CHAPTER II

PERVERSING OF THE RAINBOW

'Twas the saying of an ancient sage that humour was the only test of gravity, and gravity of humor. For a subject which would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear a serious examination was certainly false wit.

-- Anthony A. Cooper
(Earl of Shaftesbury)
Essays on Freedom of Wit and Humour Sec. I.

I

HUMOUR

The great master of Long story, William Makepeace Thackeray, has symbolically illustrated the relation of the story-teller to society with the help of a picture in his "Roundabout Paper on a Lazy Idle Boy." The picture depicts a handful of warriors and grave elders of the city, seated at the gates of Jaffa or Beirut, listening to the story-teller reciting the wonderful and cajoling fairy-tales of The Arabian Nights. This is not a bad picture, in miniature, of the story-teller's role in the community. One of the main aims of the story-teller is to endear himself to the people. This he achieves with the help of humour, as humour appeals to the heart.
Abundant scholarly evidence exists to show that the oral story and humour in America have been germinal to each other. Mark Twain is one of those writers who infused their stories with the spirit of humour and also made it the medium of narration. It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things to have a glimpse of the efforts of humanity towards understanding humour in order to follow the development of the humorous story at the hands of Twain.

Aristotle called man a "social animal." Man can also be called a "laughing animal." Man is the only creature endowed by nature with the faculty of suggestive laughter. Other animals might share with man intelligence, capacity to think, feeling of joy and sorrow, but not humour. It is true that a hyena or a chimpanzee might laugh but their laughter will not be so meaningful, not so varied as man's. The true nature of the individual is often revealed by what makes him laugh. Here, of course, it has to be borne in mind that laughter is only an accessory to the expression of humour, not a necessity. In the novels of Cooper mention is made of the noiseless laughter of the savage, for his peals of laughter should not awaken the tigers. It is also noted that the Veddhas, a primitive tribe in Ceylon, have never been known to laugh as they saw nothing to laugh at. This does not mean that they had no sense of humour, although with laughter they may show more of geniality.
Humour is a "Proteus," changing its shape and manner with the thousand diversities of individual character.\(^3\) Alan Ayckbourn's play *Absent Friends* (1975) presents a compendium of characters laughing richly and variously. They illustrate the "polysemous" character of humour. They make fun out of exultation, from animal energy, from confidence in insight, from uncertainty, from embarrassment, and from desire to simulate an unfelt hospitality or warmth. Laughter is used to express good cheer, annoyances, to break silence when words cannot be found, and as an effort to win goodwill.\(^4\)

Man probably began to laugh soon after his creation. He has been since then alternately laughing and crying from cradle to grave. Byron has called man "a pendulum bet-wixt a smile and a tear."\(^5\) Man has also been approaching, gradually, towards the comprehension of the heaven-sent gift of humour. The undefinability of humour has a tradition that has been highlighted by the accepted authority of Swift.

What Humor is, not all the Tribe Of Logick-mongers can describe. Swift adds,

*Here, onely Nature acts her Part, Unhelpt by Practice, Books, or Art.*\(^6\)

The development of the term "humour" is interesting. Originally it had no link with laughter. It was rather a term in medieval physiology. It denoted four fluids of the
human body--"Choler" (or bile), "melancholy," "phlegm," and
"blood," denoting the obstinate, brooding, cowardly, and
kindly personalities respectively. Ideally it was thought
that they should commingle in due proportion to produce a
balanced temperament. Juan Harte, a Spanish physician, in
a treatise published in 1575, *Examen de ingenios para leyes*
*Ciencias*, suggested that all infants be examined at their
birth and assigned to their subsequent careers in accordance
with their aptitudes. The physiological meaning of humour
is still retained in modern medicine as applied to the
thinner fluids such as the humours of the eye or watery
matter in a blister of the skin caused by heat etc.

Plato in his *Philebus* (pp. 48-50) gives a subtle analysis
of the pleasures of comedy. He thinks that the pleasure of
the ludicrous is caused by the sight of another's misfortune.
Plato points out that the misfortune which provokes laughter
is self-ignorance or folly of others (and not only serious
calamity - ἁγγέλεια) and that this folly must be accompanied
by an inability to hurt us. In Plato's opinion, fear casts
out laughter. Powerless self-ignorance is the object of
comic laughter.

Aristotle's brief account in *Poetics* (Ch. V) of the
"Ludicrous" is a step in advance of Plato. He too, it is
to be observed, is speaking with special reference to comedy.
"The Ludicrous," he says, "is a defect or deformity that
causes no pain or hurt . . . ." The limitation expressed by the words "without pain or hurt" is of profound importance and must be always observed as a necessary qualification.\textsuperscript{10}

Aristotle's idea suggests that laughter is generally at the expense of some oddity but it does not imply pain. This idea was taken up by Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth century British philosopher, who expressed the view that "those grimaces called laughter" were produced by self delight or sudden glory. Descartes, Lamennais, Meredith, Gross, and others accepted this opinion. The French philosopher Henri Bergson who saw laughter as a weapon which the \textit{Elan Vital} uses to attack social vices also follows Hobbes.

Kant, Scopenhauer, Herbert Spencer, and Spinoza were of a different opinion. They rejected the derision theory and put forward their own "incongruity theory." The idea being that the perception of incongruity between what is and what might be is the cause of laughter.

Freud, among the moderns, partly accepted this theory but suggested that the release of suppressed bodily energies was the key element in laughter. Continuing the pursuit, Robert E. Heilman rejects the traditional accounts of humour and puts forth the acceptance theory. He agrees with the view of Eliot's Harcourt Reilly that the comic view means avoiding "excessive expectation." It means being at ease with the mixed world. Research on humour still continues.
The foregoing theories of humour have been given only as broad illustrations. There are others as well. Pirandello, for example, writes in *L'Umorismo*, "... the task of humorism is that of discovering through a laugh and without indignation, hypocrisy behind morality." In fact the pleasant nature of humour is sensitive to any serious treatment. No laws can be rigidly laid down for the generation of laughter. Pedantry is usually the surest way to kill a joke, though it may unwittingly provoke a laugh. Most of the theorists of humour get only a partial view of their object of quest, like the six blind men of the anecdote trying to know the form of an elephant. The views of different scholars on humour boil down to two main schools of thought. One of these, following Hobbes, stresses superiority; the other accepting Kant endorses incongruity. The third group of the newly emerging critics may lay the foundations of a new school of those who believe in the acceptance theory of comedy. But this school of humour has yet to come of age.

