CHAPTER VII
THE BEST OF TWO WORLDS

To rest upon a formula is a slumber
That, prolonged, means death —

--Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Wit and Wisdom

I
THE TWO STREAMS

The short story, though it originated probably around primitive camp fires, found its more formal expression in classical fables and in some of the tales of the Old Testament
and Apocrypha. Gradually, like all other branches of literature, the short story also flowed in two channels of realism and romanticism. The romantic short story evolved out of the spoken apologue and passed through the stages of Jatakas, myths, and fairy-tales and remains to-day as a story from the folk literature narrated in a sort of animated speech. Both the traditional and the romantic short stories have their roots in reality. Elaborating the difference, Martha Foley says:

The difference between the realistic writer and the romantic is that the first tries for strict objectivity and the second adds imaginative wish-fulfillment to his impression of the objective. One tries to keep his feet on the ground, the other flies off into wild blue Yonder.
The writer of romantic short stories makes his work imaginatively impelled, indefinable, diffused, dynamic, and self-creative. The realistic short story is supposed to be written in the classical pattern. It is expected to be intellectually controlled, normative, clear, fixed, accessible, and mechanistic. In the short stories of almost any country these two streams flow simultaneously but join rarely.

The origins of the romantic, lyrical, or open story (it has been given different names), may be traced to the wave of romanticism that swept through the continent of Europe during the early nineteenth century. It infused new interest in the marvellous, emotional, and spacious aspects of life.

E.T.W. Hoffman and Ludwing Tieck in Germany wrote a number of romantic tales. Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, and Chekhov in Russia freed the short story from the traditional type of plot through the deft modulation of language; enriched their narrative with cadence and subtleties of thought. In France, Meimee, Gautier, Maupassant, and Zola revealed into their stories a sense of real life with its pleasure and pain. In Great Britain, the influence of Turgenev and Chekhov was clear in the stories specially of A.E. Coppard, R.L. Stevenson, and Katherine Mansfield. These writers introduced new trends in the field of the short story. The story was allowed to rehearse itself with least interference from outside.²

In America, short prose narratives have long been popular.
Francis Hopkinson published "A Pretty Story" (1774), the short story, first published in America. Washington Irving with his Sketch Book (1820), is regarded as one standing at the formal beginning of the American short story. The eighteenth-century American periodical essayist had also contributed to its development by placing greater emphasis on the author as an entertainer rather than a moral preceptor. Early American writers tended to imitate European and English sentimental themes and forms — even when those forms did not apply to America.

The earliest types of short stories in America, were developing conventions of the short story genre. At the same time they also developed the themes and concerns of the earliest writers. In the beginning, Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe, in the manner of German romantic tales, concentrated on the consideration of the character as a solitary figure. In Irving it is characterized as a recluse, in Hawthorne as an isolate, and in Poe as a monomaniac. These early stories of the triumverate, like the European models they were trying to follow, were rather too episodic in structure and digressive in style, having no sound motivation in characters and with no intrinsic unity. These early American short fiction writers then gradually developed a new form that later came to be named by Poe as tales of ratiocination. Washington Irving laid stress on "piquancy and brevity of
writing." Nathaniel Hawthorne himself criticized his "inveterate love of allegory," and Poe emphasized "pre-established design" and "singleness of effect" as the quality in "finest tales." 3

The primary concern of the short stories after 1849, following the death of Poe was more on the development of the aspect of character in the story. In 1885, Brander Matthews published his essay "The Philosophy of the Short Story," in which he revived Poe's definition of the short story as a work which created a single effect. Poe's view gradually became a dominant one in criticism, and to a considerable extent, in the writing of the short story. Many authors, lacking substance, laid undue emphasis upon form and poured into it "Vapid and ephemeral subjectmatter." They seemed to forget that the story should have naturalness as well as living men and women. 4 But at the end of the nineteenth century, another current was visible in criticism and, to a considerable extent, in the writing of the short story. The rationale for the short story worked out by Irving, Poe, and Hawthorne could not gain ground and failed to impress popular writers before the Civil War. "Poe's concept of ratio-cinative tale developed into the more or less empty form of detective story or the ingeniously plotted stories of our popular magazines," says Ray B. West, Jr., "at its best it could produce a O. Henry, at its second best a Jack London." 5
There was a general reaction against the type promoted by Poe and Brander Matthews. The reaction was first seen in Mark Twain and it reached its climax later in the stories of Sherwood Anderson.

