A History of Poets' Reception of Mark Twain, 1863-1936

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Gary Scharnhorst

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INTRODUCTION

Reception histories of authors typically trace the ebbs and crests in critical opinions expressed by book reviewers and occasionally in individual readers' responses to texts. I offer in this volume an alternative reception history of the writings of Mark Twain: one that traces his reputation among poets between 1863, when his work was first commended in verse, and 1936, the year after the hundredth anniversary of his birth. This project focuses on about three hundred and fifty published ballads, sonnets, limericks, nursery rhymes, couplets, quatrains, and other poems, including some in dialect, archaic English, or languages other than English, that spotlight Twain explicitly, and I organize my discussion of them topically and chronologically within topics. These poems were often more widely copied than book reviews and I cite these reprintings to indicate their frequency and the venues in which they appeared. Owen Seaman's welcome to Mark Twain at the Pilgrim Club in London in June 1907 was printed over a hundred times across the U.S. and the British Commonwealth, for example, and James Terry White's obituary verse "There Isn't Anyone for Me to Play with Any More" was printed nearly a hundred times across Canada and the U.S., over twenty-five times in Nebraska alone. I omit adolescent exercises and other verses that mention Twain only tangentially, though I list several of them in the appendix. I also omit a few scattered lyrics by unknown authors who paraded under such pseudonyms as "Mark Twain, Jr." in ephemeral or provincial newspapers such as the Eureka, Kansas, *Greenwood County Republican* and Crystal Lake, Illinois, *Herald*.

The poems reproduced in this book run the gamut from the banal and piquant to the eloquent—that is, from lowbrow doggerel by anonymous poetasters to middlebrow rhymes by Franklin P. Adams, Andrew Lang, Walt Mason, John Kendrick Bangs, Bliss Carman, Dan De Quille, Robert Jones Burdette, Oliver Herford, and Edgar A. Guest to highbrow tributes by Oliver Wendell Holmes, W. D. Howells, Julia Ward Howe, Vachel Lindsay, and Louis Fréchette. I trust this collation of verse may prove useful to teachers and scholars of the period. In all, these poems, mostly pitched to entertain general readers, silhouette the contours of Twain's fame and contemporary popular reputation, illustrate his pervasive presence in literary circles around the world, and mark the emergence of American celebrity culture during the late-nineteenth century. They often praise Twain

as a comic writer rather than for his satire and social criticism, though he was outspoken on such political issues as imperialism after 1900. Even the verses devoted to specific events in his life slight his domestic crises and personal calamities, such as the controversy over the Whittier birthday speech in 1877, the death of his wife Olivia in 1904, his implication in the scandals over Maxim Gorky's visit to New York in 1906 and the Ashcroft-Lyon lawsuit in 1909. Moreover, Twain was never mentioned publicly in poetry by such friends and acquaintances as Adah Isaacs Menken, Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard, Ambrose Bierce, John Hay, and Rudyard Kipling.

I am deeply indebted to Leslie Myrick for her help in compiling this volume.

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On the Mark Twain Pseudonym

An anonymous poet joked as early as 1871 about Mark Twain's *nom de plume* in a blank verse parody of a speech by Juliet in act II, scene 2 of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

"Literature," *New York Herald*, 12 March 1871, 7.

> What's in a name? That which we call a rose,
> By any other word would smell as sweet.
> So Romeo would—were he not Romeo called—
> Retain that dear perfection which he owes
> Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
> And for that name, which is no part of thee,
> Take all myself.
> What's in a name? That which we call Mark Twain
> By any other name could soon be beat;
> And Mark Twain would, were he not Mark Twain call'd,
> Lose all that dear perfection which he owes
> To this same title; Mark Twain, doff thy name,
> And for thy name, which is best part of thee,
> Take time to think.

"Pseudonyms of Authors," Hennessey, Okla., *Press-Democrat*, 26 January 1906, 1.

> Of all the noted humorists
> In our dear native land,
> Samuel Clemens as "Mark Twain"
> Has ready wit at hand.

