CHAPTER - III

Mark Twain, the Humorist
"Spirit of mirth, whose Chime of bells,
Shakes on his cap, and sweetly swells,
Across the Atlantic main,
Grant that Mark's Laughter never die,
That men, through many a century,
May Chuckle O'er Mark Twain."

Andrew Lang one of the Cronies of Mark Twain addressed this stanza to Twain on the eve of his fiftieth birthday in a small poem. It's a verdict that has proved that Mark Twain truly stands among the literary greats forever. He is one of the best loved writers of America. Immediately popular in his own days; he is luckier than the most popular writers who fall into oblivion immediately after their demise. But this great novelist's name today came out of the American west, exuberating with wit and humour, with no reverence for conventions, and then introduced into Europe and elsewhere the relish of American humour.

Guru Grover Dayal describes Twain's humour as, "Mark Twain's humour is unique, and as such difficult to define. His comic vision includes irony, paradox, satire, parody, burlesque, hoax and so on.\(^1\) Hence to define Mark Twain's humour is nothing but groping in the dark. "Humour" is a generic term for everything that excites laughter, frivolous or vulgar or of any other sort. Sometimes it is limited to gauntly and sympathetic laughter and contrasted with wit, which evolves intellectual and divisive laughter. It is rather difficult to answer the much discussed question of just what it is that makes us laugh. Scholars are still debating the sources and functions for humour. However in general terms humour has been defined by M.H. Abrahams as the word "humour" may ascribed either to a comic utterance or to a comic appearance or made of behavior.\(^2\) So it is clear that humour in its broader sense describes comic appearances and comic behavior. In other words it is all about comedy and jokes. Even Hornby opines in the same way when he defines humour as, "the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the abilities to laugh at things that are amusing."\(^3\) Thus
the term is something that has varying connotations to different people. As John Palmer remarks in his book "Comedy", the curse of Bable came true actually, when mankind began to laugh. For something that strikes people of one country began to laugh may appear devoid of all fun for people of another country with changes of culture and taste. Therefore, Mark Twain's humour at least many portions of it will probably recede beyond general appreciation.

Mark Twain started his career as a humorist. After a chequered career he worked as a printer's devil, journeyman printer, steamboat pilot, and soldier. Later he went to the far west. It was there that Mark Twain finally got into journalism of the masculine humorous sort which flourished. It is true when Grover Guru Dayal relates, "Twain belonged to gentlemanly South - western humour which had continued through the era of the professional funny man, often a lecturer, in the figures of Armetz Ward, Petroleum V. Nasby, John Phoenix, Dan de Quile, and many others." Van Wick Brooks also approves it in his book "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" that Mark Twain's humour came to the fore front when he was in Nevada and California. It was an evidence of his adolescent humour.

Mark Twain's humour though original to a great extent, owed something to the humorous tradition of the west. It descended from the western and the frontier humour with its incongruities and its peculiar brand of fiction known as the tall tale. Narrator of tall tale uses dialect in narration as well as in written versions of the stories. When it was written it was deliberately mis-spelt. The humorist in short posed as a plain educated man. He would make a shot at a Latin tag, but mangle it. He would quote Shakespeare with equally disastrous result. Since the joke depended on reader's knowledge of the correct form of the quotation the humour best seen in Armetz Ward and Josh Billings who prepared the way for Mark Twain's he came up through their ranks.

It is as clear as crystal to those who have studied American literature, how insistent the note of humour is both in prose and verse, from
Washington Irving onwards. No less obvious is the lack of humour before that time. The few exceptions were, before the arrival of Irving, modeled chiefly upon the satirist of the late seventeenth centuries, and fell considerably short of their models. But there is scarcely a writer of note-worthy in the nineteenth century, Margaret Fuller, the one exemption, whose humour is not an integral part of his work. Humour plays an important part in the works of scholarly writers such as Lowell and Holmes. It gives a pleasant tang to Thoreau's discursive wisdom and ripples delicately over the surface of Hawthorne's fantasies. It plays an even more important part in writers, more essentially popular like Bret Heart and Mark Twain.

Mark Twain a child of Florida gave a better climax to the American humour in his fantastic and funny works. It is aright when Walter Blair aptly puts it "It is impossible, of course, to discover any other who furnishes a better climax to a consideration of American humour than Mark Twain." He amassed such an experience in this field, he doted his fellow Americans with his humorous sketches and articles. Even Abraham Lincoln was an addict of Mark Twain's humour. "The question who was indebted to whom doesn't arise in the context for the very atmosphere of the west was saturated with such remarks proceeding form a popular humour to which Abraham Lincoln was notoriously addicted."

