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#1 in our series of Widger's Quotations by David Widger

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SELECTED QUOTATIONS OF MARK TWAIN

By David Widger

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The quotations are in two formats:

1. Small paragraphs from the text.
2. An alphabetized list of one-liners.

The editor would be pleased to be contacted at <widger@cecomet.net> for comments, questions and criticism.

D.W.

FOLLOWING THE EQUATOR, by Mark Twain [feqtr10.txt] 2895

Against nature to take an interest in familiar things
Age after age, the barren and meaningless process
All life seems to be sacred except human life
But there are liars everywhere this year
Capacity must be shown (in other work); in the law, concealment of it will do

Christmas brings harassment and dread to many excellent people
Climate which nothing can stand except rocks
Creature which was everything in general and nothing in particular
Custom supersedes all other forms of law
Death in life; death without its privileges
Every one is a moon, and has a dark side
Exercise, for such as like that kind of work
Explain the inexplicable
Faith is believing what you know ain't so
Forbids betting on a sure thing
Forgotten fact is news when it comes again
Get your formalities right--never mind about the moralities
Give thanks that Christmas comes but once a year
Good protections against temptations; but the surest is cowardice
Goody-goody puerilities and dreary moralities
Habit of assimilating incredibilities
Human pride is not worth while
Hunger is the handmaid of genius
If the man doesn't believe as we do, we say he is a crank
Inherited prejudices in favor of hoary ignorances
It is easier to stay out than get out
Man is the only animal that blushes--or needs to
Meddling philanthropists
Melt a brass door-knob and weather which will only make it mushy
Moral sense, and there is an Immoral Sense
Most satisfactory pet--never coming when he is called
Natural desire to have more of a good thing than he needs
Neglected her habits, and hadn't any
Never could tell a lie that anybody would doubt
No nation occupies a foot of land that was not stolen
No people who are quite so vulgar as the over-refined ones
Notion that he is less savage than the other savages
Only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want
Ostentatious of his modesty
Otherwise they would have thought I was afraid, which I was
Pity is for the living, Envy is for the dead
Prosperity is the best protector of principle
Received with a large silence that suggested doubt
Seventy is old enough--after that, there is too much risk
Silent lie and a spoken one
Sinking vessel, with no freight in her to throw over
Takes your enemy and your friend, working together, to hurt you
Thankfulness is not so general
The man with a new idea is a Crank until the idea succeeds
This is a poor old ship, and ought to be insured and sunk
To a delicate stomach even imaginary smoke can convey damage
Tourists showing how things ought to be managed
Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been

Appelles meets Zenobia, the helper of all who suffer, and tells her his story, which moves her pity. By common report she is endowed with more than earthly powers; and since he cannot have the boon of death, he appeals to her to drown his memory in forgetfulness of his griefs--forgetfulness 'which is death's equivalent'.

I do not remember my first lie, it is too far back; but I remember my second one very well. I was nine days old at the time, and had noticed that if a pin was sticking in me and I advertised it in the usual fashion, I was lovingly petted and coddled and pitied in a most agreeable way and got a ration between meals besides. It was human nature to want to get these riches, and I fell. I lied about the pin--advertising one when there wasn't any. You would have done it; George Washington did it, anybody would have done it. During the first half of my life I never knew a child that was able to rise above that temptation and keep from telling that lie.

This establishment's name is Hochberghaus. It is in Bohemia, a short day's journey from Vienna, and being in the Austrian Empire is of course a health resort. The empire is made up of health resorts; it distributes health to the whole world. Its waters are all medicinal. They are bottled and sent throughout the earth; the natives themselves drink beer.

But I think I have no such prejudice. A few years ago a Jew observed to me that there was no uncourteous reference to his people in my books, and asked how it happened. It happened because the disposition was lacking. I am quite sure that (bar one) I have no race prejudices, and I think I have no colour prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. Indeed, I know it. I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being--that is enough for me; he can't be any worse.

HOW TELL A STORY AND OTHERS, by Mark Twain [MT#31][mthts10.txt]3250

There are several kinds of stories, but only one difficult kind--the humorous. I will talk mainly about that one. The humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of the telling; the comic story and the witty story upon the matter.

The humorous story is strictly a work of art--high and delicate art--and only an artist can tell it; but no art is necessary in telling the comic and the witty story; anybody can do it. The art of telling a humorous story--understand, I mean by word of mouth, not print--was created in America, and has remained at home.

DEFENCE OF HARRIET SHELLEY, by Mark Twain [MT#32][mtdhs10.txt]3171

I have committed sins, of course; but I have not committed enough of them to entitle me to the punishment of reduction to the bread and water of ordinary literature during six years when I might have been living on the fat diet spread for the righteous in Professor Dowden's Life of Shelley, if I had been justly dealt with.

Yet he has been resting both for a month, with Italian, and tea, and manna of sentiment, and late hours, and every restful thing a young husband could need for the refreshment of weary limbs and a sore conscience, and a nagging sense of shabbiness and treachery.

The biographer throws off that extraordinary remark without any perceptible disturbance to his serenity; for he follows it with a sentimental justification of Shelley's conduct which has not a pang of conscience in it, but is silky and smooth and undulating and pious--a cake-walk with all the colored brethren at their best. There may be people who can read that page and keep their temper, but it is doubtful.