Mark Twain's Mother

Vachel Lindsay,[1] *New Republic*, 25 March 1925, 125; rpt. *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, 22 November 1925, 6; Bristol, Tenn., *Herald Courier*, 25 November 1925, 4.

> A girl from Missouri, snippy and vain,
> As frothy a miss as any you know,
> A wren, a toy, a pink silk bow,
> The belle of the choir, she drove insane
> Missouri deacons and all the sleek
> Her utter tomfoolery made men weak,

Till they could not stand and they could not speak.
Oh, queen at fifteen and sixteen,
Missouri sweetened beneath her reign
And she was the mother of bad Mark Twain.

1. Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931), American poet.

Mark Twain's Father

The American poet Katharine Kennedy (b. 1903) depicted Sam Clemens' father in a scene concocted from whole cloth.

Kennedy, "Mark Twain," *Overland Monthly and Out West*, 87 (April 1929), 111.

When M. was just a little tad
He had to go to village school,
"Because," soliloquized his "Dad,"
"I haint a-goin' to raise a fool."
"With larnin' he his mark may make,
"Without—he'd have to make his mark."
And so the boy—for Daddy's sake—
Pretended schoolin' was a lark.

Years passed; a friend came West once more
And hunted up the elder Twain;
He quizzed him as he had done before
About his "lad"—but tried in vain
To ruffle him; for doting "Dad"
(Whose eyes retained their roguish spark)
Would smile and say, "I have no lad
For I have made a Man of Mark."

Boyhood in Hannibal

"Springfield Has One, Too," *Cincinnati Post*, 10 August 1907, 8; Covington *Kentucky Post*, 10 August 1907, 6.

A million heroes—still some great
And others who've pulled up lame—
Will always rank as the real bell cows
In the towns from which they came.
Hannibal's proud of young Mark Twain,

Who was born in old Mizzou,
And picked that town to start out from
When his folks compelled him to.

"Hannibal," Palmyra, Mo., *Marion County Herald*, 17 January 1917, 5.

The picturesque town that stands by the river,
The great broad river that far south flows,
The river that has kept on flowing
As far back as the memory knows.

Long years ago, in days gone by
Men built their homes on the bluffs so high
They little thought how the town would grow,
Its present fame they were never to know.

The bustling town that stands by the river,
Mark Twain knew it well when a barefooted boy.
To roam o'er the bluffs and look at the river,
To swim in the creek was his greatest joy.[1]

High on a bluff overlooking the river
In a beautiful park his statue stands.[2]
Looking far out on the landscape before him,
Like a mariner gazing at distant lands.

1. Sam Clemens nearly drowned several times in Bear Creek, which flowed through Hannibal to the Mississippi River.

2. The Clemens Memorial Statue sculpted by Frederick Hibbard (1881-1950) was dedicated in Riverview Park in Hannibal in 1913.

Clifton Johnson,[1] "The Mississippi," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 4 October 1913, 4.

There is Mark Twain
On the Mississippi
And his youth again
On the Mississippi.
Old Florida,[2]
Where he was born,
Out in the fields
Of yellow corn.
And Hannibal, which that mapcap,
Tom Sawyer, put upon the map.

1. Clifton Johnson (1865-1940), American author.
2. Florida, Missouri, Clemens' birthplace, on the Salt River twenty-eight miles southwest of Hannibal.

Mississippi River Pilot

Sam Clemens piloted several Mississippi River steamboats between 1857 and 1861 as he recounts in "Old Times on the Mississippi" (1875), which he revised and enlarged for his travelogue *Life on the Mississippi* (1883).

"Mark Twain," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 17 October 1906, 10; rpt. Evansville, Ind., *Courier*, 24 October 1906, 6.

I love to camp in some still place
Beside the Mississippi wide
And see the clear moon lift her face
Above the bluffs the stream beside,
And watch the boats, the dear old boats,
Go bravely through the night,
The while the river music floats
Across the way in mellow notes
And through the soft moonlight.

I love to hear the paddles beat
In deeply muffled monotone,
And watch from river-shore retreat
The pilot's searching light far flown
That lustrous is as morning's star
And runs quick-seeing on the shore
And on the stream its long, white bar
Lays lambent, now extended far,
And now beheld no more.

