would have shown the world some generalship that would have made all generalship before look like child’s play and ’prentice work. But he never got a chance; he tried heaps of times to enlist as a private, but he had lost both thumbs and a couple of front teeth, and the recruiting sergeant wouldn’t pass him. However, as I say, everybody knows, now, what he \_would\_ have been,—and so they flock by the million to get a glimpse of him whenever they hear he is going to be anywhere. Cæsar, and Hannibal, and Alexander, and Napoleon are all on his staff, and ever so many more great generals; but the public hardly care to look

at \_them\_ when \_he\_ is around. Boom! There goes another salute. The barkeeper's off quarantine now."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sandy and I put on our things. Then we made a wish, and in a second we were at the reception-place. We stood on the edge of the ocean of space, and looked out over the dimness, but couldn't make out anything. Close by us was the Grand Stand—tier on tier of dim thrones rising up toward the zenith. From each side of it spread away the tiers of seats for the general public. They spread away for leagues and leagues—you couldn't see the ends. They were empty and still, and hadn't a cheerful look, but looked dreary, like a theatre before anybody comes—gas turned down.

Sandy says,—

"We'll sit down here and wait. We'll see the head of the procession come in sight away off yonder pretty soon, now."

Says I,—

"It's pretty lonesome, Sandy; I reckon there's a hitch somewheres. Nobody but just you and me—it ain't much of a display for the barkeeper."

"Don't you fret, it's all right. There'll be one more gun-fire—then you'll see."

In a little while we noticed a sort of a lightish flush, away off on the horizon.

"Head of the torchlight procession," says Sandy.

It spread, and got lighter and brighter: soon it had a strong glare like a locomotive headlight; it kept on getting brighter and brighter till it was like the sun peeping above the horizon-line at sea—the big red rays shot high up into the sky.

“Keep your eyes on the Grand Stand and the miles of seats—sharp!” says Sandy, “and listen for the gun-fire.”

Just then it burst out, “Boom-boom-boom!” like a million thunderstorms in one, and made the whole heavens rock. Then there was a sudden and awful glare of light all about us, and in that very instant every one of the millions of seats was occupied, and as far as you could see, in both directions, was just a solid pack of people, and the place was all splendidly lit up! It was enough to take a body’s breath away. Sandy says,—

“That is the way we do it here. No time fooled away; nobody straggling in after the curtain’s up. Wishing is quicker work than travelling. A quarter of a second ago these folks were millions of miles from here. When they heard the last signal, all they had to do was to wish, and here they are.”

The prodigious choir struck up,—

We long to hear thy voice,  
To see thee face to face.

It was noble music, but the uneducated chipped in and spoiled it, just as the congregations used to do on earth.

The head of the procession began to pass, now, and it was a wonderful sight. It swept along, thick and solid, five hundred thousand angels abreast, and every angel carrying a torch and singing—the whirring thunder of the wings made a body’s head ache. You could follow the line of the procession back, and slanting upward into the sky, far away in a glittering snaky rope, till it was only a faint streak in the distance. The rush went on and on, for a long time, and at last, sure enough, along comes the barkeeper, and then everybody rose, and a cheer went up that made the heavens shake, I tell you! He was all smiles, and had his halo

tilted over one ear in a cocky way, and was the most satisfied-looking saint I ever saw. While he marched up the steps of the Grand Stand, the choir struck up,—

“The whole wide heaven groans,  
And waits to hear that voice.”

There were four gorgeous tents standing side by side in the place of honor, on a broad railed platform in the centre of the Grand Stand, with a shining guard of honor round about them. The tents had been shut up all this time. As the barkeeper climbed along up, bowing and smiling to everybody, and at last got to the platform, these tents were jerked up aloft all of a sudden, and we saw four noble thrones of gold, all caked with jewels, and in the two middle ones sat old white-whiskered men, and in the two others a couple of the most glorious and gaudy giants, with platter halos and beautiful armor. All the millions went down on their knees, and stared, and looked glad, and burst out into a joyful kind of murmurs. They said,—

“Two archangels!—that is splendid. Who can the others be?”

The archangels gave the barkeeper a stiff little military bow; the two old men rose; one of them said, “Moses and Esau welcome thee!” and then all the four vanished, and the thrones were empty.

The barkeeper looked a little disappointed, for he was calculating to hug those old people, I judge; but it was the gladdest and proudest multitude you ever saw—because they had seen Moses and Esau. Everybody was saying, “Did you see them?—I did—Esau’s side face was to me, but I saw Moses full in the face, just as plain as I see you this minute!”