FENIMORE COOPER OFFENCES, by Mark Twain [MT#33][mtfco10.txt]3172

It seems to me that it was far from right for the Professor of English Literature in Yale, the Professor of English Literature in Columbia, and Wilkie Collins to deliver opinions on Cooper's literature without having read some of it. It would have been much more decorous to keep silent and let persons talk who have read Cooper.

Cooper's art has some defects. In one place in 'Deerslayer,' and in the restricted space of two-thirds of a page, Cooper has scored 114 offences against literary art out of a possible 115. It breaks the record.

I may be mistaken, but it does seem to me that Deerslayer is not a work of art in any sense; it does seem to me that it is destitute of every detail that goes to the making of a work of art; in truth, it seems to me that Deerslayer is just simply a literary delirium tremens.

ESSAYS ON PAUL BOURGET, by Mark Twain [MT#34][mtpbg10.txt]3173

Bret Harte got his California and his Californians by unconscious absorption, and put both of them into his tales alive. But when he came from the Pacific to the Atlantic and tried to do Newport life from study-conscious observation--his failure was absolutely monumental. Newport is a disastrous place for the unacclimated observer, evidently.

It is my belief that there are some "national" traits and things scattered about the world that are mere superstitions, frauds that have

lived so long that they have the solid look of facts. One of them is the dogma that the French are the only chaste people in the world. Ever since I arrived in France this last time I have been accumulating doubts about that.

It would be too immodest. Also too gratuitously generous. And a shade too self-sufficient. No, he could not venture it. It would look too much like anxiety to get in at a feast where no plate had been provided for him.

A foreigner can photograph the exteriors of a nation, but I think that that is as far as he can get. I think that no foreigner can report its interior--its soul, its life, its speech, its thought. I think that a knowledge of these things is acquirable in only one way; not two or four or six [years]--absorption; years and years of unconscious absorption; years and years of intercourse with the life concerned; of living it, indeed; sharing personally in its shames and prides, its joys and griefs, its loves and hates, its prosperities and reverses, its shows and shabbinesses, its deep patriotisms, its whirlwinds of political passion, its adorations--of flag, and heroic dead, and the glory of the national name. Observation? Of what real value is it? One learns peoples through the heart, not the eyes or the intellect.

One may say the type of practical joker, for these people are exactly alike all over the world. Their equipment is always the same: a vulgar mind, a puerile wit, a cruel disposition as a rule, and always the spirit of treachery.

A DOG'S TALE, by Mark Twain [MT#35][mtdtl10.txt]3174

My father was a St. Bernard, my mother was a collie, but I am a Presbyterian. This is what my mother told me, I do not know these nice distinctions myself.

And it was the same with phrases. She would drag home a whole phrase, if it had a grand sound, and play it six nights and two matinees, and explain it a new way every time--which she had to, for all she cared for was the phrase; she wasn't interested in what it meant, and knew those dogs hadn't wit enough to catch her, anyway. Yes, she was a daisy! She got so she wasn't afraid of anything, she had such confidence in the ignorance of those creatures.

By and by came my little puppy, and then my cup was full, my happiness was perfect. It was the dearest little waddling thing, and so smooth and soft and velvety, and had such cunning little awkward paws, and such affectionate eyes, and such a sweet and innocent face; and it made me so proud to see how the children and their mother adored it, and fondled it, and exclaimed over every little wonderful thing it did. It did seem to me that life was just too lovely to--

I have watched two whole weeks, and he doesn't come up! This last week a fright has been stealing upon me. I think there is something terrible about this. I do not know what it is, but the fear makes me sick

A BURLESQUE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, by Mark Twain [MT#36][mtbbg10.txt]3175

Ours is a noble old house, and stretches a long way back into antiquity. The earliest ancestor the Twains have any record of was a friend of the family by the name of Higgins. This was in the eleventh century, when our people were living in Aberdeen, county of Cork, England. Why it is that our long line has ever since borne the maternal name (except when one of them now and then took a playful refuge in an alias to avert foolishness), instead of Higgins, is a mystery which none of us has ever felt much desire to stir. It is a kind of vague, pretty romance, and we leave it alone. All the old families do that way.

Then for the next two hundred years the family tree shows a succession of soldiers--noble, high-spirited fellows, who always went into battle singing; right behind the army, and always went out a-whooping, right ahead of it.

Charles Henry Twain lived during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and was a zealous and distinguished missionary. He converted sixteen thousand South Sea islanders, and taught them that a dog-tooth necklace and a pair of spectacles was not enough clothing to come to divine service in. His poor flock loved him very, very dearly; and when his funeral was over, they got up in a body (and came out of the restaurant) with tears in their eyes, and saying, one to another, that he was a good tender missionary, and they wished they had some more of him.