I love the jingling, jangling bells
That clatter, clatter evermore,
And mark the distant, booming swells
That headlong rush upon the shore.
I love the darky's music sweet
Outcrying at the sounding lead,
And catch the soft, sing-song repeat
"Fo-o-o-o-a-ah feet!" "Fo-o-o-o-a-ah feet!"
Passed up from out ahead.

How sweet it is to hear them sing
"Ma-a-a-awk Twa-a-ain." "Ma-a-a-awk Twa-a-ain!"[1]

How sweet to hear their voices ring
Assurance oft' and still again!
Ah me! Mark Twain is old and white
And he no more is at the wheel,
But his spirit is abroad at night
When the boats steal through the soft moonlight
And the pilots have to "feel."

1. A leadman's cry indicating a water depth of two fathoms or twelve feet.

Clark McAdams,[1] "Mark Twain's Monument," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 25 July 1907, 12.

Mark Twain! What a monument! Better than granite,
Better than marble, though master should plan it.
Simply Mark Twain! for a life of endeavor,
Sung on the old Mississippi forever!

Mark Twain! What a tribute and how everlasting!
Think of the darkey, his wet lead-line casting
Out from the bow till the heavens shall totter,
Singing Mark Twain! for his twelve feet of water!

Think of the sandbars their gold backs uplifting
In the sweet autumn, and boats slowly drifting,
Think of the darkies employed all the while at
Singing Mark Twain! from the bow to the pilot!

Mark Twain! when the humorist long is departed,
When the new channels for old ones are charted,
When the great river sings soft as a child could,
When the sweet bells echo off in the wildwood!

Mark Twain! when the hoot-owl calls out of the bottom,
When the cool air has the crispness of autumn,
When are new Captains in old places whereon
Stood the old boatmen gone boating with Charon.[2]

Mark Twain! where the river by blest hills is flowing,
Out where the whistles are moltenly blowing,
Out where the paddles are measurably pounding,
Out where the musical darkey is sounding.

Mark Twain! What a monument! How everlasting!
Think of the darkey, his wet lead-line casting

Out from the bow till the heavens shall totter,
Singing Mark Twain! for his twelve feet of water!

1. Clark McAdams (1874-1935), contributing editor to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.
2. The ferryman across the River Styx.

"Will Heckmann,[1] Who Never Sank a Boat," Hermann, Mo., *Advertiser-Courier*, 14 February 1912, 1.

'Twas during the eighties, that like Mark Twain,
"Will" shipped with his father as cub
To "learn the river" and steer a boat,
Giving sandbars and snags a close rub.

He has been on the river now twenty years
And has never sunk ship or boat,
Though piloting on the Missouri for years
Was like cutting through the jungles a road.

He has learned the Gasconade and Osage,[2] too,
He brought every boat safely to port.
He was satisfied with his pilot's wage
He got all the boats could afford.

He has much in common with our river bard,
A big heart and a humorous vein,
He loves the author of *Huckleberry Finn*
As much as the pilot Mark Twain.

1. Will Heckmann, Missouri River captain and son of William L. Heckmann, Missouri River captain and pilot.
2. The Gasconade and Osage Rivers are tributaries to the Missouri River.

"The Ancient River Man," *St. Louis Republican*; rpt. *Pawtucket Times*, 30 January 1915, 8.

I met an ancient river man upon a steamboat deck
The same was making roustabouts observe his nod and beck.
I said to him, said I, "Pray, tell your finest river feat;
I'm seeking local color from the cap'ns whom I meet."
He looked me squarely in the eye, as one who taketh aim,
And said, "I taught Mark Twain, I did, the steamboat pilot game."

I met another river man upon the Levee front

And said to him, "Describe me now your greatest steamboat stunt."
This Mississippi mariner he looked me in the eyne
And unto me replied, did he, "The greatest stunt of mine,
Was teaching Sam'l Clemens, who was mostly known as Twain,
The way to steer a steamer on the Mississippi main."