In other words, the first view concentrates on the witty viewpoint; and the second, on humorous situation. There is a subtle difference between humour and wit. Humour is related to gentle and sympathetic laughter, and wit evokes intellectual (and sometimes derisive) laughter with good-humoured superiority. Wit has often been likened to a forked lightning, and humour, to harmless sheet-lightning. The one darts, the other
illuminates. FreuI, as has been said above, supports Hobbes by focussing on self-expression and personal animus. "Witz", in Freudian sense, implies both wit and joke. True humour is difficult to find, though easy to recognize and it is necessary to us like the light of the sun. "Humor is an aspect of human problem of communication. It is, in fact, one of the subtlest forms of communication ever devised." The humorist has to establish a heart-to-heart communion with his audience or readers. His art would depend on creating an effective bond with them.

The reaction to humour differs from person to person. Modern psychology has made it clear that laughter is the result of man's reaction to the object around him, in relation to the social environment in which it occurs or is placed. The same object, under different conditions, can create laughter of varying intensity. This can be confirmed from the experience of theatre-goers who observe different reactions of the audience to comic. Thus the humorous effect depends on the mental development and cultural up-bringing of the person. Besides, the sense of laughter shows how developed an individual or a society is. What is true of an individual or society is also true of a nation. It is not a mere accident that each nation is endowed with distinctive humour. These days we think in terms of universal humour as the common heritage of mankind. It is
only the cumulative effect of the humour of nations, nay, of races.

II

NATIVE AMERICAN HUMOUR

The United States of America is known for its fecundity of humour. However, the growth of the native sapling in this field has been gradual though continuous and has come up after due nurturing. The growth of humour in America bears a close resemblance to the development of dramatic tradition in England. Like drama in Elizabethan England, there have been two traditions in the realm of American humour. One was brought from Europe and the other was the product of the soil.

In the early days the Americans (especially the elite) brought humour from England and made it their model. Addison and Steele had a dominating influence on the New World. Dickens continued to provide a model for many American humorists. It was as late as the 1830's that the presence of the native tradition in humour was felt. The native American humour had its own subject, character, setting, and manner of telling.

Max Eastman has shown that the distinct flavour of the native American humour derives from "the primitive strain of imagination and the mature enjoyment of nonsense."14 "American culture began a hundred years ago," declares Mr. Eastman,
"Our nation born in an era of skeptical commonsense takes a cultural direction, entirely different from that of Europe, created in an age of imaginative disbelief."^{15}

The native spring of humour in America won recognition from the critics rather late. Constance Rourke was the first to notice the existence of a native humour rooted in the folklore of the land. Her memorable work *American Humor: A Study of National Character* (1931), portrays the three American folk types exercising their influence on the playwrights and authors. They were the "Yankee," "backwoods man" and "black-face minstrel." Paraphrasing Rourke, Gene Eluestein pointed out that she directed her attention towards two major issues: "the folk sources of an American literary tradition, and the function of humor in its development."^{16} Miss Rourke helped considerably in understanding the reflection of the American spirit into literature.

In her other book, *The Roots of American Culture* (1942), published posthumously, Rourke propounds her thesis more explicitly: "No other people has created its folklore and tried to assimilate it and turn it to the purposes of the creative imagination and of self-understanding, all within a brief span."^{17} She stated that these indigenous folk types were transmuted into "generic characters" by major authors from "Mark Twain to Henry James." Miss Rourke pointed to the sources of native American humour like
Yankee play, the Crockett Almanacs, and itinerant actors. However, she could not distinguish between folklore and popular culture.

Another important critic, Walter Blair, in his *Native American Humor*, has stressed the importance of oral traditions in the development of native American humour. He has discussed in detail the four schools of American humorists:

1. Down East Humour (1830-1867),
2. Humour of the Old Southwest (1830-1867),
3. Literary Comedians (1855-1900), and
4. The Local Colorists (1868-1900).

The Down East humour was making use of the vernacular, faithful depiction of the local background, and individualized characters. This tradition included Seba Smith (1792-1868) the creator of Jack Downing; Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796-1865), creator of Sam Slick; James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), author of the *The Bigelow Papers*; Francis M. Whitcher (1811-1852), creator of Widow Spriggins, Widow Bedott, and Aunt Maguire; and Benjamine P. Shillaber (1814-1890) whose Mrs. Partington won him everlasting fame.18

The humour produced on the old Southwest was more vigorous and adventuresome. This was mainly based on tall tales and included writers like Augustus Baldwin Longstreet (1790-1870), author of *Georgia Scenes*; Johnson J. Hooper
(1815-1863), author of *Adventures of Simon Suggs*; Thomas Bangs Thorpe (1815-1878), author of *The Mysteries of the Backwoods* (1846); and George W. Harris (1814-1869), contributor to *Sut Lovingood* (1867). 19

Then came the Literary Comedians, comprising humorists like "John Phoenix" (George H. Derby), author of *Phoenixiana*, (1855); "Orpheus C. Kerr" (Robert Henry Newell), creator of *Orpheus C. Kerr Papers* (1862-68); "Artemus Ward," (Charles Farrar Browne); author of *Artemus Ward, His Book* (1862); "Patroleum V. Nasby" (David Rosse Locke), author of *The Nasby Papers* (1864); "Josh Billings" (Henry W. Shaw), whose work *Josh Billings and His Sayings* appeared in 1865; and "Bill Nye" (Edgar Wilson Nye) whose famous book *Bill Nye and Boomerang* appeared in 1881. 20 One notices, first, that almost all the literary Comedians wrote under nom-de-plume. Secondly, their humour was seldom regional. Mark Twain had a good name for this group—"Inspired Idiots." "The Literary Comedians," says Bernard DeVoto, "presented themselves as Perfect Fools." 21 They were simpletons who provided humour at the expense of their "inspired idiocy." The humour of the Literary comedians remains closely identified with the persona of the narrator. 22 Their humour was verbal, depending on the tricks of the language to produce laughter. They also revelled in burlesque patterns.

During the late sixties and early seventies of the
nineteenth century America there arose a new type of humour known as "Local color movement." It included illustrious writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe (Oldtown Folks, 1869); and Bret Harte (The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches, 1868-1870). In 1894, Edward E. Hale, Jr. remarked:

Everybody writes 'local' stories nowadays; it is as natural as whooping-cough. There is no need of encouragement to tell the truth, a little restraint would do no harm. For, even with the best of intentions, one may write a 'local' story so badly that it will be worse than a blank-verse tragedy on Washington or anybody else. 23

Hale Jr. made this observation while reviewing Crumbling Idols, twelve essays on Art by Hamlin Garland. The little restraint hinted by the author came into prominence at the end of the century.