THE INNOCENTS ABROAD, by Mark Twain [MT#37][mtinn10.txt]3176

Ancient painters never succeeded in denationalizing themselves
Apocryphal New Testament
Astonishing talent for seeing things that had already passed
Bade our party a kind good-bye, and proceeded to count spoons
Base flattery to call them immoral
Bones of St Denis
But it is an ill-wind that blows nobody good
Buy the man out, goodwill and all
By dividing this statement up among eight
Carry soap with them
Chapel of the Invention of the Cross
Christopher Colombo
Clustered thick with stony, mutilated saints
Commend me to Fennimore Cooper to find beauty in the Indians
Conceived a sort of unwarrantable unfriendliness

Confer the rest of their disastrous patronage on some other firm
Creator made Italy from designs by Michael Angelo!
Cringing spirit of those great men
Diffident young man, mild of moustache, affluent of hair
Expression
Felt that it was not right to steal grapes
Fenimore Cooper Indians
Filed away among the archives of Russia--in the stove
For dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince
Free from self-consciousness--which is at breakfast
Fumigation is cheaper than soap
Fun--but of a mild type
Getting rich very deliberately--very deliberately indeed
Guides
Have a prodigious quantity of mind
He never bored but he struck water
He ought to be dammed--or leveed
Holy Family always lived in grottoes
How tame a sight his country's flag is at home
I am going to try to worry along without it
I carried the sash along with me--I did not need the sash
I had a delicacy about going home and getting thrashed
I was not scared, but I was considerably agitated
Is, ah--is he dead?
It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land
It is inferior--for coffee--but it is pretty fair tea
It used to be a good hotel, but that proves nothing
It was warm. It was the warmest place I ever was in
Joshua
Journals so voluminously begun
Keg of these nails--of the true cross
Lean and mean old age
Man peculiarly and insufferably self-conceited: not seasick
Marks the exact centre of the earth
Nauseous adulation of princely patrons
Never did succeed in making those idiots understand their own language
Never left any chance for newspaper controversies
Never uses a one-syllable word when he can think of a longer one
No satisfaction in being a Pope in those days
Not afraid of a million Bedouins
Not bring ourselves to think St John had two sets of ashes
Old Travelers
One is apt to overestimate beauty when it is rare
Only solitary thing one does not smell in Turkey
Oriental splendor!
Original first shoddy contract mentioned in history
Overflowing his banks
People talk so glibly of "feeling," "expression," "tone,"
Perdition catch all the guides
Picture which one ought to see once--not oftener
Polite hotel waiter who isn't an idiot
Relic matter a little overdone?
Room to turn around in, but not to swing a cat

Saviour, who seems to be of little importance any where in Rome
Self-satisfied monarch, the railroad conductor of America
Sentimental praises of the Arab's idolatry of his horse
She assumes a crushing dignity
Shepherd's Hotel, which is the worst on earth
Smell about them which is peculiar but not entertaining
Some people can not stand prosperity
Somewhat singular taste in the matter of relics
St Charles Borromeo, Bishop of Milan
St Helena, the mother of Constantine
Starving to death
Stirring times here for a while if the last trump should blow
Tahoe means grasshoppers. It means grasshopper soup
The information the ancients didn't have was very voluminous
The Last Supper
There was a good deal of sameness about it
They were like nearly all the Frenchwomen I ever saw --homely
They were seasick. And I was glad of it
Those delightful parrots who have "been here before"
To give birth to an idea
Toll the signal for the St Bartholomew's Massacre
Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness
Uncomplaining impoliteness
Under the charitable moon
Used fine tooth combs--successfully
Venitian visiting young ladies
Wandering Jew
Wasn't enough of it to make a pie
We all like to see people seasick when we are not, ourselves
Well provided with cigars and other necessaries of life
What's a fair wind for us is a head wind to them
Whichever one they get is the one they want
Who have actually forgotten their mother tongue in three months
Worth while to get tired out, because one so enjoys resting

ROUGHING IT, by Mark Twain

[MT#38][mtrit10.txt]3177

Aim and object of the law and lawyers was to defeat justice
American saddle
Cayote is a living, breathing allegory of Want
Children were clothed in nothing but sunshine
Contempt of Court on the part of a horse
Feared a great deal more than the almighty
Fertile in invention and elastic in conscience
Give one's watch a good long undisturbed spell
He was nearly lightnin' on superintending
He was one of the deadest men that ever lived
Hotel clerk who was crusty and disobliging
I had never seen lightning go like that horse
Juries composed of fools and rascals

List of things which we had seen and some other people had not
Man was not a liar he only missed it by the skin of his teeth
Most impossible reminiscences sound plausible
Native canoe is an irresponsible looking contrivance
Never knew there was a hell!
Nothing that glitters is gold
Profound respect for chastity--in other people
Scenery in California requires distance
Slept, if one might call such a condition by so strong a name
Useful information and entertaining nonsense
Virtuous to the verge of eccentricity

THE GILDED AGE, by Twain and Warner [MT#39][mtgld10.txt]3178

Accidental murder resulting from justifiable insanity
Always trying to build a house by beginning at the top
Appropriation
Beautiful credit! The foundation of modern society
Believed it; because she desired to believe it
Best intentions and the frailest resolution
Big babies with beards
Cheap sentiment and high and mighty dialogue
Conscious superiority
Does your doctor know any thing
Enjoy icebergs--as scenery but not as company
Erie RR: causeway of cracked rails and cows, to the West
Fever of speculation
Final resort of the disappointed of her sex, the lecture platform
Geographical habits
Get away and find a place where he could despise himself
Gossips were soon at work
Grand old benevolent National Asylum for the Helpless
Grief that is too deep to find help in moan or groan or outcry
Haughty humility
Having no factitious weight of dignity to carry
Imagination to help his memory
Invariably advised to settle--no matter how, but settle
Invariably allowed a half for shrinkage in his statements
Is this your first visit?
It had cost something to upholster these women
Large amount of money necessary to make a small hole
Later years brought their disenchanting wisdom
Let me take your grief and help you carry it
Life a vanity and a burden, and the future but a way to death
Mail train which has never run over a cow
Meant no harm they only wanted to know
Money is most difficult to get when people need it most
Never sewed when she could avoid it. Bless her!
Nursed his woe and exalted it
Predominance of the imagination over the judgment