Mark Twain as a humorist is less whimsical, less subtle than Bret Heart, but superior to infertility of inspiration and fecundity of subject matter. As a story teller, he has greater variety and a steadier outlook on life; with a greater force and intensity at his best of less poignancy. Twain's appeal to the readers is based on various factors. Some see in his humour the explanation for his great popularity others feel that it is the least of his attractive features. However Sigmund Freud felt, that "Mark Twain was a master humorist and used his art as an example par excellence of the humour he was defining." So, Freud who defined humour as just 'the highest joke', seemed that he had understood the broad meaning of humor in the writings of Mark Twain. This would not be surprising to any reader of literature since Freud's psychoanalytic theory was itself a culmination of
nineteenth century thought and sensibility, of which Mark Twain was so conspicuous. Indeed, if one sees the century in terms of evolution, as it often inclined to see itself, then Freud’s finding is one of its highest developments. He fulfilled the innumerable impulses and struggles of nineteenth century writer and thinkers to develop a theory of repression which would eventuate in the concept of ‘super ego’. And when Freud cited Mark Twain’s humour as a perfect example of the economy of expenditure of affection, he was not being merely Freudian but was reaching the heart of Mark Twain’s humour, which has so impressive concepts like repression, creatorship, dreams, the conscience and self-approval.

The elements of Mark Twain’s humour were all familiar to the American before he began to write. Sometimes Mark Twain’s witticisms are surprisingly like that of others. He once said “Let us be thankful for the fools, but for them the rest of us couldn’t succeed”. Josh Billings has also said much the same remark “God save phools (sick) and don’t let them run out, for it won’t for them wise men couldn’t get a living.” Even in his lectures Mark Twain was irresistibly funny. Always at the centre of the stage, he knew how to modulate his voice, how to make use of eloquent pauses, how to work out certain suspense before he uttered the joke that set the audience roaring with laughter. One of the lecture posters of Mark Twain read, “Doors open at 7.30. The trouble will begin at 8.00.” Such is the fame of Mark Twain’s humour which was ever revered by his beloved readers.

Mark Twain’s humour has the little tang of Southwest humour. It was there in the deep west Mark Twain’s humour blossomed. It’s here in the west Twain stepped into the humorous traditions of the old southwest. This is absolutely true when Leland Krauth writes “Twain owned personal copies of work by Augustan Baldwin Long street, Joseph M. Field, William Tappan Thompson, George Washington Harries, Johnson Jones Hooper and Joseph G. Baldwin.” All the afore said writers are the humorists of south west tradition and their tradition was continued by Mark Twain too, but he has a different approach and he has his own style. That’s why Bernard De Vottos called the Twain’s humourous formula as, “the matrix of Mark Twain’s
humour.” The scholarly investigation of Twain’s relationship to this tradition has thus established. Even the general influence of the southwest milieu can be well seen in his works; for Mark Twain was trained as a writer in the old south west during the days of the flowering of it’s humour; his first recovered published sketch, appeared in a comic periodical published in Boston by a writer of Down East humour.

Instantly he rose to fame as a literary comedian, and his masterpieces were created in the same local colour. No one in the early days of Clemens’ fame would have argued against the assertions that he emerged to prominence as a literary comedian or as the phrase habit, “a funny man.” The reviewer in the “Nation” found in The Innocents Abroad (1969) all the prominent characteristics of our peculiar school of humorists, their audacity, their extravagance and exaggeration. A few years later Howells was noting, The grotesque aggregation and broad irony of Roughing It (1872), which, as a scholar has recently asserted, was looked upon as a funny book, one of the journalistic sorts. Other books which followed did not change the opinion of a number of critics about his proper classification. Thus as a humorist Twain got his footing and was duly included into the ‘funny man’ group. Professor Beers of Yale University was of the same opinion when he thought, “It is proper to mention Twain as one of a group including Armetus Ward, Nasby, Billings, Kerr and Nye.” He may be called as the member of the ‘funny man’ club but he is superior to all of them. It is unfortunate that he is regarded as a humorist of the old fashioned two penny coloured order in other words a jolly hearted buffoon. But he is very much more than that. It is aptly opined by Arthur Compton Rickets when he puts it, “Even in The Innocents Abroad, amid much cheap tomfoolery, there are touches of admirable observation and a graphic power of description.”