Mark Twain is presented by Walter Blair as the culmination of American humour, and as a figure in whom all the four schools of the native American humour are simultaneously reflected. He was trained as a writer in the Old Southwest, his first known published piece was recovered by a writer of Down East Humour, he rose to fame as a Literary Comedian, and his best work was produced in the field of "Local Color." 24

Characteristics

Like all native humour, American humour of the native
type can be recognized through its salient features. The main features are, in the first place, exaggeration resulting in ridiculous overstatement giving rise to the famous tall tales of the frontier. Secondly, sometimes by contrast there comes a ridiculous understatement. Reacting against the classical treatment, native American humour dignifies the trivial and demolishes the grandeur of the genteel tradition. The tradition of what is known as "deadpan" is also the main feature of American humour. This was the perfect vehicle for conveying pathetic dimensions. The form that gives everlasting value to the American humour is the one that is based upon oral narrative. American humour effected the style and structure of oral stories.

"Most of the major humorists employed burlesques frequently," said Walter Blair. Artemus Ward wrote many burlesque novels; Mark Twain utilized burlesque patterns, especially in Sunday School Stories. Bill Nye, the last of the Literary Comedians, published his first book in 1881 in burlesque tradition and continued the vein in much of his later work also. "It is evident that the burlesque was an important form in the works of humorists in America in the nineteenth century," concludes Blair. As in life, so in humour, many times humour and pathos are intermingled. This, sometimes, even results in what is known as grim humour, as is illustrated in the later short stories of Mark Twain.
Miss Hourke, in *American Humor*, dealt with it as an emergence from the common folk. Meredith argued that comedy springs from the real world. Contradicting this, Rourke maintained that the roots of American humour were in the realms of fantasy and legend. There is the extravagance of folk speech and the unbridled satire of popular theatre. She differentiates American humour from the traditional "Comedy of Manners." Unlike the Comedy of Manners, American humour does not emphasize the values of society. Miss Rourke saw in the tradition of minstrelsy a major source of American humour. "Comedy was conspiring toward the removal of all alien traditions, out of delight in pure destruction or as preparation for new growth." Gradually this new growth flavoured all American literature.

Finally, there comes the "homeliness" of American humour. It does not flash like wit. It pervades like a rainbow. American humour cannot be separated from its content and shown like the brick of the legendary philosopher who moved about with the brick as the specimen of the house he wanted to sell. Moreover, humour in America is not restricted to literature. It mingles with the daily life of the unsophisticated and even barbaric people of America. It is from there that humour comes to the palace of the millionaire. This is because the unsophisticated man is certainly more original than the sophisticated one.
III

MARK TWAIN'S HUMOUR

Mark Twain was primarily a humorist. Humour came naturally to him. Like all great humorists, he had pathos, irony, and passion to give his humour a lively edge. He hated every kind of humbug and there was a strain of melancholy in his outlook. Though Mark Twain never formulated his principles of humour as a treatise, he had his own conception of it. There are two ways to know his thoughts on humour. There are the comments of Mark Twain interspersed throughout his writings, and secondly there are his answers to press reporters' enquiries on the subject. A glance through his own writings will not be unrewarding.

Albert Bigelow Paine (Mark Twain's Boswell) records that Mark welcomed humour as "mankind's greatest blessing." Paine goes on to state that Twain was continuously fond of humour but he desired it with a touch of gravity. "For its own best interests, humour should take its outings in grave company; its cheerful dress gets heightened colour from the proximity of sober hues..." Mark Twain never became conscious of his humor. "I think I have seldom deliberately set out to be humorous, but have nearly always allowed humour to drop in or stay out, according to its fancy..." Stressing the paradoxical nature of humour, Twain
observed in *Following the Equator*, citing from *Pudd'n head Wilson's New Calendar*: "Everything human is pathetic. The secret source of humour itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven." 32

In a letter to William Allen White in Emporia Kans: Mark Twain exclaimed "... those riches which are denied to no nation on the planet--humor and feeling." 33

Mark Twain's humour was one with a purpose and not a mere farcical laughter. Discussing this in *Eruption* he remarked: "Humorists of the 'mere' sort cannot survive." Humor is only a fragrance, a decoration. Twain recognizes the necessary reformative or even instructive element of humour but cautions that it should always be latent and suggestive and never be overt:

Humor must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live for ever. By for ever I mean thirty years. ... I have always preached. That is the reason I have lasted thirty years. If humor came of its own accord and uninvited, I have allowed it a place in my sermon. But I was not writing the sermon for the sake of humor. 34

The typical naivete of the great humorist does not forsake him even as he discusses humour here and there, e.g.:

I have no sense of humor. In illustration of this fact, I will say this--by way of confession--that if there is a humorous passage in *Pickwick Papers* I have never been able to find it. 35
In reply to a person impersonating as a reporter in order to gain audience with the master-humorist, Twain linked humour with truth. To the question "What is humor?", Twain's answer was, "The good natured side of any truth."\textsuperscript{36}

Declaring that "genuine humor" is not shallow, he reiterated, "'Laughter without a tinge of philosophy is but a sneeze of humor. Genuine humor is replete with wisdom.'\textsuperscript{37}

The quality of humour was elevated to divine heights in the statement as reported by Paine: "Humor must be one of the chief attributes of God. He cited Plants and animals that were distinctly humorous in form and in their characteristics, these he declared were God's jokes."\textsuperscript{38} In one of his speeches, Mark Twain thought that humour and intellect, far from being contradictory, are rather complementary: "Humor sets the thinking machinery in motion."\textsuperscript{39}

In "what Paul Bourget Thinks of Us" in \textit{Literary Essays} (WMT, XXII, 163), the soothing effect of this heavenly boon was thus brought to light:

Well, humor is the great thing, the saving thing, after all. The minute it crops up, all our hardnecessies yield, all our irritations and resentments flit away, and a sunny spirit takes their place.

Even in his later writings, when he is said to have adopted a sombre outlook, Mark Twain does not forget humour.
In "About Play-Acting," (The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg ETC. (WMT, XXIII, 215) Twain recounts its salutary effects:

Comedy keeps the heart sweet; but we all now that there is wholesome refreshment for both mind and heart in an occasional climb among the pomp of intellectual snow—summits built by Shakespeare and those others. Do I seem to be preaching? It is out of my line; I only do it because the rest of the clergy seem to be on vacation.

Thus he regales our hearts by sending "the rest of the clergy on vacation."

In The Mysterious Stranger, Satan has only one hope for humanity:

For your race, in its poverty, has unquestionably one really effective weapon—laughter. Power, money, persuasion, supplication, persecution—these can lift at a colossal humbug—push it a little—weaken it a little, century by century; but only laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.