Mark Twain's achievement lies in mining the native folklore and also intrinsically adorning it with the fine flower of Bostonianism. He brought about a fusion of the art and the spirit of storytelling. He followed the example of Shakespeare who integrated the native and the classical traditions in his plays. The stories of Mark Twain are purely native in matter and manner, wonderfully fresh at their best, with a new beauty of diction and vision that made them all the more captivating. They become the patterns of the literary peregrinations.

II
MARK TWAIN'S STYLE

Mark Twain has been acclaimed as an exemplar of the native American style. The reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement* (1954), praised the "instinctive casualness and realism" of his colloquial style. This style makes a major difference between the British and the American ways of expression. It is a style marked by "ease and force and informality." The use of the native idiom helps Mark Twain in bringing stage effect in his stories (e.g. "Jumping Frog," "Jim Blain's Old Ram," "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral," etc.). Mark
Twain's art was that of the performer. Schooled as a journalist like Poe, Mark Twain "conceived of the writer's work," as "pre-eminently a manipulation of responses" and "a staging of irresistible effects." Though this brought a mechanical touch in their writings, yet the two writers could achieve "a certain trance-like directness and integrity of enacted vision that comes upon us with the force of unarguable revelation." 7

Walt Whitman and Mark Twain established permanently the usefulness of the native vernacular and fashioned a national style. The effect of their style gives Whitman, Poe, and Mark Twain a place among the original masters of literature. His use of the native speech is, of course, not divested of his sensitivity to language. "There is no such thing as the 'Queen's English'," Twain said in Following the Equator, "The Property has gone into the hands of a joint stock company and we own the bulk of the shares!" 8 In his story "A Horse's Tale" the dog Sheekles is described as one who:

Understands all the languages, and talks them all, too. With an accent like gritting your teeth, it is true, and with a grammar that is no improvement on blasphemy--still, with practice you get at the meat of what he says, and it serves... 9

Although Mark Twain was not a professional linguistic scholar he had a good ear for language and "put his language to practice in a cadence, passionate and alive." 10 His contri-
bution is no small in making the American vernacular a respectable medium of expression in speech and writing.

Mark Twain's stories show that he could use various styles. Edgar M. Branch in *Literary Apprenticeship of Mark Twain* (1950), has given a thorough analysis of the different styles of Twain. He was, for example, capable of writing compact prose. The frequent use of short periods makes his story-pattern more elegant. The introductory sentences from "A True Story" are an example:

It was summer-time, and twilight. We were sitting on the porch of the farm house, and 'Aunt Rachel' was sitting respectfully below our level, on the steps—for she was our servant, and colored. She was of mighty frame and stature; she was sixty years old, but her eye was undimmed and her strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, and it was no more trouble for her to laugh than it is for a bird to sing. She was under fire now, as usual when the day was done. That is to say, she was being chaffed without mercy, and was enjoying it. She would let off peal after peal of laughter, and then sit with her face in her hands and shake with throes of enjoyment which she could no longer get breath enough to express. . . (94-95).

The short, pithy letter that Henry Adams receives from the two eccentric brothers in "£100,000, Bank Note" is another example.

You are an intelligent and honest man, as one may see by your face. We conceive you to be poor and a stranger. Enclosed you will find a sum of money. It is lent to you for thirty days, without interest. Report at this house at the end of that time. I have a
bet on you. If I win it you shall have any situation that is in my gift - any, that is, that you shall be able to prove yourself familiar with and competent to fill (318).