Mark Twain gave a new dimension to south west humour with his funny remarks and with his own tricks of the trade. It doesn’t mean that he had entirely devoided from his predecessors. He only moulded and modified it, according to the needs of his reading public. In fact Mark Twain learned a great deal of it from the humorous lectures of ward. He cited Ward as a great
artist in the dropping of a studied remark apparently without knowing it and in
the handling of the pause, and on at least one occasion suggested before a
lecture: "Would you mind, now, just to please me, letting me introduce
myself, as Artemus used to do?"14

Understandably, therefore, it became conventional to suggest that
Mark Twain learned from Artemus Ward not only the way to speak but also
the way to write humorously. According to Robert Ford, the imitation is
discoverable both in joke and in peculiar form. Each writers of this genre
begin their sentences or speeches in a serious or apparently serious mood
and produces their comic effects or the best of them by giving the most
ludicrous and unexpected turns to their sentences or to speeches. The
resemblance amongst, all these humorists is unmistakable. Despite all these
similarities there is probably no literal indebtedness on Mark Twain’s part to
Artemus Ward, Twain owes much to the method of the literary comedians.

His debt to Down East humour may similarly be one merely to
tradition; through a closer relationship with an individual work seems highly
possible. The first printed sketch by Clemens which has been discovered
appeared in the Corpet – Bag, edited by B.P. Shillaber, in the issue of May
1, 1852, in the same issue which contained a Partington paper detailing the
mischievous activity of IKE Partington in school. This humorous paper was
well known in the west; surely there were a lot of similarities between
Partington paper and Twain’s carpet – Bag, but it was only accidental and
such instances should not be taken as an imitation, but should be treated as
only generic tradition. It was an absolutely truth and this relative fact was
aptly justified by Edward Eager Necht when he puts it in his masterpieces.
"The Cavalcade of American Novel", as "of the major American novelists
Mark Twain, who hardly thought of himself as a novelist at all, divided least
from any literary, or at any rate from any bookish tradition. Hawthorne had
the example of Irving, and Cooper had that of Scott, when they began to
write, Howells and Henry James instinctively fell into step with classics."15
Mark Twain came up into literature form the popular rains trained in the
school of news paper fun making and humorous lecturing, only gradually
instructed in the more orthodox arts of the literary profession. Hence, he seems, however, these indebted to predecessors than he actually was, of the reason that his provenience has faded out the passage of time and the increase of his particular fame.

When Twain started his career as a humorist, his sole aim was just to make a comic capital out of everything, thus to begin with his humor was all end in itself. It consisted of exaggerations, verbal witticisms and wild ridicule but he never willfully tried to imitate anybody. Later on, a thought his audience always looked to him for fun, Mark Twain was very far from being simply a "Funny man". Even his early writings and talks operate more as satire and realism thus as aimless wanderings into the comic. The direction and shape of his humour remained sympathetic, reformatory, moralistic and humane.

Though The Carpet - Bag edited by B.P. Shillaber was the first humorous sketch that came into print, yet it was The Innocents Abroad that gave Mark Twain everything that he desired. There after his short story The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras Country announced to the world the arrival of a rare humorist. Instantly Mark Twain's fame rose to sky and the newspapers fell after him and engaged him to contribute humorous reports of travel in Europe. Thus going there, Mark Twain sent home amusing reports, drawing attention to the short comings of the old world. The sheer audacity of it was unprecedented. Mark Twain thinking highly of his own country and convinced of its superiority, confronted the European scene in the mood of a debunker. He toured through Europe with little reverence and seemed to think that the Arnold 'a historical creek' would have to have water pumped into it to become a river. He found the foreign language a source of amusement and his description of the awful German language is typical, and he says that wherever the literary German dives into a sentence that is the last you are going to see of him till he emerges on the other side of the Atlantic with his verb in his mouth. His fellow counymen also get a good amount of division in the book, as well as in A Tramp Abroad.
The Innocents Abroad is undoubtedly a new kind of travel book that made Mark Twain a national figure. The book was the result of Mark Twain's lecture tours abroad and it abounds Twain's personal experience vis-à-vis other personalities he met abroad. The personality of the novelist himself and the characters of his fellow tourists, and the adventures which befall them and the scenes they visited are all presented with the high spirits, with occasional wit and good humour. In this travelogue Mark Twain's fresh descriptions of scenes interesting in themselves, especially those of the Holy Land, his soliciting attention by never persisting in a topic but shifting cleverly from the present to the past, from argument to pure rumination, from locations to persons all are humouristically presented and they captured the heart and mind of the American reader. Humour permeates through the book and makes it all the more captivating. Twain tried his best to maintain psychic equilibrium amongst all American minds. This same fact was virtually attested by Van Wyck Brooks, when he writes "we can see, therefore, that if Mark Twain's humour was universally popular, it was because it contributed to the efficiency of industrial pioneering, It helped to maintain the psychic equilibrium of the business man, throughout the united states, precisely as at first it had helped to maintain the psychic equilibrium of the western pioneer."  