I met a third and fourth and fifth who've sailed the river long
And begged for reminiscences with which to thrill the throng.
They each and every one of them in tones of honest pride
"I taught Mark Twain to pilot boats, in '61," replied.
"These truthful ancient river men," unto myself I said,
"I would have they'd told me all of this before Mark Twain was dead."

C. L. Edson,[1] "Young Mark Twain," *Kansas City Star*, 1 May 1921, 39; rpt. Billings, Mont., *Gazette*, 15 May 1921, 14; Charleston, S.C., *News and Courier*, 29 December 1922, 4.

Figure 1. Sketch by Harry Earl Wood (1871-1943), *Kansas City Star*, 1 May 1921, 39.

Young Mark Twain sailing down the Mississippi,
Down the tawny river where the sandbars loom,
Young Mark Twain sailing down the Mississippi,
With a paddle in the puddle where the bullfrogs boom.
He scrapes against the clay bluffs, he crosses to the willows,
He keeps her in the current on the boiling, muddy billows.
The waves that bear the bubbles are as yellow as a saddle;
There are green and crimson ripples in the eddy from the paddle;
And the stars above the river see the stars beneath a-quiver
And the waves are loud and lappy and the spray is cool and drippy.
As bold Mark Twain puts her down the Mississippi.

Young Mark Twain sailing down the Mississippi,
All the way from Hannibal to Noo Or-leans;
A young and handsome pilot passing snag and marshy islet
With a license in his wallet and a dollar in his jeans
With a zooming in the whistle, and a fuming of the funnel,
He holds her in the channel and he steers her down the runnel

To waddle in the rapids where the waves spit spume
And steady in the eddy where the bullfrogs boom.

Sliding over sandbars, slipping by the snags,
Sailing in among the trees and overhanging crags,
He scrapes against the clay bluffs, he crosses to the willows,
He keeps her in the current on the boiling, muddy billows.
And Young Mark Twain, with a spirit gay and zippy
Steers a leaky packet down the mighty Mississippi.
Planters playing poker in the cabin with their chips,
Niggers playing stoker with a song upon their lips;
Call bells and engine bells and hissing of the steam,
And lighted windows moving through the darkness like a dream
And the spray is soft and sappy and the night is cool and drippy
As Young Mark Twain puts her down the Mississippi;
And the swamp fires gleam where the ghost trees loom
As he paddles through the puddles where the bullfrogs boom.

Feudists in a fatal fight drowning in their blood,
Nigger hiding in the swamp wading through the mud;
Fakers in the river towns cozening the dupes,
A fallen King and Dauphin[2] robbing chicken coops,
A loafer in the tanyard liquored up with gin,[3]
A nigger floating on a raft with Huckleberry Finn.
Packet boats in a race, flaming through the night,
Nigger on the safety valve, holding of her tight,
Lard and bacon in the fire, blazes that are blue,
Every time a darkey stokes it sucks him up the flue,
Bang! goes the boiler! A geyser glare o' steam,
And then the dark and scalded corpses—floating down the stream.

And weird Mark Twain, with his lashes damp and drippy,
Peers through a mist that has dimmed the Mississippi.
He is sailing on the Thames, he is sailing on the Rhine,
He is sailing on a river where the lights of Paris shine.[4]
He saw the cell of Abelard, the grave of Heloise,[5]
He saw the flaming Joan of Arc—the fagots round her knees;[6]

He sails to the Holy Land, where Gaza had its towers
He sees the Tomb of Adam and he covers it with flowers;
And winks out a tear for the daddy of the race[7]
(Befitting a descendant when he stands in such a place).
He sails up to Camelot, where Arthur had his Knights,
He peppers them with buckshot to stop their foolish fights.[8]
He sails to Offal Court, where the smell must make him wince,[9]
He takes aboard a Pauper and he takes aboard a Prince.

He passes up to Paddington and into Oxford town,
And scholars cap him with a cap and robe him in a gown.[10]

Mark Twain woke. Was he dreaming, was he dippy?
It was young Mark Twain sailing down the Mississippi.
Young Mark Twain steering, staring, peering in the gloom,
Floating and a-boating where the bullfrogs boom.