Question was asked and answered--in their eyes
Riches enough to be able to gratify reasonable desires
Road, which did not seem to know its own mind exactly
Sarcasms of fate
Sleep that heals all heart-aches and ends all sorrows
Small gossip stood a very poor chance
Sun bothers along over the Atlantic
Think a Congress of ours could convict the devil of anything
Titles never die in America
Too much grace and too little wine
Understood the virtues of "addition, division and silence"
Unlimited reliance upon human promises
Very pleasant man if you were not in his way
Wasn't worth a cent two years ago, and now I owe two millions
"We must create, a public opinion," said Senator Dilworthy
We'll make you think you never was at home before
We've all got to come to it at last, anyway!
Widened, and deepened, and straightened--(Public river Project)
Wished that she could see his sufferings now
Your absence when you are present

THE AMERICAN CLAIMANT, by Mark Twain [MT#40][mtacl10.txt]3179

He's a kind of an aristocrat, his father being a doctor, and you know what style that is--in England, I mean, because in this country a doctor ain't so very much, even if he's that.

Hasn't any culture but the artificial culture of books, which adorns but doesn't really educate.

A discriminating irreverence is the creator and protector of human liberty.

The exercise of an extraordinary gift is the supremest pleasure in life.

Oh, just to work--that is life! No matter what the work is--that's of no consequence. Just work itself is bliss when a man's been starving for it.

What right has Goethe, what right has Arnold, what right has any dictionary, to define the word Irreverence for me? What their ideals are is nothing to me. So long as I reverence my own ideals my whole duty is done, and I commit no profanation if I laugh at theirs. I may scoff at other people's ideals as much as I want to. It is my right and my privilege. No man has any right to deny it.

No throne was ever set up by the unhampered vote of a majority of any nation; and that hence no throne exists that has a right to exist, and no symbol of it, flying from any flagstaff, is righteously entitled to wear any device but the skull and crossbones of that kindred industry which

differs from royalty only business-wise--merely as retail differs from wholesale.

DOUBLE BARRELLED DETECTIVE, by Mark Twain [MT#41][mtdbd10.txt]3180

"We ought never to do wrong when people are looking."

"The regularest man that ever was," said Jake Parker, the blacksmith:
"you can tell when it's twelve just by him leaving, without looking at your Waterbury."

The sheriff that lets a mob take a prisoner away from him is the lowest-down coward there is. By the statistics there was a hundred and eighty-two of them drawing sneak pay in America last year. By the way it's going, pretty soon there 'll be a new disease in the doctor-books--sheriff complaint." That idea pleased him--any one could see it.

"People will say, 'Sheriff sick again?' 'Yes; got the same old thing.' And next there 'll be a new title. People won't say, 'He's running for sheriff of Rapaho County,' for instance; they'll say, 'He's running for Coward of Rapaho.' Lord, the idea of a grown-up person being afraid of a lynch mob!"

THE STOLEN WHITE ELEPHANT, by Mark Twain [MT#42][mtswe10.txt]3181

Left out of A Tramp Abroad, because it was feared that some of the particulars had been exaggerated, and that others were not true. Before these suspicions had been proven groundless, the book had gone to press.
--M. T.]

"Well, as to what he eats--he will eat anything. He will eat a man, he will eat a Bible--he will eat anything between a man and a Bible."--"Good very good, indeed, but too general. Details are necessary--details are the only valuable things in our trade. Very well--as to men. At one meal--or, if you prefer, during one day--how man men will he eat, if fresh?"--"He would not care whether they were fresh or not; at a single meal he would eat five ordinary men.

Elephant arrived here from the south and passed through toward the forest at 11.50, dispersing a funeral on the way, and diminishing the mourners by two.

RAMBLING IDLE EXCURSION, by Mark Twain [MT#43][mtrid10.txt]3182

Straight roads reveal everything at a glance and kill interest.

All the journeyings I had ever done had been purely in the way of business. The pleasant May weather suggested a novelty namely, a trip for pure recreation, the bread-and-butter element left out. The Reverend said he would go, too; a good man, one of the best of men, although a clergyman.

We went ashore and found a novelty of a pleasant nature: there were no hackmen, hacks, or omnibuses on the pier or about it anywhere, and nobody offered his services to us, or molested us in any way. I said it was like being in heaven. The Reverend rebukingly and rather pointedly advised me to make the most of it, then.

There's cats around here with names that would surprise you. "Maria" (to his wife), "what was that cat's name that eat a keg of ratsbane by mistake over at Hooper's, and started home and got struck by lightning and took the blind staggers and fell in the well and was 'most drowned before they could fish him out?"--"That was that colored Deacon Jackson's cat. I only remember the last end of its name, which was Hold-The-Fort-For-I-Am-Coming Jackson."