The procession took up the barkeeper and moved on with him again, and the crowd broke up and scattered. As we went along home, Sandy said it was a great success, and the barkeeper would have a right to be proud of it forever. And he said we were in luck, too; said we might attend

receptions for forty thousand years to come, and not have a chance to see a brace of such grand moguls as Moses and Esau. We found afterwards that we had come near seeing another patriarch, and likewise a genuine prophet besides, but at the last moment they sent regrets. Sandy said there would be a monument put up there, where Moses and Esau had stood, with the date and circumstances, and all about the whole business, and travellers would come for thousands of years and gawk at it, and climb over it, and scribble their names on it.

Footnotes:

{9} The captain could not remember what this word was. He said it was in a foreign tongue.

# A Literary Nightmare

By Mark Twain

Will the reader please to cast his eye over the following lines, and see if he can discover anything harmful in them?

*Conductor, when you receive a fare,  
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!  
A blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare,  
A buff trip slip for a six-cent fare,  
A pink trip slip for a three-cent fare,  
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!*

## CHORUS

*Punch, brothers! punch with care!  
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!*

I came across these jingling rhymes in a newspaper, a little while ago, and read them a couple of times. They took instant and entire possession of me. All through breakfast they went waltzing through my brain; and when, at last, I rolled up my napkin, I could not tell whether I had eaten anything or not. I had carefully laid out my day's work the day before—thrilling tragedy in the novel which I am writing. I went to my den to begin my deed of blood. I took up my pen, but all I could get it to say was, "Punch in the presence of the passenjare." I fought hard for an hour, but it was useless. My head kept humming, "A blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare, a buff trip slip for a six-cent fare," and so on and so on, without peace or respite. The day's work was ruined—I could see that plainly enough. I gave up and drifted down-town, and presently discovered that my feet were keeping time to that relentless jingle.

When I could stand it no longer I altered my step. But it did no good; those rhymes accommodated themselves to the new step and went on harassing me just as before. I returned home, and suffered all the afternoon; suffered all through an unconscious and unrefreshing dinner; suffered, and cried, and jingled all through the evening; went to bed and rolled, tossed, and jingled right along, the same as ever; got up at midnight frantic, and tried to read; but there was nothing visible upon the whirling page except "Punch! punch in the presence of the passenjare." By sunrise I was out of my mind, and everybody marveled and was distressed at the idiotic burden of my ravings—"Punch! oh, punch! punch in the presence of the passenjare!"

Two days later, on Saturday morning, I arose, a tottering wreck, and went forth to fulfil an engagement with a valued friend, the Rev. Mr. ———, to walk to the Talcott Tower, ten miles distant. He stared at me, but asked no questions. We started. Mr. ——— talked, talked, talked as is his wont. I said nothing; I heard nothing. At the

end of a mile, Mr. ——— said "Mark, are you sick? I never saw a man look so haggard and worn and absent-minded. Say something, do!"

Drearily, without enthusiasm, I said: "Punch brothers, punch with care! Punch in the presence of the passenjare!"

My friend eyed me blankly, looked perplexed, they said:

"I do not think I get your drift, Mark. Then does not seem to be any relevancy in what you have said, certainly nothing sad; and yet—maybe it was the way you said the words—I never heard anything that sounded so pathetic. What is—"

But I heard no more. I was already far away with my pitiless, heartbreaking "blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare, buff trip slip for a six-cent fare, pink trip slip for a three-cent fare; punch in the presence of the passenjare." I do not know what occurred during the other nine miles. However, all of a sudden Mr. ——— laid his hand on my shoulder and shouted:

"Oh, wake up! wake up! wake up! Don't sleep all day! Here we are at the Tower, man! I have talked myself deaf and dumb and blind, and never got a response. Just look at this magnificent autumn landscape! Look at it! look at it! Feast your eye on it! You have traveled; you have seen booster landscapes elsewhere. Come, now, deliver an honest opinion. What do you say to this?"

I sighed wearily; and murmured:

"A buff trip slip for a six-cent fare, a pink trip slip for a three-cent fare, punch in the presence of the passenjare."

Rev. Mr. ——— stood there, very grave, full of concern, apparently, and looked long at me; then he said:

"Mark, there is something about this that I cannot understand. Those are about the same words you said before; there does not seem to be anything in them, and yet they nearly break my heart when you say them. Punch in the—how is it they go?"

I began at the beginning and repeated all the lines.

My friend's face lighted with interest. He said:

"Why, what a captivating jingle it is! It is almost music. It flows along so nicely. I have nearly caught the rhymes myself. Say them over just once more, and then I'll have them, sure."