1. Charles Leroy Edson (1881-1975), American journalist, humorist, and poet.

2. Ironically, Huck confesses to stealing chickens in chapter 12 of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885).

3. As Twain noted in his autobiographical dictation for 8 March 1906, Jimmy Finn, a Hannibal town drunk, "slept with the hogs in an abandoned tan-yard" (Twain, "Chapters from My Autobiography," 692; rpt. *Mark Twain's Own Autobiography*, 191. See also *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, I, 397.

4. The Seine River.

5. Twain recounts the story of Abelard and Heloise in chapter 15 of *The Innocents Abroad* (1869).

6. Twain chronicles the martyrdom of Joan in *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896).

7. Twain visits the ostensible tomb of Adam in chapter 53 of *The Innocents Abroad*.

8. Hank Morgan kills Sir Sagramor with a single shot (not buckshot) from a revolver in chapter 39 ("The Yankee's Fight with the Knights") of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

9. The pauper, Tom Canty, lives with his family in Offal Court, London, in *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882).

10. Mark Twain was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University in June 1907.

Jackass Hill and Angel's Camp

Twain camped on Jackass Hill, near Jimtown and Tuttletown, California, and mined for gold during the winter of 1865-66. Both Bret Harte (1836-1902), the founding editor of the *Overland Monthly*, and Twain, one of the original contributors to the *Overland*, prospected on Jackass Hill, albeit at different times. As Twain remembered in *Roughing It* (1872), "there were not five other cabins in view over the wide expanse of forest and hill."[1]

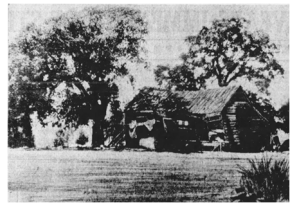

Figure 2. The cabin where Mark Twain lived on Jackass Hill, California, *Harper's Monthly*, 124 (March 1912), 591.

Harry T. Fee,[2] "Jackass Hill," *Overland Monthly and Out West*, 87 (May 1929), 146.

I sat on the hill where Mark sat,
I stood by the stream with Bret,
Told and retold were the dreams of old
Where glamour lingers yet.
Beyond was old Table Mountain,[3]
Rife with romance's thrill.
And ghosts amassed from the golden past
Stalked by me on Jackass Hill.

Below lay the cabins of Jimtown
Aglow in another day.
And I saw the crowd which the time allowed—
Ah Sin and his pals at play.[4]
The old creek down by the willows
With water now scarce was damp,
But I viewed it, the stream of the artist's dream,
And "The Luck of Roaring Camp."[5]

They are gone, and the passing eons
Their newer schemes have planned
Yet still the theme of their golden dream
Is stamped on our golden land.
In the old red dust of the hillsides,
Their treasures still stand apart,
And I Mark the Twain in my dreaming brain,
And I keep their tryst in my Harte.

1. Twain, *Roughing It*435.
2. Harry T. Fee (1870-1935), American poet.
3. The Butte County, California, setting of Harte's mining story "The Twins of Table Mountain" (1879).

4. Ah Sin is a character featured in Harte's ballad "Plain Language from Truthful James," aka "The Heathen Chinee" (1870), and Harte and Twain's play *Ah Sin* (1877).

5. Harte's story "The Luck of Roaring Camp" (1868), originally published in the *Overland Monthly*.

Twain's mining partner William R. "Bill" Gillis (1840-1929) lived most of his life near Jackass Hill, where he managed a replica of the cabin he had shared with Mark Twain and his brothers Steve and Jim and entertained tourists, including this anonymous poet.

"I Thank You," *Oakland Tribune*, 6 August 1929, 30; *Los Angeles Citizen News*, 6 August 1929, 10; Long Beach, Cal., *Sun*, 6 August 1929, 4; *San Bernardino County Sun*, 6 August 1929, 20; Durham, N.C., *Herald-Sun*, 6 August 1929, 4.