According to Bergson, laughter of situation may be determined by (a) repetition, (b) inversion, and (c) reciprocal interference of series. As for repetition, Bergson mentions the following:

Thus you meet a friend in the street whom you have not seen for an age; there is nothing comic in the situation. If, however, you meet him again the same day, and then a third and a fourth time, you may laugh at the co-incidence.
In a piece entitled "Humor," published first in Harper's Magazine, and later included in the revised and enlarged edition of the Autobiography of Mark Twain (1959), the role of repetition in rousing humour is stressed:

Repetition is a mighty power in the domain of humor. If frequently used, nearly any precisely worded and unchanging formula will eventually compel laughter if it be gravely and earnestly repeated, at intervals, five or six times.  

Twain narrates, how he evoked laughter from a San Francisco audience after repeating an anecdote more than once.

Fred W. Lorch has given a good collection of Mark Twain's press comments on humour.

By and large Mark admitted that the line of demarcation between wit and humour is very subtle. There is, however, an "imperceptible touch of something permanent about true humor which is not present in wit:"

Wit might be the mere conversational eruption of 'smartness,' a bright feather, an ornament. It tends to be artificial. It need not be funny. It is something that flashes itself upon the hearer. By general, if tacit, consent it is counted as a poor relation to humour. Pope, for example was one of the world's Wittiest writers, yet most agree he was artificial.

Mark Twain felt that unlike wit, humour is always natural and spontaneous. In order to be able to pour it
forth, one must taste "the springs of pathos." "Humor and pathos are often simultaneous. But precisely what humor is and where it comes from is hard to say." 45

When asked, whether laughter was not like poetry, the overflowing of the cup, the humorist demurred: "True and proper laughter didn't come in that causeless way. Behind it, is depth and purpose." 46

He acknowledged that as with other things, taste for humour also changes, so humorous books do not have the same chance of life as with narratives. 47

These extracts have been quoted to give an idea of Mark Twain's own views on humour. This will be helpful in understanding his use of native American humour.

Mark Twain wove into his larger works as well as short stories various humorous formulae, themes, devices, motifs and attitudes. They are the most representative of the tradition of American humour. Amazing in its variety and complexity, Twain's humour covers, without apparent system or plan, the range and scope of the four schools of native American humour summarized above. Twain was a transcending genius, not to be limited by regional or parochial limits. He drew his materials and inspiration from all directions—from the Down East writers, the humorists of the Old Southwest, the Literary Comedians or the Local Colorists—and
made them his own.

Chronologically, Twain was favoured by nature in so far as his career as a humorist is concerned; for, he was in a unique position to make use of the great wealth and variety of the native traditions that were flourishing in his early years. "The great period of American humorous writing has been the last three quarters of the nineteenth century." Not much of humour was possible in the seventeenth century colonial life. Wit and humour thrive well in a free atmosphere. During the eighteenth century humour of a satirical kind was coming up. Post-revolution Native American humour was falling in the line of tales. People narrated their stories of adventure at the battlefield and on the sea. This tradition was gradually developing. Providentially Mark Twain was born in the 1830s, the decade that marks the emergence into print of an ever increasing amount of traditional humorous writing which was characterized by what has been termed "an emphatic native quality."

In his variegated career as a printer's apprentice, a Mississippi steamboat pilot, and an enquiring traveller, Twain had imbibed as much of the soul of native American humour as any writer of the time could have done. He had an intimate knowledge of the themes and formulae. As a result, they became fabrics of his being and of the life he was to depict for his reading public.
Unfortunately, and at times paradoxically, his deep knowledge of the indigenous source-material became a hindrance to his fame. The post-war generation failed to appreciate his literary artistry. Led by Van Wyck Brooks, a group of critics looked upon him as a "thwarted genius." This gave rise to the famous but vain Van Wyck Brooks—DeVoto controversy. Although this controversy has been almost settled at the hands of Gladys C. Bellamy, still its echoes are heard now and then in some voices of disapprobation which, however, served one good purpose, that of preventing Mark Twain from being catapulted to the status of a demi-god.

The impact of native humour has always lurked in Twain, specially in its explosive and anecdotal nature. In order to have a better idea of his use of native American humour, it would be desirable to have a glimpse into Twain's sources and influences.

Sources

"Every author is the product of his age." True!, but every human being inherits some qualities which he cherishes. The first source for Mark Twain was his mother. Paul Feldkeller has shown that he inherited "'warm humanity and geniality of heart', and his tendency to view the world objectively in terms of humorous contrasts are traced directly to his mother."49 Albert Bigelow Paine observed of Jane Clemens, "Her sense of pity was abnormal, . . . she would
drown the young kittens, when necessary, but warmed the water for the purpose." 50 Twain himself has pointed out the value of inherited ideas. In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, he has called them "a curious thing, and interesting to observe and examine" (WMT, XVI, 66).

The second great source of Mark Twain's humour was the American folk-tale. Folklore influences so permeated Mark Twain's nature that they easily found their way into his writings, almost in fact, whenever he picked up his pen. Mark Twain's use of folklore in his works has not received the attention it deserves. Some of his finest books may be reduced to mere chaff if the grain of folklore in them were taken away. In many cases this lore became his basic writing method. The importance of these folk materials is such that any considerable evaluation of his work or of his place in American literature must include this most vital aspect of his creative powers. The art of oral story-telling is the greatest of American folk arts. It exercised much influence over most of the Western tales. Daniel G. Hoffman has recognized the rhetorical structure and typical gaudy vocabulary of folk comedy. 51 Constance Rourke directed her attention on the folk-sources of the American literary tradition and the role of folk humour in its development. She said:

Through Mark Twain, the American mind resumed many of its more careless and instinctive early patterns. The sense of legend was continued
or resorted, or at least the high comic legend again commanded the native fancy. 52

These "instinctive early patterns" were rooted in the American folktale. Mark Twain benefitted himself through primitive imagination, through the vivacity of the spoken word, and through the platform technique.

Mark Twain's short stories also are rich in folk material. His "Jumping Frog" is the towering example of the humorous folk-tale. There are others like "Science Versus Luck," "Guying the Guides" "The Old Ram Story" and "Jim Baker's Bluejay Yarn." He was specially attracted by the Tradition Populaire, Fable, Tall Tales and Animal Fable in folklore traditions. His art of oral story telling was shaped by folk speech. Even Charlie Chaplin was drawn towards folklore in order to expose the defects of the industrial age in which he lived.