CARNIVAL OF CRIME IN CT., by Mark Twain [MT#44][mtccc10.txt]3183

Yes, but you did; you lied to him."--I felt a guilty pang--in truth, I had felt it forty times before that tramp had traveled a block from my door--but still I resolved to make a show of feeling slandered; so I said: "This is a baseless impertinence. I said to the tramp"--
"There--wait. You were about to lie again. I know what you said to him. You said the cook was gone down-town and there was nothing left from breakfast. Two lies. You knew the cook was behind the door, and plenty of provisions behind her."

I never did a thing in all my life, virtuous or otherwise, that I didn't repent of in twenty-four hours.

In conclusion, I wish to state, by way of advertisement, that medical colleges desiring assorted tramps for scientific purposes, either by the gross, by cord measurement, or per ton, will do well to examine the lot in my cellar before purchasing elsewhere, as these were all selected and prepared by myself, and can be had at a low rate; because I wish to clear, out my stock and get ready for the spring trade.

ALONZO FITZ AND OTHERS, by Mark Twain [MT#45][mtlaf10.txt]3184

It was well along in the forenoon of a bitter winter's day. The town of Eastport, in the state of Maine, lay buried under a deep snow that was newly fallen. The customary bustle in the streets was wanting. One

could look long distances down them and see nothing but a dead-white emptiness, with silence to match. Of course I do not mean that you could see the silence--no, you could only hear it.

"That clock's wrong again. That clock hardly ever knows what time it is; and when it does know, it lies about it--which amounts to the same thing. Alfred!"

THOSE EXTRAORDINARY TWINS, by Mark Twain [MT#46][mtext10.txt]3185

A man who is born with the novel-writing gift has a troublesome time of it when he tries to build a novel. I know this from experience. He has no clear idea of his story; in fact he has no story. He merely has some people in his mind, and an incident or two, also a locality. He knows these people, he knows the selected locality, and he trusts that he can plunge those people into those incidents with interesting results. So he goes to work. To write a novel? No--that is a thought which comes later; in the beginning he is only proposing to tell a little tale; a very little tale; a six-page tale. But as it is a tale which he is not acquainted with, and can only find out what it is by listening as it goes along telling itself, it is more than apt to go on and on and on till it spreads itself into a book. I know about this, because it has happened to me so many times.

I didn't know what to do with her. I was as sorry for her as anybody could be, but the campaign was over, the book was finished, she was sidetracked, and there was no possible way of crowding her in, anywhere. I could not leave her there, of course; it would not do. After spreading her out so, and making such a to-do over her affairs, it would be absolutely necessary to account to the reader for her. I thought and thought and studied and studied; but I arrived at nothing. I finally saw plainly that there was really no way but one--I must simply give her the grand bounce. It grieved me to do it, for after associating with her so much I had come to kind of like her after a fashion, notwithstanding she was such an ass and said such stupid irritating things and was so nauseatingly sentimental. Still it had to be done. So, at the top of Chapter XVII, I put in a "Calendar" remark concerning July Fourth, and began the chapter with this statistic: "Rowena went out in the back yard after supper to see the fireworks and fell down the well and got drowned." It seemed abrupt, but I thought maybe the reader wouldn't notice it, because I changed the subject right away to something else.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, by Mark Twain [MT#47][mtmst10.txt]3186

It was in 1590--winter. Austria was far away from the world, and asleep; it was still the Middle Ages in Austria, and promised to remain so forever. Some even set it away back centuries upon centuries and said

that by the mental and spiritual clock it was still the Age of Belief in Austria. But they meant it as a compliment, not a slur, and it was so taken, and we were all proud of it. I remember it well, although I was only a boy; and I remember, too, the pleasure it gave me.

When we were finishing our house, we found we had a little cash left over, on account of the plumber not knowing it.

I will explain that whenever I want a thing, and Mrs. McWilliams wants another thing, and we decide upon the thing that Mrs. McWilliams wants--as we always do--she calls that a compromise.

"What an ass you are!" he said. "Are you so unobservant as not to have found out that sanity and happiness are an impossible combination? No sane man can be happy, for to him life is real, and he sees what a fearful thing it is. Only the mad can be happy, and not many of those. The few that imagine themselves kings or gods are happy, the rest are no happier than the sane. Of course, no man is entirely in his right mind at any time, but I have been referring to the extreme cases.

"Now there is the history of that burglar alarm--everything just as it happened; nothing extenuated, and naught set down in malice. Yes, sir,--and when I had slept nine years with burglars, and maintained an expensive burglar alarm the whole time, for their protection, not mine, and at my sole cost--for not a d---d cent could I ever get THEM to contribute--I just said to Mrs. McWilliams that I had had enough of that kind of pie; so with her full consent I took the whole thing out and traded it off for a dog, and shot the dog.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, by Mark Twain [MT#48][mtcsc10.txt]3187

This last summer, when I was on my way back to Vienna from the Appetite-Cure in the mountains, I fell over a cliff in the twilight, and broke some arms and legs and one thing or another, and by good luck was found by some peasants who had lost an ass, and they carried me to the nearest habitation, which was one of those large, low, thatch-roofed farm-houses, with apartments in the garret for the family, and a cunning little porch under the deep gable decorated with boxes of bright colored flowers and cats; on the ground floor a large and light sitting-room, separated from the milch-cattle apartment by a partition; and in the front yard rose stately and fine the wealth and pride of the house, the manure-pile. That sentence is Germanic, and shows that I am acquiring that sort of mastery of the art and spirit of the language which enables a man to travel all day in one sentence without changing cars.