I'm writing this
On the shaded porch
Of a rancher's house.
Up in the hills
The golden hills
Of '49.
And the golden streams
At the feet of them.
And I've just been up
To the rounded top
Of a nearby hill
Where stands a shack
With a sign on it
That says to me
And all who pass
That in the sixties
It was Mark Twain's shack.
And I was thrilled
As I stood and looked
From the shack's lone door
Upon the scene
That Mark looked on.
And to make the picture
More complete
I lighted my pipe
And leaned a shoulder
Against the frame
Where it must have been
That Mark had leaned.

And anyway,
As I stood there,
I said to myself
I'd take a nail
For a souvenir.
And I searched for one
And lo and behold!
The nails in the shack
Were wire nails
With the rounded tops.
And I recalled
That in my youth
There were nothing at all
But iron nails
Where wire nails
Were still unmade.
And if the shack
Was really the one
In which Mark lived
It would make me ninety
Or thereabouts.
And anyway
Confession was made
By my white-haired friend
That the shack had burned
But the fireplace
Had still remained
And they'd built a new shack.[1]
But in the building
They had forgotten
To look about
For iron nails.
But anyway
The hill's the same
And the view's the same
And that's what counts.
I thank you.

1. The rebuilt cabin was located some seventy-five yards from the original cabin ("Letter Reveals Mark Twain Tenant of Jackass Hill Cabin," Stockton, Calif., *Record*, 9 November 1935, 18).

Western Journalist

Ten months after joining the editorial staff of the Virginia City, Nevada, *Territorial Enterprise* in August 1862, Twain took a leave of absence and left for San Francisco, his first excursion to the Bay. Joseph T. Goodman (1838-1917), the paper's owner and editor-in-chief, wrote his star reporter and Twain's friend Dan De Quille (aka William Wright, 1829-1898) that Twain had left for San Francisco to "remain for an indefinite time—and it is doubtful whether he will be connected with the paper again or not."[1] De Quille marked Twain's absence from Nevada in a lyric that effeminized the landscape around Virginia City and personified it as a spurned lover. Twain returned to Virginia City and resumed work for the newspaper in early July 1863.

De Quille, "To Mark Twain," Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, May 1863; rpt. Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, 1599-1600.

Mount Davidson still soars aloof
And grandly frowns on Cedar Hill;
The sunshine girds the Sugar Loaf
And glimmers on the Desert still;
The Goose Creek Mountains far beyond
On Heaven's glowing bosom rest—
As often, in your moments fond,
Your head has lain upon this breast.
Mark Twain, Mark Twain,
Ah, when again,
Shall this breast be divinely pressed!

The May returns with many a bird,
And many a flower of loveliest hue;
The warbling donkey's notes are heard!—
The sagebrush takes its deepest blue;
And every lovely sight and sound
Awakens memories sweet and choice
Of hours when I have sat spellbound,
Charmed by your gentle eyes and voice.
Mark Twain, Mark Twain,
Ah, when again,
Shall your voice bid my heart rejoice!

Rude sounds of life in discord blent,
Rise harshly from the crowded street,

Where sordid souls on trade intent,
Perfect their groveling schemes in feet;[2]
But brightly on the hill above
The silver croppings rise to view—
Sweetly as in its first strong love
My maiden heart cropped out to you.
Mark Twain, Mark Twain,
Ah, when again,
That heart will you locate anew!

At morn, at noon, in evening light,
As in a move I move around,
For Heaven has lost its loveliest sight
And earth its sweetest sound—
Do fond emotions softly swell
For her for whom your steps have strayed—
Or has some flaunting city belle
Eclipsed your plighted sagebrush maid?
Mark Twain, Mark Twain,
Ah, haste again
To her whose true love you betrayed!

1. Goodman to De Quille, 5 May 1863 (*UCLC* 48717, Mark Twain Project, Bancroft Library, Univ. of California, Berkeley); Twain, *Early Tales and Sketches 1851-1864*, 246-47.

2. Both the extent of ownership in a mine and poetic rhythms were measured in feet.

In Re. "Aurelia's Unfortunate Young Man" (1864)

An anonymous poet summarized the plot of one of Mark Twain's best early stories about a young lover who is gradually dismantled.

"Charade," Nottinghamshire, England, *Guardian*, 28 October 1893, 7.