The concentrated sentence is undoubtedly one of Mark Twain's chief contributions to the American prose style. His periods are significantly shorter than many of his contemporaries.

His statements seem to indicate that he eschewed verbiage or elegance of any short, yet such is not always the case. Twain's stories also display compounding or seriation of words, phrases, clauses, or periods which contributes significantly to the rhythm of his prose. The description of Jim Smiley's mare in "Jumping Frog," provides a brief illustration:

Thish-yer Smiley had a mare--the boys called her fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because of course she was faster than that--and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind (2).

In "A Fable" The Cat describes the mirror:

'It is a hole in the wall' . . . "You look in it and there you see the picture, and it is so dainty and charming and ethereal and inspiring in its unimaginable beauty that your head turns round and round, and you almost swoon with ecstasy" (597).

Depending on the context, these series so joined, can effect a slow, steady rhythm of prose or can suggest the sappy,
over-exuberance of the character on narrator who utters them. Seriation is one of Twain's most complex means of expanding his periods. These periods are not always so studied as those of Matthew Arnold or Hawthorne, not so complex as those of Henry James, but just as effective for their purpose.

**Metaphor**

Mark Twain's short fiction shows the development of his skill in the use of metaphors in themselves and also in their context, structure, and link. Metaphor operates with its content as dialogue metaphor, point of view metaphor, and metaphoric pattern. Development of dialogue metaphor is most evident in his early stories. Mary in "Legend of Capitoline Venus" (1869), converses with her lover George:

'Oh George, I do Love You!'

'Bless your dear heart, Mary, I know that. Why is Your father so obdurate?'

'George, he means well, but art is folly to him—he only understands groceries. He thinks you would starve me.'

'... why am I not a money-making bowelless grocer, instead of a divinely gifted sculptor. . . . '

'Do not despond, Georgy, dear—all his prejudices will fade away as soon as you shall have acquired fifty thousand dol—'

Fifty thousand, demons! Child, I am in arrears for my board! (22).

Mark Twain continued to develop dialogue metaphors in his stories. In "Puck Fanshaw's Funeral" (*Roughing It*, (1872),
Scotty Design the "stalwart rough" with a "warm heart," calls on the minister newly arrived from the East to arrange for Buck's funeral. The difficulty the two have in understanding the metaphor in each other's dialogue provides a good amount of fun.

As Mark Twain gained skill in storytelling, his personal response to the suggestion of immanent meaning is more and more reflected. The owl at the end of Bluejay Yarn is an instance of the point of view metaphor.

And they could all see the point, except an owl that came from Nova Scotia to visit the Yo Semite, and he took this thing in his way back. He said he couldn't see anything funny in it. But then he was a good deal disappointed about Yo Semite, too (163).

Darwin H. Shrell brings to light the figurative use of the Owl in Twain's Bluejays. He says that at the time of writing A Tramp Abroad, Mark Twain was distressed and puzzled over the apparent failure of his Whittier Birth-day dinner speech. The confrontation between the impulsive bluejays who can laugh at their own foibles and the wise but humorless Eastern Owl who cannot, symbolizes the contrast between writers who recognize their role in its proper perspective and those who take themselves too seriously.11

The frequently quoted passage in a "A Double Barelled Detective Story" (1902), is the notable example of the
metaphor ic pattern for the effect of burlesque.

It was a crisp and spicy morning in early October. The lilacs and laburnums, lit with the glory - fires of autumn, hung burning and flashing in the upper air, a fairy bridge provided by kind Nature for the wingless wild things that have their homes in the tree-tops and would visit together; the larch and the pomegranate flung their purple and yellow flames in brilliant broad splashes along the slanting sweep of the woodland; the sensuous fragrance of the innumerable deciduous flowers rose upon the swooning atmosphere; far in the empty sky a solitary esophagus slept upon motionless wing; everywhere brooded stillness, serenity, and the peace of God (436).