Twain was not the type of author to take a high-brow attitude or to sit in his own ivory tower. He was in love with humanity. He assimilated all their fun and frolic in his art. He was alive to the frontier spirit that has been a very powerful element in American consciousness for the last three centuries. Conditions demanded that frontiersmen must be alert, strong, and clever. They should go deep and not be taken in by superficialities. All these attitudes shaped Mark Twain's humour and it is reflected in his stories.
His life on the Mississippi river and his training in the South and the puritan spirit of the East all cumulatively shaped his humour. Thus for Mark Twain's lively humour, life at hand was the greatest source.

Influences

Mark Twain always remained alive to the humours before him and also to his contemporaries. Whatever he took from external sources he presented in his own fashion in the manner of Shakespeare, Stevenson, and Ibsen. Critics are right in saying that he took colour from the environment. He states in *What is Man?* that:

> Whatsoever a man is, is due to his make, and to the influences brought to bear upon it by his heredities, his habitat, his associations. He is moved, directed, COMMANDED, by exterior influences—solely. He originates nothing, himself—not even an opinion, not even a thought.53

Twain here makes it clear that man has his personality as governed and conditioned by the hereditary characteristics, environment, and association. Later, he adds the individual's training as another necessary factor in the acceptance of outside influences. Twain also accepts that man at a certain period in his life becomes a sort of pipe for every wind to play upon and it is the accumulation of all the outside influences that produces the result.

A rare and nice photograph of Mark Twain, standing in
the middle in close conversation with "Patroleum V. Nasby" and "Josh Billings" seated on his either side, is a pictorial illustration of the receptive mind of Twain in exchanging ideas with other humorists of the time. The photograph appeared in 1901 issue of, *The Century Magazine*.54

His visit to Artemus Ward in December, 1863, proved to be a landmark in the development of his humour. He assimilated many of the qualities of Artemus Ward. There was much similarity in their mannerisms. Both of them were the most significant products of the American Literary Comedians, especially during the Civil War.

William Dean Howells has praised Mark Twain in glowing terms:

> I do not think, anyone else can play with humorous fancies so dedicatedly and deliciously as he does. . . . His is a humor which flows softly all around about and over and through the mesh of the page. Pervasive, refreshing, health-giving and makes no more show, no more noise than does the circulation of blood.55

It is difficult to find so much of understanding between the two great humorists of the time. Blair has illustrated various devices of the Literary Comedians used by Twain from a single page of Chapter XVII of *A Tramp Abroad*.56

Mark Twain also read great writers like Thomas Paine, Robert Ingersoll, Locke, Hobbes, Cervantes, Goldsmith, Emerson, Pepys, Swift, and the great bard Shakespeare. The
influence of Shakespeare's romantic comedy on Mark Twain's humorous story has not received due scholarly attention. Mark Twain had great admiration for Shakespeare. Pochmann has recounted twenty allusions to Shakespeare in Twain, nearly double than those to any other writer. Mark Twain acknowledged his indebtedness to the valuable and enduring moral lessons he learned from great Shakespearean tragedies like *Othello* and *Lear*. He had a great fancy for *Romeo and Juliet*. Jervioe Langdon points out that he often read Shakespeare aloud in family gatherings. Further, Jervioe alludes to an interesting passage in an unpublished manuscript "comments on English Fiction" (Ca. 1870), in which Mark Twain uses some great passages from *The Bible*, *Abraham Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg*, and six lines from Prospero's Valedictory as his Yardstick for style. In his essay, "Is Shakespeare Dead?", Mark Twain has ridiculed the controversy over whether Shakespeare wrote his plays or Bacon wrote for him. He regrets that everyone at Stratford-Upon-Avon forgot Shakespeare, although he lived half his life there.57

Shakespeare, Shaw, and Mark Twain, the three great personalities of the world had one thing in common. None went to a college or a University. This produced in them a certain naiveté, forthrightness, and freedom of expression which would certainly have been affected by the rigours of bookish education, which is only reflected knowledge.58
Like Shakespeare, Mark Twain takes a broad view of humanity in his short stories. Like a seismograph, both can record the vibrations of national laughter and national merriment very accurately. Both lived and moved among persons of their world. We have Mark Twain giving in his short stories a moving spectrum of the world of his times, as Shakespeare did in his plays. His humorous stories present varied phenomena of life. There are ships and barbers and magnanimous incidents of life and literature. He gives advice about the acquisition of wealth ($30,000 Bequest). Animal and bird-stories like "Blue-Jays," "Dog's Tale," and "Horse's Tale" convey a deeper meaning of life. The parallel versatility of the two personalities in burlesque, ghost stories, merry tales, pathetic legends, stories of irony, and adventure is striking.

Mark Twain's humour in general, like Shakespeare's romantic comedy, aims at amending human weakness tenderly. The intention of both is latent and implied. Humour in Twain's stories mingles with pathos. In Shakespeare's comic world also there are breathings of tragic feelings. In Mark Twain's story "Death Disk" a pathetic tale is given a humorous ending. In Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice happiness comes only after pangs of suffering.

Shakespeare in his plays takes delight in the daily intrigues of the human family. Mark Twain in his stories
tells us about the tricks of the lightning-rod men, watch-makers, journalists, and officialdom.

W. P. Trent has shown that American humour "like Twain's" "laughs at domestic, social and political mishaps, it makes game of foibles and minor vices; it delights to shock the prim, but sedulously avoids all real grossness. . . ." 59 The same spirit of geniality is also seen in Shakespearean comedy.

Twainian humorous story and Shakespearean comedy, both exhibit love and warmth for humanity. They, in their stories, present human character as a whole and not merely a part of it. This is the reason that both became endeared to posterity.

In Shakespeare's later comedies the semblance of happiness is preserved. The same spirit is traceable in Mark Twain's later writings like The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, and The Mysterious Stranger.

The above question has been examined by some German critics. Rudolf Fischer, a Shakespearean scholar of repute points out that in both:

there is a happy blending of the historical and poetic demands of the material; in both external truth is subordinated to the inner; and in both the author's individuality breaks through unconsciously in the comprehension and shaping of the cultural ideas of the material. 60
Differentiating Shakespeare from Twain, Fischer also clarifies that while Shakespeare thinks in terms of the Elizabethan Age, Twain approaches The Middle Ages, as his age was rationalistic, in externals but its instincts were transcendental. Fischer goes on to say that both have frames to work in, one of drama and the other of fiction.