My sister *one* once loved a *two*
Who seemed constructed on the plan
Of him you've doubtless read about—
Mark Twain's "Unfortunate Young Man."
At first a human integer,
He had for her a great attraction;
But soon began to lose his parts
And to become a vulgar fraction.
An eye, an ear, a leg, an arm
And other limbs in order went;

And every week his frame decreased
By one and even more per cent.
As time passed on my sister *one*
Was piecemeal of her *two* bereft;
But—only as a woman can—
She loved the portions which were left.
Now, how this strange career would end
Was getting easy to foresee,
For eighteen months reduced him to
One fifth of what he used to be.
But still the love my sister showed
Her *three* each time he lost a part,
Would almost move a stone to tears
Or even break a *total* heart.
But *first* has not a *second* now
For fate to her unkind did prove
For bit by bit he dropped away
Till there was nothing left to love.

In Re. "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1865)

Originally published in the New York *Saturday Press* in November 1865, Twain's jumping frog sketch was an instant sensation across the country—a subtle political satire featuring anthropomorphized animals, a dog named "Andrew Jackson" after the first U.S. President from west of Appalachia and a frog named "Dan'l Webster" after the pompous U.S. Senator from New England, a perennial Presidential candidate.

M. L. Rayne,[1] "Slaughter of the Innocents," *New York Tribune*, 22 May 1904, 41; *St. Louis Republic*, 22 May 1904, 67.

The vivisection frog sat down.
Up popped a brother of renown—
He too was legless, but he knew
Of jumping frogs a thing or two.

"Our heads are on our shoulders yet—
For that be thankful," said the vet.
"Fellows, I have not lived in vain—
I owe my glory to Mark Twain."

1. Martha Louise Rayne (1836-1911), American journalist.

The International Frog Jumping Jubilee, inaugurated in May 1928 to celebrate the first road paved in Angels Camp, California, soon evolved into an annual festival.

"A Song of the Jumping Frog of Calaveras," Stockton, Cal., *Independent*, 11 May 1929, 8.

I'll sing to you a verse or two
Of a tale of long ago
To old Mark Twain you must lay the blame
For 'twas he who said, "It's so."
It's just a little episode
That once occurred on the Mother Lode,
In Angels Camp, the Frog's abode,
The home of the Jumping Frog.

O, the Jumping Frog, the Jumping Frog, the Jumping Frog of Calaveras!
Come and see the Froggies there,
They are jumping everywhere,
The Jumping Frog, the Jumping Frog of Calaveras;
Come to Calaveras to the Froggies' Jubilee.

Two days each year are set aside
For the Froggies' Jubilee—
Brings back the days of "Forty nine"
And folks you will all agree.
In Angels Camp Frogs celebrate,
And represented from every state;
Though every doggie has his day,
The Frogs have theirs in May.

We all well know the Jumping Frog,
Twain's story of by-gone days;
Bets were won on leaps they made
Way back in the barroom days.
Buckshot played its part in the game,
But Froggies made the story fame,
The country is dry and not the same—
But think of the Good Old Days.

The Jumping Frog of Angels Camp
Was considered to be the champ,
They brought a Frog from Jackass Gulch,
And you bet he was no tramp.
They laid a track, when all was set,

And everyone put down his bet—
The frogs they jumped and jumped and jumped,
By Heck, they're jumping yet.

"Frogs," Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, *Herald*, 22 March 1935, 10.

Mark Twain in story gave a frog great renown,
The champion jumper till weighted down
With lead in his tummy, and he lost his crown.

Mark Twain on Women's Suffrage (1867)

Twain published a pair of satirical columns on women's suffrage in the San Francisco *Alta California* in April 1867. In the first of them, he reported that the "tiresome old goose, my wife, is prancing around like a lunatic, upstairs, rehearsing a speech in favor of female suffrage which she is going to deliver before a mass meeting of seditious old maids in my back parlor tonight."[1] For the record, Twain had not yet married nor, for that matter, even met his future wife. His facetious sketch prompted this reply.

"To M.T.," San Francisco *Alta California*, 5 May 1867, 6.