Mark Twain's use of the metaphoric patterns shows how his own understanding grew over the course of his career.

His mastery of the tall-tale, the "use of the native speech and lore," and his "common touch" indicate that he combined an apparently unconscious artistic temperament with the heart full of love for the people around him. He did not want to live in an intellectual seclusion. That is why he never strived to become an artist. The artistic apparels came unpromptedly to his stories. Many times, through irony and satire, he tried to correct social evils also.12

Irony & Satire

Mark Twain's short stories are tinged with mild irony and corrective, gentle satire. The tales reveal that inspite of his latent sardonic capabilities, Mark Twain,
as a mature author, realized that in order to write effective satire, he must overcome his emotionalism and his strong impulse to mutilate his satiric target. Guy A. Cardwell feels that Mark Twain's attack in "A Cure for the Blues" (1893), on the sentimental story, The Enemy Conquered of Royston, fails in its satirical effect as his:

anger is too unmodified, too unjust, his pessimism too unconditionally naive to fit a mode that thrives on rationalism, skepticism, elegance, and controlled, mitigated pessimism.13

Twain discovered a method of restraining himself in most of the short stories by a deliberate and careful choice of the narrative point of view. He was able, through the use of some of the basic narrative personas, to gain detachment and aesthetic distance that the creation of successful satire requires. There were three types of personas; those of the stories having first person narrators, the frame stories with first person frame narrators, and stories having third person narrators. Each of these points of view is linked with a specific degree of satire.

Twain often produced hyperbolic tall-tales, full of slapstic satire by introducing a first person storyteller. Throughout his career he gave such extravaganzas as "Journalism in Tennessee" (1869), "How I edited An Agricultural Paper" (1870), "The Facts in the Great Beef Contract" (1870), "The Invalid's Story" (1882), and "The Belated Russian
Passport" (1902). In these stories "he has the genial perception of incongruities and absurdities and grasp of pure nonsense which constitute humour." The over-all nature and tone of the satire is mild in these stories.

Satire of a more serious nature is frequently manifest in stories being narrated by the first person frame-story narrators as in "A Curious Dream" (1870), "The Story of the Old Ram" (Roughing It, 1872), "The Man Who Put Up at Gadsby's (A Tramp Abroad, 1872), and Extracts from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven (1907). The satire in these stories consists in the exposure of the dissembler or at the gulf between the ideal and the real.

The most serious type of satire is there in those stories which are told by the third person narrators as in The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg (1899), and The Mysterious Stranger (1916). In these stories Twain was as in The Innocents Abroad:

a satirist of the more enduring types of folly, American as well as European. He was scornful of those things in the human scheme which did violence to his concepts of right, justice, decorum, decency, reality, and honesty.15

Critics agree that there is a sense of despair in Mark Twain's later satire. Humour gives way to satire that will not work in a deterministic context. Nevertheless, as Nita Lang says, it "shows traces of old brilliance." Among the best pieces are The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, which
while it suffers from the increased tendency to moralize is well-structured, and the excellent satire in "To The Person Sitting in Darkness."

John S. Tuckey has traced the progressive development of Mark Twain's satire. He states that in the early phase burlesque is the dominant form for the incidental satire that Mark Twain wrote. During the next stage satire became more serious and was directed against human behaviour and institutions as the cause of social evils. Irony is the main characteristic of the satire in this period. In the final phase satire is more directed against cosmic situation while man is shown as insignificant. Tuckey sees cosmic irony as the characteristic feature of the satire of this spell. At the same time, Tuckey concedes that despite his apocalyptic situation, Twain continues to attack undesirable human actions.17

In "Jim Baker's Bluejay Yarn" (A Tramp Abroad, 1880), and "Jim Blaine's Old Ram" (Roughing It, 1872), Mark Twain resorts to a typical way of achieving irony. The speaker assumes initially, a mock ignorance or folly. From the combination of the folk style and comic invention Twain made these stories, along with their oral humour, elaborate pieces of literary irony. The gage in these stories is that everyone in the audience, except the dupe, laughs at an extravagant story, leaving the victim with the feeling that he is too
much of a dunce to understand the story. It is at such
times that Twain's humour is also at its best as is seen by
Cardwell:

We feel, I believe, that his humor is
feeblest and most labored when most independent,
most successful when subordinated to such
elements as pathos or to social criticism
expressed through satire.