Ulrich Stiendroff, another German critic, wanted Twain to be understood in the proper perspective as a humorist "who, following the lesson of Shakespeare was not a 'joker' but 'a philosopher smiling at the world around him and laughing with it ... splitting the mist, coldly and mercilessly but doing it by love'." 61

Schonemann, however, takes a different view and does not see any particular influence of Shakespeare on Mark Twain. In his opinion, "Shakespeare raises the weakness of man to colossal dimensions, while Mark Twain proceeds negatively and reduces the great and the pathetic." Schonemann takes as his proof Mark Twain's supposed indifference to Shakespeare in "Is Shakespeare Dead?". It is strange that Schonemann failed to understand the anti-romance element in Twain's humour and his burlesque patterns which are directed against all cant, hypocrisy, and sham. Similarly Mark Twain in "Is Shakespeare Dead?" is only having his tongue in his cheek. The ample evidence of his regard for Shakespeare belies the assumption that Mark Twain was indifferent to him. 62
Whatever influences came to Mark Twain, they became part of his own personality. In a recent study David Sloane has shown that Mark Twain soon surpassed his models and contemporaries. By 1870 Artemus Ward was dead. Nasby and Kerr were becoming spent-up forces. The other compeers in the field like Billings and Max Adler could not yet come up to Mark Twain's image. David B. Kasterson states that though both had attraction for each other's humour, it was Josh Billings who always admired Twain as a genius. Even a fastidious personality like G.B. Shaw respected Twain.

In the context of this study it may not be out of place to reiterate that Southwestern humour had an indelible impact on Twain. Bernard DeVoto has dwelt upon the fact that Twain heard Southwestern humour right from his boyhood from rivermen and villagers in Hannibal. "A good story might ripple from New Orleans to New York and back again in twenty or thirty reprints." The popularity of the oral stories of the frontier was of some inspiration to the budding humorist who might some day experiment with this dynamic art form. Later on frontier stories spread through newspapers and then they found their place in popular paper-backs. These humorous stories were increasingly catching the imagination of the natives although this humour was un-welcome to the purists of the British tradition. "It was a humour instinct with the life of the frontier," says DeVoto, "wild and robust
and male."66 This frontier humour, full of vigour and fancy, provided live material to Twain for perpetuating it in literature. Being of a frontiersman, Mark Twain's humorous stories reflect life on the western frontier.

IV

MARK TWAIN'S HUMOROUS STORY

Mark Twain, in his short stories perfected, as few men have been able to do, the art of preserving the animation of the spoken word on the printed page. From his boyhood he was narrating stories. This favourite tendency grew with his age. His daughter, Clara Clemens, is on record telling us that he never showed the least sign of boredom when she and her sister, Susy, clambered upon his knee begging for a long story.67

Mark Twain felt most relaxed and at ease in narrating a short story. It was in this genre that his popular drawl was at its acme. Some of his full length works and lectures contain a string of stories. This is the reason that in Mark Twain's stories there is more compactness, economy of effect, and least of padding than in any of his longer works. Mark Twain's humorous short story reveals the characteristics of American humour. The main features are: a definite pose, a sort of subtle irony, an obvious exaggeration, and an amazing sense of ridiculous.
Unlike Bret Harte, Mark Twain was never a failure on the lecture platform. He had the natural gift for reproducing comic pose in public, and also good skill in spinning out anecdotes and stories. He felt much pleased when he was able to cast his spell over the audience. "'His evenings after dinner'," says George Warner, "'were an unending flow of stories'." In the elaboration of his stories he made dexterous use of a deliberate expression and produced some of his most telling effects by a plausibly indifferent pose, uttering the "nub" of the story in a few, quiet, sleepy, casual words. In some of the stories like "Luck," "Political Economy," "Was It Heaven? or Hell?" etc., Mark Twain adopts a straight pose i.e., conveys his own point of view; and in others like "Jumping Frog," "Old Ram," "Blue jay yarn," etc. he assumes a pose for humanity in general, something that people of all times will love.

The question may arise as to how a great nation and a great intellectual like Mark Twain were given to exaggeration. It may be clarified that "Pioneer life" was no bed of roses. People had to face wild animals and brave the vagaries of nature. They were required to cheer themselves and their comrades. Imaginative fancy was the help at hand and this has a tendency to idealize. Many immigrants had come to the New World against the wishes of their elders and friends. They had to write letters home giving an impression as if
they had reached an inaccessible El Dorado. These letters, probably, got into literature and paved the way for tall tales. Thus even the exaggerated humour of Mark Twain was a chronicle of the spirit of the times. Mark Twain's training in the field of oral-telling was homely and he brought homeliness to his stories by unfurling them in a relaxed and humorous fashion.

Mark Twain's humour in his stories is full of variety. There is the grotesque folk-tradition, the world of epicureanism, believing in full enjoyment of life; the intellectual element perceiving incongruities between appearance and reality, the sudden flashes of physical vigour and rational strength. There is also the lurking ambivalence.69

Thus almost all his stories have the background of humour but in some of them he has given pure humour. He is thoroughly humorous in stories like "The Jumping Frog," "Experience of the McWilliamses with Membranous Croup," "What Stumped the Bluejays," "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral," and "Playing Courier." In addition, there are a few others which can be accepted as humorous stories of Twain. They are stories like "A Medieval Romance," "The Story of the Old Ram," "The Man Who Put Up at Gadsby's," "Tom Quartz" etc. In several other stories Mark Twain is also witty, satirical, and even sardonical.

As has been shown above, Twain had his own conception of
humour. In his view humour often borders on the sombreness. He saw no humour in the unmixed heavenly bliss. He thought that life will not be worth living if we have all humour and no pathos. According to him hidden springs of humour were not joy but sorrow. That is why he declared that humorists and fun makers "of-the mere sort" will not survive. Hence even in his most humorous stories there is an element of pathos. Robert A. Wiggins has suitably suggested that this type of humour demands a good amount of adroitness. If the required atmosphere and tone of the story is not achieved, pathos will become bathos. This has often happened in Dickens, but it is something very rare in Twain.

Mark Twain stands in his short stories as a master of sublime humour to be made out of hyperbole and out of mock-seriousness in which, as it were, a slight modulation shows the intent. His story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras county" admirably represents his own quaint drawlery as a story-teller. This story suggests, as a montage, different facets of Mark Twain's storytelling. Therefore it merits some detailed treatment as a practical illustration of the versatile genius of Twain as a raconteur.

--The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County--

This sketch sent Mark Twain's fame to the top. The most striking feature is that a commonplace folktale has been turned into a charming story by the elevating genius of Mark
Twain. The story is of the Jumping Frog, Dan' L Webster, trained for big leaps by a gambler Jim Smiley. "... he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see." But this frog, of which Jim Smiley was "monstrous proud," is defeated in a jumping contest when a stranger fills its gullet with "a double handful of quail shot," while Smiley is away to bring another frog. Smiley, thus, for the first time loses the bet.