Now mark, M. Twain, what I shall say,
Your Ps and Qs mind while away
From San Francisco city;
Dissensions cease with your good wife,
For you *twain* must be one for life!
Then shun henceforth this fruitless strife,
And spare your friends their pity.

And, Mrs. T., mind what I say,
Treat M.T. in a kindly way;
For ballot rights then cease to pray,
Content to live serene and gay
Nor seek to wear the breeches.

And whey your voyagings are done,
I trust you straightway back will come,
Nor make Jerusalem your home,
But San Francisco city.

1. "'Mark Twain' on Female Suffrage," San Francisco *Alta California*, 10 April 1867, 1; and "Female Suffrage—Views of 'Mark Twain,'" San Francisco *Alta California*, 28 April 1867, 6. See also *Mark Twain on Potholes and Politics*, 11-13.

The *Quaker City* Excursion (1867)

In December 1866 Mark Twain contracted to submit fifty travel letters to the San Francisco *Alta California* during the *Quaker City* voyage to Europe and the Holy Land between June and November 1867. The Long Island farmer Bloodgood Cutter (1817-1906), whom Twain derisively dubbed the "poet lariat," composed this poem aboard ship on 29 June 1867, three weeks into the voyage. If, as the saying goes, Alexander Pope made Homer ride a hobby horse in his translation of the *Odyssey*, Cutter penned tributes to Twain while bouncing on a pogo stick.

Cutter, *The Long Island Farmer's Poems*, 5-6**;** rpt. "Gems from Cutter's Pen," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 24 June 1894, 10; Johnson City, Tenn., *Press-Chronicle*, 22 September 1935, 3.

For months the papers did announce
There would be an Excursion grand,
To start about the first of June
On a voyage to the Holy Land.
*
One droll person there was on board,
The passengers called him "Mark Twain";
He'd talk and write all sort of stuff,
In his queer way, would it explain.

To judge from all available evidence, Twain and Cutter never crossed paths again after the *Quaker City* returned to New York. However, George Washington Cable orchestrated an April Fool's joke on Twain in 1884 and Cutter played along. Cable invited dozens of Twain's acquaintances to solicit his autograph and Cutter framed his request in a poem.

Cutter, "Rhymed Letter by Bloodgood H. Cutter to Mark Twain," *Mark Twain's Letters* (1917), 441-42.

Friends, suggest in each one's behalf
To write, and ask your autograph.
To refuse that, I will not do,
After the long voyage I had with you.
That was a memorable time
You wrote in Prose, I wrote in Rhyme
To describe the wonders of each place
And the queer customs of each race.
That is in my memory yet

For while I live, I'll not forget.
I often think of that affair
And the many that were with us there
As your friends think it for the best
I ask your Autograph with the rest
Hoping you will it to me send
It will please and cheer your dear old Friend.

After Cutter's death, the Long Island public school principal Lewis E. Trescott succeeded him as "poet lariat."[1]

Trescott, "An Appeal," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 26 February 1907, 15.

'Twas 40 years ago Mark Twain this honor did bestow
On Bloodgood Cutter for a reason all of us do know:
It was because he wrote the kind of poems that he did,
And that's a fact of history that never can be hid.

Our land was full of poets then who wrote their views in verse,
And some of them were very good and some of them were worse,
But when Mark Twain a Poet Lariat did want to find
He took up Bloodgood Cutter and not some other kind.

1. See also "Mark Twain's 'Lamb,'" New York *World*, 9 December 1877, 1; rpt. *Detroit Free Press*, 16 December 1877, 4.

In Re. *The Innocents Abroad* (1869)

Mark Twain revised his dispatches from the *Quaker City* voyage for publication under the title *The Innocents Abroad*, his first bestseller. As he recounted in the travelogue, Twain and his friends repeatedly asked their tour guides "Is he dead?" at various sites they visited.

"Accident," Topeka *Commonwealth*, 7 August 1872, 4; rpt. Leavenworth, Kans., *Commercial*, 8 August 1872, 4.

A colored man in our town,
Rejoicing in the name of Brown,
Whilst working deep within a well,
An accident most sad befell.

Whilst stooping down beneath the bucket,
Unfortunately something shook it—