Many humorous writers gain ironic effects through absurd
usage. Though in such situations the author wears a mask of
ignorance, yet there are strong prospects evident, indicating
that he knows what he is doing.

Twain in *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* (1899),
neatly wove irony upon irony, systematically stripping away
Hadleyburg's smug complacency to reveal its inward corruption.
In the "Extracts from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven,"
which he first published in 1907-8, the range of his
satirical techniques and target is broad. Through the
observations of Stormfield and the conversation with Twain's
spokesman, the author effectively ridicules the overtly
sentimental and idealistic concept of heaven. Twain's
competent handling of satire in Stormfield's adventures
makes their unfinished state markedly disappointing.

The social power attributed to satire became increasingle;
appealing to Mark Twain in his later writings. Maxwell
recognizes it and says:
The idea of satire as a social control Mark Twain certainly held. In *The Mysterious Stranger* (1898) he casts it in a role very similar to that accorded it by Pope.9

The Mysterious Stranger would presume to act without the moral sense and would presume to embody a magician's might. His later writings and the mental phantoms behind them seem to have for him a power to cure, or to foster a revolution as well.

Elaborating on the ambivalence of Mark Twain in his ironic dimensions, Cox has traced the effort of Mark Twain to achieve a correspondence between irony and humour. This pursuit demands from him the best of his efforts in his ironic writings to resolve the ambivalence. The success in this field came very gradually to him. It was not until *The Mysterious Stranger* that Twain was able to achieve the union of the worlds of irony and humour.20 The Twainian concept probably inspired Freud to call irony a "sub-species of the comic."21 The range of Mark Twain's satire is wide and its aim is to draw the attention of human beings towards their own weaknesses.

His satire was well-intentioned and was pulsating with the pulse of the people. "The Jumping Frog" is a good instance. It presents the blending of the satire nurtured in the Down-East Humor within the framework of the oral technique in the tradition of the South-Western humour.
In a writer like Twain with such a wide magnitude and versatility there are bound to be some lacunae.

In some of his short-stories humour is more topical and local rather than universal. His burlesque of detectives in "A Double Barreled Detective Story," and "The Stolen White Elephant" are the illustrations of the type. The humour in these stories springs from certain social situations. In a society where such situations do not exist, the humour arising out of the situations in such stories may have a historical value but it will not have the aesthetic literary value necessary for its enjoyment. Other sketches like "My Watch," "Political Economy," "The Convasser's Tale," and "The Facts in the Great Beef Contract" also belong to the same order of topically humorous stories. The point can be further illustrated from "Cecil Rhodes and the Shark" (Following The Equator, 1897). The humour in this story arises out of a situation no longer present in modern times. It does not take fifty days now for a news to reach from England to Australia. The humour in this story can only be imagined and not experienced. These humorous stories also show that at times Twain gets too much occupied with the "quizzical slant of life." The reader's perception of the incongruities of life, leads him away from a "complete view
Mark Twain was a product of the Frontier which was a prolific source of oral tradition. Naturally, he had much allurement for the humorous oral story and his short-stories abound in oral effects. This poses a problem for the ear not attuned to the rhythms of the native oral speech and lore. The modern drawing-room reader is not at ease with the looseness of structure in his stories. In order to be fully enjoyed its demands on the part of the reader, a good acquaintance with the Frontier traditions and idioms of the humorous oral storytelling. Depending on their manner of telling to the lecture audience, Twain's stories, have often a stage effect—a haranguing sense. The element of moralizing, and burlesquing at times becomes sentimental and fatiguing (e.g. in "Was It Heaven? or Hell?" and "The Stolen White Elephant"). It is true that generally Mark Twain avoids preaching and uses suggestiveness yet even a little of didacticism mars the beauty of literature.