"I do not understand it. I believe she has not diagnosed the case with sufficient care. Did she look like a person who was theorizing, or did she look like one who has fallen off precipices herself and brings to the aid of abstract science the confirmations of personal experience?"--
"Bitte?" --It was too large a contract for the Stubenmadchen's

vocabulary; she couldn't call the hand. I allowed the subject to rest there, and asked for something to eat and smoke, and something hot to drink, and a basket to pile my legs in; but I could not have any of these things.

Does she seem to be in full and functionable possession of her intellectual plant, such as it is?"--"Bitte?"--"Do they let her run at large, or do they tie her up?"

MARK TWAIN'S SPEECHES, by Mark Twain [MT#49][mtmts10.txt]3188

A little pride always goes along with a teaspoonful of brains
Ain't any real difference between triplets and an insurrection
Chastity, you can carry it too far
Classic: everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read
Don't know anything and can't do anything
Dwell on the particulars with senile rapture
Future great historian is lying--and doubtless will continue to
Head is full of history, and some of it is true, too
Humor enlivens and enlightens his morality
I shall never be as dead again as I was then
If can't make seventy by any but an uncomfortable road: don't go
Kill a lot of poets for writing about "Beautiful Spring"
Live upon the property of their heirs so long
Morality is all the better for his humor
Morals: rather teach them than practice them any day
Never been in jail, and the other is, I don't know why
Never to smoke when asleep, and never to refrain when awake
Patriotism is usually the refuge of the scoundrel
Please state what figure you hold him at--and return the basket
Principles is another name for prejudices
She bears our children--ours as a general thing
Some civilized women would lose half their charm without dress
The Essex band done the best it could
Time-expired man, to use Kipling's military phrase
To exaggerate is the only way I can approximate to the truth
Two kinds of Christian morals, one private and the other public
What, sir, would the people of the earth be without woman?
When in doubt, tell the truth
Women always want to know what is going on

SKETCHES NEW AND OLD, by Mark Twain [MT#50][mtsno10.txt]3189

A wood-fire is not a permanent thing
Accessory before the fact to his own murder
Aggregate to positive unhappiness
Always brought in 'not guilty'

Apocryphal was no slouch of a word, emanating from the source
Assertion is not proof
Early to bed and early to rise
I am useless and a nuisance, a cumberer of the earth
I never was so scared before and survived it
If I had sprung a leak now I had been lost
Just about cats enough for three apiece all around
Looked a look of vicious happiness
Lucid and unintoxicated intervals
No matter how absurd and unreasonable their demands
No public can withstand magnanimity
Not because I was afraid, but because I wanted to (go out the window)
Permanent reliable enemy
Science only needed a spoonful of supposition to build a mountain
State of mind bordering on impatience
Walking five miles to fish
Was a good deal annoyed when it appeared he was going to die

1601, by Mark Twain

[MT#51][mtsx10.txt]3190

But suppose a literary artist ventured to go into a painstaking and elaborate description of one of these grisly things--the critics would skin him alive. Well, let it go, it cannot be helped; Art retains her privileges, Literature has lost hers. Somebody else may cipher out the whys and the wherefores and the consistencies of it--I haven't got time."

Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain's biographer, likewise acknowledged its greatness, when he said, "1601 is a genuine classic, as classics of that sort go. It is better than the gross obscenities of Rabelais, and perhaps in some day to come, the taste that justified Gargantua and the Decameron will give this literary refugee shelter and setting among the more conventional writing of Mark Twain. Human taste is a curious thing; delicacy is purely a matter of environment and point of view."

Suppose Sir Walter [Scott] instead of putting the conversation into the mouths of his characters, had allowed the characters to speak for themselves? We should have had talk from Rebecca and Ivanhoe and the soft lady Rowena which would embarrass a tramp in our day. However, to the unconsciously indelicate all things are delicate."

GOLDSMITH'S FRIEND ABROAD AGAIN, by Twain [MT#52][mtgfa10.txt]3191

No experience is set down in the following letters which had to be invented. Fancy is not needed to give variety to the history of a Chinaman's sojourn in America. Plain fact is amply sufficient.

DEAR CHING-FOO: It is all settled, and I am to leave my oppressed and

overburdened native land and cross the sea to that noble realm where all are free and all equal, and none reviled or abused--America!

But he said, wait a minute--I must be vaccinated to prevent my taking the small-pox. I smiled and said I had already had the small-pox, as he could see by the marks, and so I need not wait to be "vaccinated," as he called it. But he said it was the law, and I must be vaccinated anyhow. The doctor would never let me pass, for the law obliged him to vaccinate all Chinamen and charge them ten dollars apiece for it, and I might be sure that no doctor who would be the servant of that law would let a fee slip through his fingers to accommodate any absurd fool who had seen fit to have the disease in some other country.

And I grew still more uneasy, when I found that any succored and befriended refugee from Ireland or elsewhere could stand up before that judge and swear, away the life or liberty or character of a refugee from China; but that by the law of the land the Chinaman could not testify against the Irishman.

CURIOUS REPUBLIC OF GONDOUR, by Mark Twain [MT#53][mtcrg10.txt]3192

I found that the nation had at first tried universal suffrage pure and simple, but had thrown that form aside because the result was not satisfactory. It had seemed to deliver all power into the hands of the ignorant and non-tax-paying classes; and of a necessity the responsible offices were filled from these classes also.