Next came two most powerful books of Mark Twain in humorous tradition. The first is The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, and second is The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The later novel was aptly praised by Ernest Hemingway in 1935 as, "All American writing comes from one book. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as goods since." In itself the statement was more eloquent thus true, but it sounded as new note. With this practical statement of Hemingway, the emphasis shifted to Twain's humour, art, technique and language.

In The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn which is considered to be one of Twain's best novels, humour assumes multi-dimensionality of range and character. It varies from burlesque to devastating satire and irony. Comic situations are not adumbrated into the narrative in wayward manner.
They are in fact well-knit and thematically integrated, that they seem to govern the entire movement of the plot, the novel, which is otherwise a series of episodes often to discover logical interrelationship between these “disjointed” stretches, yet they have an experimental identity and represent the comic vision of the novelist. Twain was a great humanitarian, and the striking feature of his humour is his broad sympathy. It has been clearly seen in Huck’s speech, when he tries to save the King and the Duke, even when he was grossly insulted and ill-treated by them.

As an artist of the comic, Twain’s place is near Chaucer Shakespeare and Addison, who used humour in an urbane and sophisticated manner, and did not allow their laughter to become ridicule. His humour is characterized by restraint, control sympathy and benevolence, he never indicts a character too severely as Swift in his Gulliver’s Travels or Pope in his Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot does. His laughter is well intentioned and is directed against the world of double dealing, hypocrisy and humbug. It doesn’t single out specific persons as targets. For example, the most contemptible figures in Huckleberry Finn the King and the Duke remain incognito as individuals and their activities represent the general criminality on the frontier. The comic situations in which they are often involved not only expose their own frauds, they also show the society in a better light. They in fact embody the novelist’s perception of evil in its cruelest operations. That is why Mark Twain’s humour verges more and more on the tragic possibilities. After gunning down Bogg, a drunkard in chapter 21, the town’s men are excited and the dead body of the drunkard becomes a source of fun. In this context Huck says “People rush in order to have a look at the corpse. ‘…. But the people that had the places wouldn’t give them up, and folks behind was saying all the time, ‘say now, you’ve looked enough, you fellows, “taint right and taint fair, for you stay that all the time, and never give anybody a chance, other folks has their right as your…’”16 The scene is no way funny. It makes us grieve. There is a painful irony in the attitude of the on – lookers.

At the same time there are a number of such humorous incidents in the novel that tickle our funny bone. In the chapter 21 of The Adventures of
Huckleberry Finn The Dauphin and the Duke's conversation of learning the Romeo and Juliet dialogues is full of humour. Where the Dauphin says to the Duke "you mustn't blow out Romeo! That way, like a bolt you must say it soft, and sick, and languish, so R-O-O-meo! That is the idea; for Juliet's a dear sweet mere child of a girl, you known, and she don't bray like a jackass." And on other occasion the conversation continues like this "Well, capet, well want to make this a first class show, you know, so I guess we'll add a little more to it. We want a little something to answer encores with, anyway.

"What's onkores, Bilge water?"
The Duke told him, and them says".

"I'll answer by doing the Highland fling or the sailor's hornpipe and you well, let me see – oh, I've got it – you can do Hamlet's soliloquy.

"Hamlet's which?"