I said them over. Then Mr. —— said them. He made one little mistake, which I corrected. The next time and the next he got them right. Now a great burden seemed to tumble from my shoulders. That torturing jingle departed out of my brain, and a grateful sense of rest and peace descended upon me. I was light-hearted enough to sing; and I did sing for half an hour, straight along, as we went jogging homeward. Then my freed tongue found blessed speech again, and the pent talk of many a weary hour began to gush and flow. It flowed on and on, joyously, jubilantly, until the fountain was empty and dry. As I wrung my friend's hand at parting, I said:

"Haven't we had a royal good time! But now I remember, you haven't said a word for two hours. Come, come, out with something!"

The Rev. Mr. —— turned a lack-luster eye upon me, drew a deep sigh, and said, without animation, without apparent consciousness:

"Punch, brothers, punch with care! Punch in the presence of the passenjare!"

A pang shot through me as I said to myself, "Poor fellow, poor fellow! he has got it, now."

I did not see Mr. —— for two or three days after that. Then, on Tuesday evening, he staggered into my presence and sank dejectedly into a seat. He was pale, worn; he was a wreck. He lifted his faded eyes to my face and said:

"Ah, Mark, it was a ruinous investment that I made in those heartless rhymes. They have ridden me like a nightmare, day and night, hour after hour, to this very moment. Since I saw you I have suffered the torments of the lost. Saturday evening I had a sudden call, by telegraph, and took the night train for Boston. The occasion was the death of a valued old friend who had requested that I should preach his funeral sermon. I took my seat in the cars and set myself to framing the discourse. But I never got beyond the opening paragraph; for then the train started and the car-wheels began their 'clack, clack-clack-clack-clack! clack-clack! clack-clack-clack!' and right away those odious rhymes fitted themselves to that accompaniment. For an hour I sat there and set a syllable of those rhymes to every separate and distinct clack the car-wheels made. Why, I was as fagged out, then, as if I had been chopping wood all day. My skull was splitting with headache. It seemed to me that I must go mad if I sat there any longer; so I undressed and went to bed. I stretched myself out in my berth, and—well, you know what the result was. The thing went right along, just the same. 'Clack-clack clack, a blue trip slip,



clack-clack-clack, for an eight cent fare; clack-clack-clack, a buff trip slip, clack clack-clack, for a six-cent fare, and so on, and so on, and so on punch in the presence of the passenjare!' Sleep? Not a single wink! I was almost a lunatic when I got to Boston. Don't ask me about the funeral. I did the best I could, but every solemn individual sentence was meshed and tangled and woven in and out with 'Punch, brothers, punch with care, punch in the presence of the passenjare.' And the most distressing thing was that my delivery dropped into the undulating rhythm of those pulsing rhymes, and I could actually catch absent-minded people nodding time to the swing of it with their stupid heads. And, Mark, you may believe it or not, but before I got through the entire assemblage were placidly bobbing their heads in solemn unison, mourners, undertaker, and all. The moment I had finished, I fled to the anteroom in a state bordering on frenzy. Of course it would be my luck to find a sorrowing and aged maiden aunt of the deceased there, who had arrived from Springfield too late to get into the church. She began to sob, and said:

"Oh, oh, he is gone, he is gone, and I didn't see him before he died!"

"Yes!" I said, 'he is gone, he is gone, he is gone—oh, will this suffering never cease!'

"You loved him, then! Oh, you too loved him!"

"Loved him! Loved who?"

"Why, my poor George! my poor nephew!"

"Oh—him! Yes—oh, yes, yes. Certainly—certainly. Punch—punch—oh, this misery will kill me!"

"Bless you! bless you, sir, for these sweet words! I, too, suffer in this dear loss. Were you present during his last moments?"

"Yes. I—whose last moments?"

"His. The dear departed's."

"Yes! Oh, yes—yes—yes! I suppose so, I think so, I don't know! Oh, certainly—I was there I was there!"

"Oh, what a privilege! what a precious privilege! And his last words—oh, tell me, tell me his last words! What did he say?"

"He said—he said—oh, my head, my head, my head! He said—he said—he never said anything but Punch, punch, punch in the presence of the passenjare! Oh, leave me, madam! In the name of all that is generous, leave me to my madness, my misery, my despair!—a buff trip slip for a six-cent fare, a pink trip slip for a three-cent fare—endu—rance can no fur—ther go!—PUNCH in the presence of the passenjare!"