That last--and saddest evidence of intellectual poverty, the Pun.

Mrs. Murphy jumped to the conclusion that it would only cost two or three dollars to embalm her dead husband, and so she telegraphed "Yes." It was at the "wake" that the bill for embalming arrived and was presented to the widow. She uttered a wild, sad wail, that pierced every heart, and said: "Sivinty-foive dollars for stoofhn' Dan, blister their sowls! Did thim divils suppose I was goin' to stairt a Museim, that I'd be dalin' in such expinsive curiassities!"

I kind of dodged, and the boot-jack broke the looking-glass. I could have waited to see what became of the other missiles if I had wanted to, but I took no interest in such things.

TWAIN'S LETTERS V1 1835-1866 by A. B. Paine[MT#54][mt1lt10.txt]3193

A mighty national menace to sham
All talk and no cider
Condition my room is always in when you are not around
Deprived of the soothing consolation of swearing

Frankness is a jewel; only the young can afford it
Genius defies the laws of perspective
Hope deferred maketh the heart sick
I never greatly envied anybody but the dead
In the long analysis of the ages it is the truth that counts
Just about enough cats to go round
Moral bulwark reared against hypocrisy and superstition
The coveted estate of silence, time's only absolute gift
We went outside to keep from getting wet
What a pleasure there is in revenge!
When in doubt, tell the truth
When it is my turn, I don't

TWAIN'S LETTERS V2 1867-1875 by A. B. Paine[MT#55][mt2lt10.txt]3194

DEAR REDPATH,--I wish you would get me released from the lecture at Buffalo. I mortally hate that society there, and I don't doubt they hired me. I once gave them a packed house free of charge, and they never even had the common politeness to thank me. They left me to shift for myself, too, a la Bret Harte at Harvard. Get me rid of Buffalo! Otherwise I'll have no recourse left but to get sick the day I lecture there. I can get sick easy enough.

I send you No. 5 today. I have written and re-written the first half of it three different times, yesterday and today, and at last Mrs. Clemens says it will do. I never saw a woman so hard to please about things she doesn't know anything about. Yours ever, MARK.

This is the place to get a poor opinion of everybody in. There isn't one man in Washington, in civil office, who has the brains of Anson Burlingame--and I suppose if China had not seized and saved his great talents to the world, this government would have discarded him when his time was up. There are more pitiful intellects in this Congress! Oh, geeminy! There are few of them that I find pleasant enough company to visit. I am most infernally tired of Wash. and its "attractions." To be busy is a man's only happiness--and I am--otherwise I should die
Yrs. aff. SAM.

TWAIN'S LETTERS V3 1876-1885 by A. B. Paine[MT#56][mt3lt10.txt]3195

It is interesting to note that in thanking Clemens for his compliment Howells wrote: "What people cannot see is that I analyze as little as possible; they go on talking about the analytical school, which I am supposed to belong to, and I want to thank you for using your eyes..... Did you ever read De Foe's 'Roxana'? If not, then read it, not merely for some of the deepest insights into the lying, suffering, sinning, well-meaning human soul, but for the best and most natural English that a

book was ever written in."

Pray offer my most sincere and respectful approval to the President--is approval the proper word? I find it is the one I most value here in the household and seldomest get.

In the same letter he suggests to his brother that he undertake an absolutely truthful autobiography, a confession in which nothing is to be withheld. He cites the value of Casanova's memories, and the confessions of Rousseau.

And I say this also: He that waiteth for all men to be satisfied with his plan, let him seek eternal life, for he shall need it.

Well-good-bye, and a short life and a merry one be yours. Poor old Methusaleh, how did he manage to stand it so long?

You are assisted in your damaging work by the tyrannous ways of a village-- villagers watch each other and so make cowards of each other.

TWAIN'S LETTERS V4 1886-1900 by A. B. Paine[MT#57][mt4lt10.txt]3196

And I have been an author for 20 years and an ass for 55
Argument against suicide
Conversationally being yelled at
Dead people who go through the motions of life
Die in the promptest kind of a way and no fooling around
Heroic endurance that resembles contentment
Honest men must be pretty scarce
I wonder how they can lie so. It comes of practice, no doubt
If this is going to be too much trouble to you
One should be gentle with the ignorant
Sunday is the only day that brings unbearable leisure
Symbol of the human race ought to be an ax
What a pity it is that one's adventures never happen!

TWAIN'S LETTERS V5 1901-1906 by A. B. Paine[MT#58][mt5lt10.txt]3197

I have seen that iceberg thirty-four times in thirty-seven voyages; it is always the same shape, it is always the same size, it always throws up the same old flash when the sun strikes it; you may set it on any New York door-step of a June morning and light it up with a mirror-flash; and I will engage to recognize it. It is artificial, and it is provided and anchored out by the steamer companies. I used to like the sea, but I was young then, and could easily get excited over any kind of monotony, and keep it up till the monotonies ran out, if it was a fortnight.

It vexes me to catch myself praising the clean private citizen Roosevelt, and blaming the soiled President Roosevelt, when I know that neither praise nor blame is due to him for any thought or word or deed of his, he being merely a helpless and irresponsible coffee-mill ground by the hand of God.