Under ordinary circumstances this act of the stranger, would only have been dismissed as a cruel joke. Perhaps (in modern times) it would have been looked upon as an act of cruelty to a humble animal like frog. There appeared a news item a couple of years ago, in an Indian daily:

Bid to Make Goat of Buyers

Tiruchirapalli, January 4: Four goat-traders, who tried a novel method of increasing the weight of their animals for sale, have landed themselves behind the bars.

According to the police, the traders took their animals down to the banks of Cauvery and started force-feeding them with river water and mud.

On a public complaint of cruelty, they had been arrested--Samachar.

Not so with Mark Twain's Jumping Frog. The tale has been in circulation for more than a century, and quite naturally has given rise to a few dissenting voices. Fifteen years after its publication, H.R. Hawies, a British critic, wrote,
"What, I should like to know, is the fun of saying that a frog who has been caused to swallow a quantity of shot cannot jump so high as he could before!"72 On the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Mark Twain, a leading British journal, editorially commented, "it has no more jump in it than the frog itself!"73 Yet no one has thought of deploping him for a wicked joke. On the other hand, people are grateful to Twain that he has transformed into literature a mediocre folk-tale. Benkert informed that under the inspiration of Twain's Jumping Frog, a "Frog-Jumping Tournament" has been taking place each year at Angels Camp and a prize is regularly awarded for the longest jumping Frog.74

The story has been written in the tradition of Southwestern American humour. It has proved to be a marvellous piece of folk-tale. With this sketch of Mark Twain, the backwoods American humour of the west has come to its own. Mark Twain, using the persona of Simon Wheeler, achieves the blending of his inherited gift of the Southwestern humour and his in-born skill of making superb humour out of everyday occurrences of the work-a-day world. Keeping up the spirit of the frontier, the story affords us with humour derived from a close observation of life. We see the whole American spirit pulsating through it.75 Paying tributes to Twain's Jumping Frog Canby observes:

"'The celebrated Jumping Frog of Calavaras County',
was folklore or rather saloon lore of Calaveras County which in retelling he made superb, unquestionably one of the most humorous stories in any time or language." The tale was the turning point of Mark Twain's genius. It was a good beginning towards his maturity.

It is perhaps the best known tall tale in American tradition. Here Twain provides an effective contrast between the cultivated and conventional Eastern visitor and Simon Wheeler who is fat, bald-headed, garrulous, colloquial, and prolix. The humour in the story spontaneously bubbles forth from the depiction of the folk-life. There is wholesome exaggeration of the asthmatic mare, bull pup Andrew Jackson, and even on the recovery or otherwise of Parson Walker's ailing wife.

Mark Twain's humour shows the usual signs of drifting towards extravaganza. H. Macl-Currie remarks: "the boisterous jester in Mark Twain comes out again and again to delight 'quaintness of invention' being revealed in 'incongruity' and far-fetched absurdity." The tall-tale is generally having a big practical joke and here is the tale of shrewdness set at nought by cunning. The story comes in the category of Thorpe's "Big Bear of Arkansas," but it is superior to it in the matter of handling the "nub." Whereas in Thorpe's story the nub is prominently displayed, the same is hidden here as per Twainian canons.
It is aptly acclaimed as the climax of tall-tale, taking "anecdotal" folk humour to universal dimensions.

Twain's Jumping Frog, in its original form, was a daring experiment in double-dead-pan narration. It was intended for publication in *Artemus Ward's Travels* (1865), and was undertaken at his (Ward's) invitation. Twain tries to adopt Ward's humorous lecture techniques on the printed page. To achieve this, Mark Twain endows his primary narrator with Ward's dead-pan platform manner. The tradition of dead-pan humour, which Twain inherited, was a very good medium for expressing nostalgia being recalled across the gulf of time. He gives here the studied slowness of speech, the meandering drawl, and the low keyed humour with an expressionless face. The seeming naivete of Simon Wheeler appears at first glance to be an ample specimen of "provincial idiocy." But persons good at understanding the niceties of American humour will not miss to grasp how much Twain achieved through dead-pan manner of telling adopted in a story like this. The story is told with mock-gravity with no obvious hints to produce laughter and it meanders along in a casual manner. Simon Wheeler wears an expression of "winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil face." Gerber expresses the opinion that "Jumping Frog" is one of those few short works where Mark Twain operates the persona with necessary aesthetic force and consistency.
Secondly, Mark Twain frames the story-structure. The frontier humorous story is narrated in a unique framework manner. In this manner there is a story within a story. An educated and sophisticated character introduces a rustic who then tells the tale. Thus the author uses the rustic as a sort of screen to ward off attacks due to his frankness. The pattern of the story within a story is not new in the world of literature. Chaucer employed it in Canterbury Tales. We also get it in Boccacio. Addison's Mr. Spectator introduces Will Wimble in much the same manner: "Odd and uncommon characters are the game, I look for and most delight in," he says, "for which reason, I was much pleased with the novelty of the person that talked with me." Thus Many of the narrative devices of Mark Twain's stories are accepted by good story-tellers all the world over. For the full comic effect, the inner story is told in vernacular. This also strengthens the American belief that a person's knowledge and wisdom can be seen even without formal education. Moreover, the indirect effects produced through vernacular are very useful for satire. The situation and characterization in the story also contribute towards its superb humour.

Paul Schmidt and Kenneth S. Lynn have seen satirical intentions in the story. Schmidt stresses the need to go into the inner meaning of the story. On going deeper, Schmidt sees burlesque in the story. The business of
burlesque is to ridicule serious and dignified conceptions of society through grotesque exaggeration and comic imitation. Burlesque in a way brings down high to low. The main object of satire for Mark Twain in this story is the "genteel tradition." Mark Twain burlesques the notion of the romantic movement that man's highest glory is communion with nature. Simon Wheeler's personality suggests the importance of communion with human nature. The story thus establishes that the vernacular Westerner need not necessarily be "an uncouth savage." Schmidt concludes: "In terms of both the burlesque strategy and the style, then, Clemens's story ultimately asserts the superiority of vernacular brotherhood over the competitive individualism which animates genteel attitudes." Paul Schmidt, in this way, sees in the story the summing up of the conflict between American West and the civilized American East. He also sees it as an anti-romantic story attacking the romanticism of Rousseau.

Following the line, Krause holds that Jumping Frog is not "Just a tale within a tale." He finds in it political and moral satire. All the proper names like Andrew Jackson, Dan'L Webster etc., suggest for him the picture of East-West conflict. He comes to the conclusion that the inner message of the story is a plea for the blend of the East and West. One is constrained to say that critics sometimes subjected Twain's humour to far reaching (or far-fetched) interpretations.
The moderate conclusion that can be arrived at is that the story has touches of irony and an under-current of human concern. This is in keeping with Twain's conception that humour must instruct only implicitly.