My friend's hopeless eyes rested upon mine a pregnant minute, and then he said impressively:

"Mark, you do not say anything. You do not offer me any hope. But, ah me, it is just as well—it is just as well. You could not do me any good. The time has long gone by when words could comfort me. Something tells me that my tongue is doomed to wag forever to the jigger of that remorseless jingle. There—there it is coming on me again: a blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare, a buff trip slip for a—"

Thus murmuring faint and fainter, my friend sank into a peaceful trance and forgot his sufferings in a blessed respite.

How did I finally save him from an asylum? I took him to a neighboring university and made him discharge the burden of his persecuting rhymes into the eager ears of the poor, unthinking students. How is it with them, now? The result is too sad to tell. Why did I write this article? It was for a worthy, even a noble, purpose. It was to warn you, reader, if you should come across those merciless rhymes, to avoid them—avoid them as you would a pestilence.

# My Platonic Sweetheart

By: Mark Twain

*Note.—Mark Twain was always interested in those psychic phenomena which we call dreams. His own sleep fancies were likely to be vivid, and it was his habit to recall them and to find interest, and sometimes amusement, in their detail. In the story which follows he set down, and not without some fidelity to circumstance—dream circumstance—a phase of what we call recurrent dreams. As the tale progressed he felt an inclination to treat the subject more fully—more philosophically—and eventually he laid the manuscript away. The time did not come when he was moved to rewrite it; and for the pure enjoyment of it as a delicate fancy it may be our good fortune that he left it unchanged.—A. B. P.*

I met her first when I was seventeen and she fifteen. It was in a dream. No, I did not meet her; I overtook her. It was in a Missourian village which I had never been in before, and was not in at that time, except dreamwise; in the flesh I was on the Atlantic seaboard ten or twelve hundred miles away. The thing was sudden, and without preparation—after the custom of dreams. There I was, crossing a wooden bridge that had a wooden rail and was untidy with scattered wisps of hay, and there she was, five steps in front of me; half a second previously neither of us was there. This was the exit of the village, which lay immediately behind us. Its last house was the blacksmith-shop; and the peaceful clinking of the hammers—a sound which nearly always seems remote, and is always touched with a spirit of loneliness and a feeling of soft regret for something, you don't know what—was wafted to my ear over my shoulder; in front of us was the winding country road, with woods on one side, and on the other a rail fence, with blackberry vines and hazel bushes crowding its angles; on an upper rail a bluebird, and scurrying toward him along the same rail a fox-squirrel with his tail bent high like a shepherd's crook; beyond the fence a rich field of grain, and far away a farmer in shirt-sleeves and straw hat wading knee-deep through it: no other representative of life, and no noise at all; everywhere a Sabbath stillness.

I remember it all—and the girl, too, and just how she walked, and how she was dressed. In the first moment I was five steps behind her; in the next one I was at her side—without either stepping or gliding; it merely happened; the transfer ignored space. I noticed that, but not with any surprise; it seemed a natural process.

I was at her side. I put my arm around her waist and drew her close to me, for I loved her; and although I did not know her, my behavior seemed to me quite natural and right, and I had no misgivings about it. She showed no surprise, no distress, no displeasure, but put an arm around my waist, and turned up her face to mine with a happy welcome in it, and when I bent down to kiss her she received the kiss as if she was expecting it, and as if it was quite natural for me to offer it and her to take it and have pleasure in it. The affection which I felt for her and which she manifestly felt for me was a quite simple fact; but the quality of it was another matter. It was not

the affection of brother and sister—it was closer than that, more clinging, more endearing, more reverent; and it was not the love of sweethearts, for there was no fire in it. It was somewhere between the two, and was finer than either, and more exquisite, more profoundly contenting. We often experience this strange and gracious thing in our dream-loves: and we remember it as a feature of our childhood-loves, too.

We strolled along, across the bridge and down the road, chatting like the oldest friends. She called me George, and that seemed natural and right, though it was not my name; and I called her Alice, and she did not correct me, though without doubt it was not her name. Everything that happened seemed just natural and to be expected. Once I said, “What a dear little hand it is!” and without any words she laid it gratefully in mine for me to examine it. I did it, remarking upon its littleness, its delicate beauty, and its satin skin, then kissed it; she put it up to her lips without saying anything and kissed it in the same place. Around a curve of the road, at the end of half a mile, we came to a log house, and entered it and found the table set and everything on it steaming hot—a roast turkey, corn in the ear, butter-beans, and the rest of the usual things—and a cat curled up asleep in a splint-bottomed chair by the fireplace; but no people; just emptiness and silence. She said she would look in the next room if I would wait for her. So I sat down, and she passed through a door, which closed behind her with a click of the latch. I waited and waited. Then I got up and followed, for I could not any longer bear to have her out of my sight. I passed through the door, and found myself in a strange sort of cemetery, a city of innumerable tombs and monuments stretching far and wide on every hand, and flushed with pink and gold lights flung from the sinking sun. I turned around, and the log house was gone. I ran here and there and yonder down the lanes between the rows of tombs, calling Alice; and presently the night closed down, and I could not find my way. Then I woke, in deep distress over my loss, and was in my bed in Philadelphia. And I was not seventeen, now, but nineteen.