It was a presidential year and the air was thick with politics. Mark Twain was no longer actively interested in the political situation; he was only disheartened by the hollowness and pretense of office-seeking, and the methods of office-seekers in general.

Shall we ever laugh again? If I could only see a dog that I knew in the old times! and could put my arms around his neck and tell him all, everything, and ease my heart. Think--in 3 hours it will be a week!--and soon a month; and by and by a year. How fast our dead fly from us.

Aldrich was here half an hour ago, like a breeze from over the fields, with the fragrance still upon his spirit. I am tired of waiting for that man to get old.

When a man is a pessimist before 48 he knows too much; if he is an optimist after it, he knows too little.

TWAIN'S LETTERS V6 1907-1910 by A. B. Paine[MT#59][mt6lt10.txt]3198

That doctor had half an idea that there is something the matter with my brain. . . Doctors do know so little and they do charge so much for it.

You ought not to say sarcastic things about my "fighting on the other side." General Grant did not act like that. General Grant paid me compliments. He bracketed me with Zenophon--it is there in his Memoirs for anybody to read. He said if all the confederate soldiers had followed my example and adopted my military arts he could never have caught enough of them in a bunch to inconvenience the Rebellion. General Grant was a fair man, and recognized my worth; but you are prejudiced, and you have hurt my feelings.

DEAR HOWELLS,--I have to write a line, lazy as I am, to say how your Poe article delighted me; and to say that I am in agreement with substantially all you say about his literature. To me his prose is unreadable--like Jane Austin's. No, there is a difference. I could read his prose on salary, but not Jane's. Jane is entirely impossible. It seems a great pity that they allowed her to die a natural death.

COMPLETE LETTERS OF MARK TWAIN, by Paine [MT#60][mtclt10.txt]3199

That doctor had half an idea that there is something the matter with my brain. . . Doctors do know so little and they do charge so much for it.

Shall we ever laugh again? If I could only see a dog that I knew in the old times! and could put my arms around his neck and tell him all, everything, and ease my heart. Think--in 3 hours it will be a week!--and soon a month; and by and by a year. How fast our dead fly from us.

I used to like the sea, but I was young then, and could easily get excited over any kind of monotony, and keep it up till the monotonies ran out.

And I say this also: He that waiteth for all men to be satisfied with his plan, let him seek eternal life, for he shall need it.

Well-good-bye, and a short life and a merry one be yours. Poor old Methusaleh, how did he manage to stand it so long?

You are assisted in your damaging work by the tyrannous ways of a village-- villagers watch each other and so make cowards of each other.

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Quotations of Mark Twain
by David Widger

Bookmarks:

All life seems to be sacred except human life
But there are liars everywhere this year
If the man doesn't believe as we do, we say he is a crank
It is easier to stay out than get out
Man is the only animal that blushes--or needs to
No nation occupies a foot of land that was not stolen
No people who are quite so vulgar as the over-refined ones
Notion that he is less savage than the other savages
Ostentatious of his modesty
Otherwise they would have thought I was afraid, which I was
Pity is for the living, Envy is for the dead
Prosperity is the best protector of principle
Received with a large silence that suggested doubt
Seventy is old enough--after that, there is too much risk
Takes your enemy and your friend, working together, to hurt you
The man with a new idea is a Crank until the idea succeeds
To a delicate stomach even imaginary smoke can convey damage
Tourists showing how things ought to be managed
Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been
But it is an ill-wind that blows nobody good
Fun--but of a mild type

I had a delicacy about going home and getting thrashed
I was not scared, but I was considerably agitated
It used to be a good hotel, but that proves nothing
Keg of these nails--of the true cross
People talk so glibly of "feeling," "expression," "tone,"
Room to turn around in, but not to swing a cat
Smell about them which is peculiar but not entertaining
Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness
Uncomplaining impoliteness
Well provided with cigars and other necessaries of life
What's a fair wind for us is a head wind to them
Whichever one they get is the one they want
Worth while to get tired out, because one so enjoys resting
Aim and object of the law and lawyers was to defeat justice
Coyote is a living, breathing allegory of Want
Children were clothed in nothing but sunshine
Contempt of Court on the part of a horse
Fertile in invention and elastic in conscience
Man was not a liar he only missed it by the skin of his teeth
Native canoe is an irresponsible looking contrivance
Nothing that glitters is gold
Profound respect for chastity--in other people
Scenery in California requires distance
Slept, if one might call such a condition by so strong a name
Virtuous to the verge of eccentricity
Always trying to build a house by beginning at the top
Believed it; because she desired to believe it
Best intentions and the frailest resolution
Grief that is too deep to find help in moan or groan or outcry
Haughty humility
Imagination to help his memory
Invariably allowed a half for shrinkage in his statements
It had cost something to upholster these women
Let me take your grief and help you carry it
Life a vanity and a burden, and the future but a way to death
Money is most difficult to get when people need it most
Nursed his woe and exalted it
Predominance of the imagination over the judgment
Road, which did not seem to know its own mind exactly
Sleep that heals all heart-aches and ends all sorrows
Very pleasant man if you were not in his way
Wasn't worth a cent two years ago, and now I owe two millions
"We must create, a public opinion," said Senator Dilworthy
Your absence when you are present

on," said Senator Dilworthy

Your absence when you are present

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