In his longer works specially, Twain has not escaped padding. In fact expansiveness was a general characteristic of the nineteenth century fiction. In his short stories, however, padding is at a minimum and the effect is mostly achieved in a few bright flashes and subtle touches. Twain felt most relaxed and at ease in his short stories because this was the form that suited well to his temperament. Even
some of his longer works are in the nature of a bunch of stories rather than being continuous, coherent and full length structures.

In spite of his tremendous success as a humorist and as a re conteur, his preferences are sometimes unpredictable. At times he indulged in digressions and even dilated on trifles at the cost of significant events (as in "The Stolen White Elephant" or in "A Double Barrelled Detective Story). In his enthusiasm for bringing in raw material, he occasionally neglected fine effects of refinement and polish just as Henry James went to the other extreme and came to regard the refining of the material as the material itself.23

Mark Twain could not make a favourable impression upon the sophisticated Eastern critics in America or critics in England and Europe who could not reconcile themselves to the traditions of the American West. David Daiches complained that "Mark Twain was of a divided mind about most of the important social issues concerning tradition and individual consciousness. He tended to be an anarchist and a religious skeptic." He says that Twain "is not like the traditional comedian who wants to play Hamlet: he is rather Hamlet who puts on antic disposition to save his reason."24 While ambivalence is definitely a characteristic of Twain, and the point has already been discussed in the fourth chapter of this study, yet it has to be said that David Daiches confines
himself to the writings of Twain's last period only and even in them he fails to see the underlying current of humour. As Rubin, Jr., says, most of the major work of Twain is based on the humour arising out of the clash between the genteel and vulgar cultural modes. It is the juxtaposition and not the blending of these modes which produces humour in most of the American writers of the nineteenth century. Thus sometimes Twain's ambivalence was due to this cultural clash between the East and the West. This was a source of humour as well.

Even among the critics attacking Mark Twain, there is inconsistency. In the same vein they attack and praise his stories. Fred Lewis Pattee criticizes the "Jumping Frog" for its incongruity and rambling manner. He calls it, not a short story but a "whimsical anecdote;" yet he also takes it as "a long step toward the true short story." The objections raised by Pattee in Twain's short stories are their sprawling nature, lack of restraint, and exaggeration. It is clear that Pattee's objections are not so much against Mark Twain's talent as against the "humorous tall-tale." Ray B. West, Jr. did not class Mark an excellent short story writer, as in his opinion, he does not show consciousness of his craft. A few pages later in the same work West, Jr., pays tributes to Mark Twain in the following words:
There is no doubt that the qualities which raised Mark Twain's work to a rank commensurate with the works of Hawthorne and Melville were qualities inherent in the folk concepts and the language of the frontier, . . . it is a quality which is successful, as in the case of Mark Twain's best works only when it is combined with an honest attempt to explore the nature of human experience, not fit it into a pre-conceived mold. 27

One cannot understand as to how an author can exploit qualities of the folk concepts and language without having an inherent knowledge of his craft. It is another thing that he does not always show himself off, which is not necessary also. The knowledge of craft can be implicit and glimmering.