....

Ten years afterward, in another dream. I found her. I was seventeen again, and she was still fifteen. I was in a grassy place in the twilight deeps of a magnolia forest some miles above Natchez, Mississippi: the trees were snowed over with great blossoms, and the air was loaded with their rich and strenuous fragrance; the ground was high, and through a rift in the wood a burnished patch of the river was visible in the distance. I was sitting on the grass, absorbed in thinking, when an arm was laid around my neck, and there was Alice sitting by my side and looking into my face. A deep and satisfied happiness and an unwordable gratitude rose in me, but with it there was no feeling of surprise; and there was no sense of a time-lapse; the ten years amounted to hardly even a yesterday; indeed, to hardly even a noticeable fraction of it. We dropped in the tranquil way into affectionate caressings and pettings, and chatted along without a reference to the separation; which was natural, for I think we did not know there had been any that one might measure with either clock or almanac. She called me Jack

and I called her Helen, and those seemed the right and proper names, and perhaps neither of us suspected that we had ever borne others; or, if we did suspect it, it was probably not a matter of consequence.

She had been beautiful ten years before; she was just as beautiful still; girlishly young and sweet and innocent, and she was still that now. She had had blue eyes, a hair of flossy gold before; she had black hair now, and dark-brown eyes. I noted these differences, but they did not suggest change; to me she was the same girl she was before, absolutely. It never occurred to me to ask what became of the log house; I doubt if I even thought of it. We were living in a simple and natural and beautiful world where everything that happened was natural and right, and was not perplexed with the unexpected or with any forms of surprise, and so there was no occasion for explanations and no interest attaching to such things.

We had a dear and pleasant time together, and were like a couple of ignorant and contented children. Helen had a summer hat on. She took it off presently and said, "It was in the way; now you can kiss me better." It seemed to me merely a bit of courteous and considerate wisdom, nothing more; and a natural thing for her to think of and do. We went wandering through the woods, and came to a limpid and shallow stream a matter of three yards wide. She said:

"I must not get my feet wet, dear; carry me over."

I took her in my arms and gave her my hat to hold. This was to keep my own feet from getting wet. I did not know why this should have that effect; I merely knew it; and she knew it, too. I crossed the stream, and said I would go on carrying her, because it was so pleasant; and she said it was pleasant to her, too, and wished we had thought of it sooner. It seemed to me a pity that we should have walked so far, both of us on foot, when we could have been having this higher enjoyment; and I spoke of it regretfully, as a something lost which could never be got back. She was troubled about it, too, and said there must be some way to get it back; and she would think. After musing deeply a little while she looked up radiant and proud, and said she had found it.

"Carry me back and start over again."

I can see, now, that that was no solution, but at the time it seemed luminous with intelligence, and I believed that there was not another little head in the world that could have worked out that difficult problem with such swiftness and success. I told her that, and it pleased her; and she said she was glad it all happened, so that I could see how capable she was. After thinking a moment she added that it was "quite atreous." The words seemed to mean something, I do not know why: in fact, it seemed to cover the whole ground and leave nothing more to say; I admired the nice aptness and the flashing felicity of the phrase, and was filled with respect for the marvelous

mind that had been able to engender it. I think less of it now. It is a noticeable fact that the intellectual coinage of Dreamland often passes for more there than it would fetch here. Many a time in after years my dream-sweetheart threw off golden sayings which crumbled to ashes under my pencil when I was setting them down in my note-book after breakfast.

I carried her back and started over again; and all the long afternoon I bore her in my arms, miles upon miles, and it never occurred to either of us that there was anything remarkable in a youth like me being able to carry that sweet bundle around half a day without some sense of fatigue or need of rest. There are many dream-worlds, but none is so rightly and reasonably and pleasantly arranged as that one.