"Hamlet's soliloquy, you know; the most celebrated thin in Shakesppear." All such speeches evoke such laughter among even the melancholic philosophers, that they could not restrain and remain silent but only to laugh. The humour in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is more subtle and less hilarious when compared with The Adventure of Tom Sawyer. In this novel Twain has in him something of a philosopher as well. Through his lips Mark Twain affords an irreverent treatment of things and institutions. The attempts of Widow Douglas and her sister Miss Watson to civilize Huck and Huck's reaction to these attempts are highly amusing. The desperate attempts made by the pious lady to impress upon the boy the bliss of heaven and how they fell flat are really interesting. Huck's comments on individuals and institutions are really tickling since the author has made use of burlesque exaggerations, and skilful anticlimaxes. Huckleberry Finn also abounds in humorous situation Jim's mistaking Huck for his ghost, the enacting at Romeo and Juliet by the Duke and the Dauphin, Aunt Sally
greeting Huckleberry Finn as Tom Sawyer and the dramatic entrance of Tom as Sid are the situations that delight any reader.

On the same line there are many more incidents from chapter 34 to 43. All these ten chapters are about fanciful freeing of Jim, the nigger from imprisonment of Tom's uncle Silas and Aunt Sally. Tom and Huck now make efforts to find out where Jim is imprisoned. They discovered him, by following another slave taking food to Jim. Then they put forward their plans regarding the method of stealing him. Huck says that they can steal him by stealing the key from uncle Silas but this was disapproved by Tom, for he felt that everything should be carried out, like that had been written in a romantic novel.

On another instance Huck suggests that Jim can be freed just by lifting bedstead, but Tom suggests seeing off the leg of Jim's bedstead; for he wants style that he has read in the books. He wants everything regular. Tom wants Jim to write a journal in the manner of a prisoner, and if he can't write he was suggested to make some mysterious marks on his shirt. In this regard James M. Cox gives an aright opinion saying that, "The difference between Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn is the difference between the primitive and the effective imagination. Tom's drive to dominate his companions, the quality which marks him a devotee at the shrine of William James bitch goddess, arises for the imitative aspect of mind. The artificial application of a foreign code demands its strict flexibility."21

When Tom organizes his gang at the beginning of the novel he is helpless before the independent machinery of his code; even when the machinery obviously will not work, he insists on its use. Look at this Tom's conversation with Jim, a nigger, imprisoned in uncle's estate.

"You got any spiders in here, Jim"

"No, Sah, thanks to goodness I hain't, Mars Tom"

"All right, well get you some".
"But bless you, honey, I don't want none. Is afeard un um. I jis soon have rattlesnakes around".

Tom Thought a minute or two, and says;

"It's a good idea. And I recon it's been done. It must a been done; it stands to reason. Yes, it's a prime good idea. Where could you keep it?"

Keep what, Mars Tom?

Why, a rattle snake.

"De goodness gracious alive, Mars Tom! Why, if dey was a rattle snake to come in heah, I'd take en bust right out thou dot long wall, I would, wid my head.

"Why, Jim, you wouldn't be a afraid of it, after a little, you could tame it.

"tame it"

"Yes – easy enough. Every animal is grateful for kindness and petting, and they wouldn't think of hurting a person that pets them. Any book will tell you that."22

On another occasion Tom suggests Jim:

"Oh – there's one thing I forgot. Could you raise a flower here, do you recon?"

"I Doan, know but maybe I could, Mars Tom; but it's to label dark in heah, en I aim got no use for no flower, no how, en she'd be a powerful sight o' trouble.

"well , you try it, anyway. Some other prisoner has done it".

"One ere dem big cat –tail- look-in' Mullen – stakes would grown in heah, Mars Tom, I reck'n but she wouldn't be with half de trouble she'd cuss.
“Don't you believe it. Well fetch you a little one, and you plant it in the corner, over there, and raise it. And don't call it mullen, call it patchouli that's its right name, when it's in a prison. And you want to water it with your tears.”

"Why I got plenty spring water, Mars Tom".

You don't want spring water, you want to water it with your tears. It's the way they always do."²³

Such ideas and romantic plans rake up sumptuous laughter even among the most molvolian readers. That is why Mark Twain was aptly called by Barry Pain," He was very funny and he knew every trick of the trade."²⁴