From the point of view of artistic achievement "The Jumping Frog" occupies a very valuable position. Its author displayed consummate artistic skill to raise a rather primitive type of sketch to a pleasurable domain. As William M. Gibson has expounded, the idea of the tale came from an Arkansas anecdote, appearing in The Spirit of the Times, ten years back. Mark Twain enjoys the credit of transforming "the backwoods cuteness" of the original into a "mock-heroic, drama." His very noteworthy contribution was the introduction of a narrative framework. The comic appeal of the story consists in the unconscious collaboration of the two narrators. The use of vernacular speech is singularly forceful in the juxtaposed usage with the standard American speech. It does not depend for its effect on the verbal tricks like malapropism and deliberate misspellings. This way Mark Twain takes a line different from that of the Literary Comedians. The unflagging use of the superior vernacular speech in Twain starts with "Jumping Frog" and culminates in Huckleberry Finn.

Mark Twain introduces loquacity of the old age both as a framework scheme and as an independent humorous technique.
Simon Wheeler is posed as an old man searching among his memories. Incidents in the present served as stimuli, provoking his mental excursion over the uncharted seas of recollection. The present was therefore not a result of the past but a distortion of it. Thus sensibility also expresses pathetic dimensions and the typical Twainian humour is traced down to the springs of sorrow instead of joy, and to pathos instead of wit.

The "Jumping Frog" widely travelled and was initiated into various languages by way of translations. Taylor records two amusing incidents relating to the translation of the story, into French and Greek languages. In 1872, Therese Bentzon (who wrote under the pen name of Madame Blanc) published in the Revue des Deux Mondes, the first French consideration of Mark Twain, a lengthy article criticizing The Innocents Abroad as crude and unperceptive. Madame Blanc said that Mark Twain's talent was best displayed in frontier sketches like "The Jumping Frog," translated in her article, though she confessed her inability to understand why the sketch had elicited such "roars of laughter." She had a patronizing praise for Mark Twain's vigour and originality, so typically American, but assured French readers that they need not worry if they failed to appreciate his native humour. Temperament and tradition, she maintained, made the refined Frenchman sympathetic to French wit and hostile to
"Anglo-Saxon humor." Mark Twain probably saw a good opportunity to feign injury. Within a year he published a mock-translation of the French version of his story. The result is an adroit accomplishment of a transformation of the French idiom.\textsuperscript{84} It happened with Robert Graves also who translated into French one of Wordsworth's Lucy poems, "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal." The literal translation turned out to be ludicrous.

In 1894 Professor Henry Van Dyke of Princeton University showed Mark Twain a book by Professor Henry Sidgwick, \textit{Greek Prose Composition}, which contained a Greek tale at least two thousand years old, captioned "The Athenian and His Frog," which was a sort of mirror-image of the plot Twain had heard from Ben Coon. Twain was really non-plussed and remained so until he met Prof. Sidgwick who clarified that he had epitomized and rendered into Greek his "Jumping Frog," as it was so similar to ancient Greek tales. Sidgwick explained that he did not think it necessary to give credit for a tale, already so widely known all over the globe. Mark Twain's chagrin at the possibility that Ben Coon had probably deceived him with an early Greek tale can well be imagined.\textsuperscript{85}

"The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," is in this way the most celebrated short story of Mark Twain, celebrating the author, the American West, and the Native American Humour. Justin Kaplan states appropriately that "Jumping Frog," with its complex and mature performance,
served as an example for Twain to be emulated in much of his later work. This and his ghost story "The Golden Arm" became "an epitome of his preferred and almost instinctive form—the oral humorous story which," according to Twain, was "distinctly American." The story is humorous from the beginning to the end, and easy to understand. When the story is finished, the reader regrets being deprived of further details of the "Yeller one-eyed cow."

The "Jumping Frog" is a good specimen of Twainian humorous story. His short stories are generally mixed. Some are serious in tone with a humorous effect; others are humorous in tone with serious or possibly serious portions. In some other stories where the comic satire prevails, the basic intention is to laugh over human and social foibles. Even the best of humorists have had their serious moments. Twain in stories like The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg and The Mysterious Stranger shows his serious moods. His short stories are indeed a pageant.
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7 Ibid., p. 7.


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15 Ibid.


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Cf. Ibid., pp. 102-3.


See Blair, Native American Humor, p. 147.

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37. Ibid., p. 17.


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60 Hemminghaus, *Mark Twain in Germany*, p. 40.

61 Ibid., p. 86.

62 Ibid., pp. 102-3; Robert L. Gale has noted several parallels between *The Prince and the Pauper* and *King Lear*, including speeches on mercy by boy-king and by Lear, in, "The Prince and the Pauper and King Lear," *MTJ*, 12, No. 1 (Spring 1963), 14-17; Mark Twain's use of Shakespeare has also been examined by E. Bruce Kirkham, "Huck and Hamlet: An Examination of Twain's use of Shakespeare," *MTJ*, 14, No. 4 (Summer 1969), 17-19.

Mark Twain, in a letter written during the last phase of his life, said about "Is Shakespeare Dead?";

I In that booklet I courteously hinted at the long-ago well established fact that even the most gifted human being is merely an ass, & always an ass, when his forbears have furnished him an idol to worship. . . . I wrote that book for pleasure--not
in the expectation of convincing anybody that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare... Shakespeare the Stratford tradesman will still be divine Shakespeare to our posterity a thousand years hence. See John Macy The Spirit of American Literature (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1913), pp. 253-54.

66 Ibid.
74 Aileen Z. Benkert, "Jumping Frogs Complete Once More at Angels' Camp," MTJ, 8, No. 3 (Winter-Spring 1949), 16; the fact is also corroborated by J. Golden Taylor in "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," American West, 2, No. 4 (1965), 73-76.


80 Cited by Brashear and Rodney, p. 182.

81 Paul Schmidt, 270-77.


85 Ibid.

CHAPTER III

STEAMBOAT ON THE RIVER

Oh, could I flow-like-thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without O'erflowing full

--Sir John Denham, Cooper's Hill.

I

PRELUSION

The etymological meaning of theme is "something laid down." In literature it means the subject or topic of a discourse or a treatise. Sometimes the term is used to indicate the subject of a work. Generally it denotes the central thesis or an artistic presentation. A theme may be explicit or implicit. The inner meaning of the novella, The Dead by James Joyce, for example, becomes clear after a second, third, or even a fourth reading. In 1894, M. Georges Patti, the well known French Critic, in Mercure de France, first turned his attention to themes. He divided the forces governing action into four classes: casual, biologic, egoic, and divine. Dahlstrom classified "literary situation" into five categories—physical, organic, social, egoic, and divine.