After dark we reached a great plantation-house, and it was her home. I carried her in, and the family knew me and I knew them, although we had not met before; and the mother asked me with ill-disguised anxiety how much twelve times fourteen was, and I said a hundred and thirty-five, and she put it down on a piece of paper, saying it was her habit in the process of perfecting her education not to trust important particulars to her memory; and her husband was offering me a chair, but noticed that Helen was asleep, so he said it would be best not to disturb her; and he backed me softly against a wardrobe and said I could stand more easily now; then a negro came in, bowing humbly, with his slouch-hat in his hand, and asked me if I would have my measure taken. The question did not surprise me, but it confused me and worried me, and I said I should like to have advice about it. He started toward the door to call advisers; then he and the family and the lights began to grow dim, and in a few moments the place was pitch dark; but straightway there came a flood of moonlight and a gust of cold wind, and I found myself crossing a frozen lake, and my arms were empty. The wave of grief that swept through me woke me up, and I was sitting at my desk in the newspaper office in San Francisco, and I noticed by the clock that I had been asleep less than two minutes. And what was of more consequence, I was twenty-nine years old.

....

That was 1864. The next year and the year after I had momentary glimpses of my dream-sweetheart, but nothing more. These are set down in my note-books under their proper dates, but with no talks nor other particulars added; which is sufficient evidence to me that there were none to add. In both of these instances there was the sudden meeting and recognition, the eager approach, then the instant disappearance, leaving the world empty and of no worth. I remember the two images quite well; in fact, I remember all the images of that spirit, and can bring them before me without help of my note-book. The habit of writing down my dreams of all sorts while they were fresh in my mind, and then studying them and rehearsing them and trying to find out what the source of dreams is, and which of the two or three separate persons inhabiting us is their architect, has given me a good dream-memory—a thing which is not usual with people, for few drill the dream-memory, and no memory can be

kept strong without that.

I spent a few months in the Hawaiian Islands in 1866, and in October of that year I delivered my maiden lecture; it was in San Francisco. In the following January I arrived in New York, and had just completed my thirty-first year. In that year I saw my platonic dream-sweetheart again. In this dream I was again standing on the stage of the Opera House in San Francisco, ready to lecture, and with the audience vividly individualized before me in the strong light. I begun, spoke a few words, and stopped, cold with fright; for I discovered that I had no subject, no text, nothing to talk about. I choked for a while, then got out a few words, a lame, poor attempt at humor. The house made no response. There was a miserable pause, then another attempt, and another failure. There were a few scornful laughs; otherwise the house was silent, unsmilingly austere, deeply offended. I was consuming with shame. In my distress I tried to work upon its pity. I began to make servile apologies, mixed with gross and ill-timed flatteries, and to beg and plead for forgiveness; this was too much, and the people broke into insulting cries, whistlings, hootings, and cat-calls, and in the midst of this they rose and began to struggle in a confused mass toward the door. I stood dazed and helpless, looking out over this spectacle, and thinking how everybody would be talking about it next day, and I could not show myself in the streets. When the house was become wholly empty and still, I sat down on the only chair that was on the stage and bent my head down on the reading-desk to shut out the look of that place. Soon that familiar dream-voice spoke my name, and swept all my troubles away:

“Robert!”

I answered:

“Agnes!”

The next moment we two were lounging up the blossomy gorge called the Iao Valley, in the Hawaiian Islands. I recognized, without any explanations, that Robert was not my name, but only a pet name, a common noun, and meant “dear”; and both of us knew that Agnes was not a name, but only a pet name, a common noun, whose spirit was affectionate, but not conveyable with exactness in any but the dream-language. It was about the equivalent of “dear,” but the dream-vocabulary shaves meanings finer and closer than do the world’s daytime dictionaries. We did not know why those words should have those meanings; we had used words which had no existence in any known language, and had expected them to be understood, and they were understood. In my note-books there are several letters from this dream-sweetheart, in some unknown tongue—presumably dream-tongue—with translations added. I should like to be master of that tongue, then I could talk in shorthand. Here is one of those letters—the whole of it:

“Rax oha tal.”

Translation.—”When you receive this it will remind you that I long to see your face and touch your hand, for the comfort of it and the peace.”

It is swifter than waking thought; for thought is not thought at all, but only a vague and formless fog until it is articulated into words.

We wandered far up the fairy gorge, gathering the beautiful flowers of the ginger-plant and talking affectionate things, and tying and retying each other’s ribbons and cravats, which didn’t need it; and finally sat down in the shade of a tree and climbed the vine-hung precipices with our eyes, up and up and up toward the sky to where the drifting scarfs of white mist clove them across and left the green summits floating pale and remote, like spectral islands wandering in the deeps of space; and then we descended to earth and talked again.

“How still it is—and soft, and balmy, and reposeful! I could never tire of it. You like it, don’t you, Robert?”

“Yes, and I like the whole region—all the islands. Maui. It is a darling island. I have been here before. Have you?”