Wallace Stegner hesitates to call Mark Twain a short story writer. In his opinion he is more "a fabulist, satirist, parodist." Stegner's criticism is because of the fact that Mark Twain did not give sufficient attention to "formal short story." By "formal short story," Stegner probably means stories of wit and elegance. Stegner also fails to perceive that Mark Twain, moving away from the classical tradition of the short story writing, was laying the foundation of the romantic short story. In the same article Stegner cannot restrain himself from perceiving some of the virtues of Twain as a short story writer. He recognizes his "non bookish vein" in his humorous sketches. He admires Twain's "native vein," his "mother lode," in "some pieces completely inimitable; . . ." Stegner regrets that "the
proportion of good Twain to bad is actually rather low" in his short stories, but he hastens to add, "even one or two of Mark at his best is enough to redeem the rest." The critic's only complaint is, that Mark's attempts "at the literary short story seem contrived." The reviewer, however, acknowledges that the Twainian humorous stories (which he refers to as "Yarns"), "fall as naturally from the lips of his characters as they did from his own." He agrees that the best of humorous tales and "the beast-fables, which conceal behind their apparent innocence an irony as alert as the black snake," are not formless. "They have their own esthetic, they are built to a traditional pattern, which Mark Twain had not so much learned as caught, like chickenpox, from the air of his youth." It is obvious that Stegner's criticism becomes a mere union of paradoxes. He also claims "The Notorious Jumping Frog," Jim Baker's "Bluejay Yarn," and "Jim Blaine's Old Ram," as illustrating "Mark Twain's talents best." In the end Stegner makes a reconciliatory remark with which there is no quarrel:

He made silk purses from sow's ears, and if . . . there are some untransformed ears among the purses, we should not complain for the virtues and weaknesses of a writer like Mark Twain are inseparable, sometimes almost interchangeable.

Most of Wallace Stegner's rather superficial attack on Mark Twain's short stories stems from his hesitation to accord
literary recognition to what he himself calls "magical rhythms of spoken speech," which Twain introduced into literature. It is clear that though Mark Twain has his faults he has also become the target of critics because of his failure to conform to the genteel tradition. There are other critics like James E. Miller, Jr., who call for significant attention to "Twain's mastery of the art of short fiction form." Robert E. Spiller, referring to the oral effects of his writings has also called them "typical chats with his readers. . . ." He says that it would be wrong to fit his writings in a pre-conceived design. "He was not a writer of genres and his work does not break down into neat categories." Spiller emphasizes the rambling and overlapping nature of Twain's narrative.29

IV
OVERVIEW

Thus inspite of his shortcomings, the fact remains that Mark Twain is one of the great writers of the humorous short stories not of America alone but of the entire world as well. He is second only to Shakespeare in the art of combining the best of the two worlds. He could achieve a synthesis of the romantic spirit and the literary form. He made the American short story dramatic in nature by writing about the life of the common man of the Frontier. His stories depict the "assertion of the basic democratic axioms, in his onslaught
on privilege, injustice, vested power, political pretence and comic exploitation. . . .”

Thus he widened considerably the area of serious literature in the United States. He revitalized the literature of democracy and became the first great popular story-teller in America.

Mark Twain is also the first great writer to write his stories in native vernacular, thereby helping to develop the modern American style. He made English language independent of ornateness and ostentation and wrote in a simple, flexible, racy, and also graceful style. He enabled the American short story to get back from its dependence on European models. He improved upon the European tradition and gave the American short story its own place and form, worthy to be admired. These changes came more through spontaneity and less through conscious intention. Twain's stories are an individual writer's fortunate solution to a particular narrative problem.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Oh, this is the joy of a rose.
That it blows,
And goes.
--Willa Cather, In Rose-Time

In view of the treatment of themes and techniques of
Mark Twain's short stories in the preceding chapters, it is
easy to conclude that short story was the most congruous
form for Mark Twain. The main points of the study are being
summed up below in order to corroborate the point of
conclusion.

Mark Twain's favourite branch of literature is the
humorous oral story. Even in its written shape, it retains
its oral character. This type of story proved to be very
congenial for Mark Twain because it was in this field of
activity that he could apply to the maximum extent his own
critical theories. He stressed the fact that the humorous
story has its own nub which is latent and evasive. In its
tendency towards self-conscious use of language, allegory,
dramatic form and its frequent reportorial tone, the short
story offered Twain, a field, much in conformity with his
beliefs about fiction. The short story was a form to which
Twain could devote himself with ease, because it responded