“Once, but it wasn’t an island then.”

“What was it?”

“It was a sufa.”

I understood. It was the dream-word for “part of a continent.”

“What were the people like?”

“They hadn’t come yet. There weren’t any.”

“Do you know, Agnes—that is Haleakala, the dead volcano, over there across the valley; was it here in your friend’s time?”



“Yes, but it was burning.”

“Do you travel much ?”

“I think so. Not here much, but in the stars a good deal.”

“Is it pretty there?”

She used a couple of dream-words for “You will go with me some time and you will see.” Non-committal, as one perceives now, but I did not notice it then.

A man-of-war-bird lit on her shoulder; I put out my hand and caught it. Its feathers began to fall out, and it turned into a kitten; then the kitten’s body began to contract itself to a ball and put out hairy, long legs, and soon it was a tarantula; I was going to keep it, but it turned into a star-fish, and I threw it away. Agnes said it was not worth while to try to keep things; there was no stability about them. I suggested rocks; but she said a rock was like the rest; it wouldn’t stay. She picked up a stone, and it turned into a bat and flew away. These curious matters interested me, but that was all; they did not stir my wonder.

While we were sitting there in the Iao gorge talking, a Kanaka came along who was wrinkled and bent and white-headed, and he stopped and talked to us in the native tongue, and we understood him without trouble and answered him in his own speech. He said he was a hundred and thirty years old, and he remembered Captain Cook well, and was present when he was murdered: saw it with his own eyes, and also helped. Then he showed us his gun, which was of strange make, and he said it was his own invention and was to shoot arrows with, though one loaded it with powder and it had a percussion lock. He said it would carry a hundred miles. It seemed a reasonable statement; I had no fault to find with it, and it did not in any way surprise me. He loaded it and fired an arrow aloft, and it darted into the sky and vanished. Then he went his way, saying that the arrow would fall near us in half an hour, and would go many yards into the earth, not minding the rocks.

I took the time, and we waited, reclining upon the mossy slant at the base, of a tree, and gazing into the sky. By and by there was a hissing sound, followed by a dull impact, and Agnes uttered a groan. She said, in a series of fainting gasps:

“Take me to your arms—it passed through me—hold me to your heart—I am afraid to die—closer—closer. It is growing dark—I cannot see you. Don’t leave me—where are you? You are not gone? You will not leave me? I

would not leave you.”

Then her spirit passed; she was clay in my arms.

....

The scene changed in an instant, and I was awake and crossing Bond Street in New York with a friend, and it was snowing hard. We had been talking, and there had been no observable gaps in the conversation. I doubt if I had made any more than two steps while I was asleep. I am satisfied that even the most elaborate and incident-crowded dream is seldom more than a few seconds in length. It would not cost me very much of a strain to believe in Mohammed’s seventy-year dream, which began when he knocked his glass over, and ended in time for him to catch it before the water was spilled.

Within a quarter of an hour I was in my quarters, undressed, ready for bed, and was jotting down my dream in my note-book. A striking thing happened now. I finished my notes, and was just going to turn out the gas when I was caught with a most strenuous gape, for it was very late and I was very drowsy. I fell asleep and dreamed again. What now follows occurred while I was asleep; and when I woke again the gape had completed itself, but not long before, I think, for I was still on my feet. I was in Athens—a city which I had not then seen, but I recognized the Parthenon from the pictures, although it had a fresh look and was in perfect repair. I passed by it and climbed a grassy hill toward a palatial sort of mansion which was built of red terra-cotta and had a spacious portico, whose roof was supported by a rank of fluted columns with Corinthian capitals. It was noonday, but I met no one. I passed into the house and entered the first room. It was very large and light, its walls were of polished and richly tinted and veined onyx, and its floor was a pictured pattern in soft colors laid in tiles. I noted the details of the furniture and the ornaments—a thing which I should not have been likely to do when awake—and they took sharp hold and remained in my memory; they are not really dim yet, and this was more than thirty years ago.

There was a person present—Agnes. I was not surprised to see her, but only glad. She was in the simple Greek costume, and her hair and eyes were different as to color from those she had had when she died in the Hawaiian Islands half an hour before, but to me she was exactly her own beautiful little self as I had always known her, and she was still fifteen, and I was seventeen once more. She was sitting on an ivory settee, crocheting something or other, and had her crewels in a shallow willow work-basket in her lap. I sat down by her and we began to chat in the usual way. I remembered her death, but the pain and the grief and the bitterness which had been so sharp and so desolating to me at the moment that it happened had wholly passed from me now, and had left not a scar. I was grateful to have her back, but there was no realizable sense that she had ever been gone, and

so it did not occur to me to speak about it, and she made no reference to it herself. It may be that she had often died before, and knew that there was nothing lasting about it, and consequently nothing important enough in it to make conversation out of.

When I think of that house and its belongings, I recognize what a master in taste and drawing and color and arrangement is the dream-artist who resides in us. In my waking hours, when the inferior artist in me is in command, I cannot draw even the simplest picture with a pencil, nor do anything with a brush and colors; I cannot bring before my mind's eye the detailed image of any building known to me except my own house at home; of St. Paul's, St. Peter's, the Eiffel Tower, the Taj, the Capitol at Washington, I can reproduce only portions, partial glimpses; the same with Niagara Falls, the Matterhorn, and other familiar things in nature; I cannot bring before my mind's eye the face or figure of any human being known to me; I have seen my family at breakfast within the past two hours; I cannot bring their images before me, I do not know how they look; before me, as I write, I see a little grove of young trees in the garden; high above them projects the slender lance of a young pine, beyond it is a glimpse of the upper half of a dull-white chimney covered by an A-shaped little roof shingled with brown-red tiles, and half a mile away is a hill-top densely wooded, and the red is cloven by a curved, wide vacancy, which is smooth and grass-clad; I cannot shut my eyes and reproduce that picture as a whole at all, nor any single detail of it except the grassy curve, and that but vaguely and fleetingly.

But my dream-artist can draw anything, and do it perfectly; he can paint with all the colors and all the shades, and do it with delicacy and truth; he can place before me vivid images of palaces, cities, hamlets, hovels, mountains, valleys, lakes, skies, glowing in sunlight or moonlight, or veiled in driving gusts of snow or rain, and he can set before me people who are intensely alive, and who feel, and express their feelings in their faces, and who also talk and laugh, sing and swear. And when I wake I can shut my eyes and bring back those people, and the scenery and the buildings; and not only in general view, but often in nice detail. While Agnes and I sat talking in that grand Athens house, several stately Greeks entered from another part of it, disputing warmly about something or other, and passed us by with courteous recognition; and among them was Socrates. I recognized him by his nose. A moment later the house and Agnes and Athens vanished away, and I was in my quarters in New York again and reaching for my note-book.

....

In our dreams—I know it!—we do make the journeys we seem to make; we do see the things we seem to see; the people, the horses, the cats, the dogs, the birds, the whales, are real, not chimeras; they are living spirits, not shadows; and they are immortal and indestructible. They go whither they will; they visit all resorts, all points of interest, even the twinkling suns that wander in the wastes of space. That is where those strange mountains are

which slide from under our feet while we walk, and where those vast caverns are whose bewildering avenues close behind us and in front when we are lost, and shut us in. We knew this because there are no such tilings here, and they must be there, because there is no other place.

This tale is long enough, and I will close it now. In the forty-four years that I have known my Dreamland sweetheart, I have seen her once in two years on an average. Mainly these were glimpses, but she was always immediately recognizable, notwithstanding she was so given to repairing herself and getting up doubtful improvements in her hair and eyes. She was always fifteen, and looked it and acted it; and I was always seventeen, and never felt a day older. To me she is a real person, not a fiction, and her sweet and innocent society has been one of the prettiest and pleasantest experiences of my life. I know that to you her talk will not seem of the first intellectual order; but you should hear her in Dreamland—then you would see!

....

I saw her a week ago, just for a moment. Fifteen, as usual, and I seventeen, instead of going on sixty-three, as I was when I went to sleep. We were in India, and Bombay was in sight; also Windsor Castle, its towers and battlements veiled in a delicate haze, and from it the Thames flowed, curving and winding between its swarded banks, to our feet. I said:

“There is no question about it, England is the most beautiful of all the countries.”

Her face lighted with approval, and she said, with that sweet and earnest irrelevance of hers:

“It is, because it is so marginal.”

Then she disappeared. It was just as well; she could probably have added nothing to that rounded and perfect statement without damaging its symmetry.

This glimpse of her carries me back to Maui, and that time when I saw her gasp out her young life. That was a terrible thing to me at the time. It was preternaturally vivid; and the pain and the grief and the misery of it to me transcended many sufferings that I have known in waking life. For everything in a dream is more deep and strong and sharp and real than is ever its pale imitation in the unreal life which is ours when we go about awake and clothed with our artificial selves in this vague and dull-tinted artificial world. When we die we shall slough off this cheap intellect, perhaps, and go abroad into Dreamland clothed in our real selves, and aggrandized and enriched by the command over the mysterious mental magician who is here not our slave, but only our guest.