The process of Jim's "escape" created a lot of nuisance in the house from which we get a set of humorous situations like uncle Silas's taking out the spoon from out of his pocket, which he supposes to have put meaning it to be a copy of the Testament. Twain extracts humour from such odd situations verging almost on the absurd. Readers can also get a lot of fun from the activity of catching rattlesnakes, rats and spiders to be put in Jim's cabin. They catch fifteen rats, but accidentally they get them loose in Aunt Sally's house. What a scene in the house with rats running about in dozens and snakes which landed in plates and down the back of people's necks, and Aunt Sally getting mad over the nuisance. In the case of anonymous letters also in the heat of his getting to style, Tom forgets the practical aspects of the letters seriously and the romantic notion explode tragically at the end with the shooting of Tom, and bullet pierced into Tom's calf. Tom was the gladdest of all because he was hurt by a bullet. When Huck and Jim decide to bring the doctor, he raises a considerable row and he wants to crawl out and get the raft lose himself. When Huck and Jim insist on bringing the doctor, he agrees but advises. "Well, then, if you're bound to go, I'll tell you the way to do, when you get to the village. Shut the door, and blindfold the doctor tight and fast, and make him swear to be silent as the grave, and put a purse full of gold in his hand, and then take and lead him all around the back alleys and every where's, in the dark, and the fetch him here in the canoe, in a roundabout way amongst the islands, and search him, and take
his chalk away from his and don't give it back to him till you get him back to the village, or else he will chalk this raft and so he can find it against. It's the way they all do."

Thus it is discovered the "style" of romance is an obsession with Tom, and this he does even at the greatest risk. Tom stands for the old romantic order. He has read those "middle ages" romantic adventures of Walter Scott and Dumas, and likes to follow scrupulously those methods that were suggested in those books to get Jim out. And Huck's objection to the "method", "style" and "regularity" of Tom, speak of Mark Twain's distrust and dislike of the romantic novels of the old order. He seems to make fun of these adventures and other pirate books that seem to have hindered Tom's imagination. Mark Twain's observation was that whatever we teach and preach throughout books should be right and the humour may be used, only to evoke some interest among the readers but it should not make them dolts. Twain is right when he says "humour is only a fragrance, a decoration. If it is really succeeded in survival, it must surreptitiously teach and preach right thing."26

The two most popular and delightful books of Mark Twain are The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The author 'this divine amateur as Arnold Bennet called him, whose two great stories especially magnificent were inferior as complete works of art, was a genuine humorist. The book The Adventures of Tom Sawyer was the result of Mark Twain's desire to picture a real boy instead of another youth full model of all virtues as described by the Sunday school stories for juveniles. Highly autobiographical the book is fascinating string of witty anecdotes in which the lovable boy Tom figures pre-eminently. The boyish pranks of Tom, that exasperate his aunt Polly, and other ensuing chain of events are all ample proof of Mark Twain's grasp of humorous situations.

The novel The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is set around the 1840's, about two decades before the American Civil war. Tom Sawyer is living in St. Petersburg, a small Missouri Village on the Mississippi river. Tom's mother is
dead and he is being brought up by Aunt Polly, who tries to curb his natural instincts as a young boy, along with his cousin, Mary and his deceitful half brother, Sidney.

Tom like all young boys of his age is mischievous and often skips school. For instance one day, when he was supposed to be in the school, Tom goes out for swimming and as punishment Aunt Polly gets him to whitewash a long, broad fence on a Saturday. But Tom was cunning enough to throw it on some innocent guy in order to get the work done. Here he finds Ben Rogers and enticed him to white wash the fence. At first he told that no one can do such skills full work but Tom. This talk instigated Ben Rogers a lot and Ben became so obvious that he not only requested Tom to give him the chance of white washing the fence but also offered his choicest apple to Tom. Let the humorous conversation be read:

"Ben, I'd like to, honest Injun, but Aunt Polly well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn't let him. Sid wanted to do it, but she wouldn't let Sid. Now, don't you see how I am fixed? If you was to tackle this fence, and anything was to happen to it".

"Oh, shucks, I'll be just careful. Now lemme try, Say – I'll give you the ore of my apple".

"Well, here : No, Ben, now don't, I am afeard"

"I'll give you all of it."27

It is funny and humorous to see Tom's traits here. Surely it is drudgery to white wash a long fence, but out of it also Tom gained the profit of getting the work done, besides that he got an apple too. Such humorous instances are a lot in the novel.

Here Tom's going to Sunday school and his boyish pranks tickles the funny bone of every reader when the author writes about this young lad;"He entered the church, now with a swarm of clean and noisy boys and girls, proceeded to his seat and started a quarrel with the first boy that came
handy. The teacher, a grave elderly man, interfered, then turned his back a moment and Tom pulled a boy's hair in the next bench, and was absorbed in his book when the boy turned around, stuck a pin in another boy, presently, in order to hear him say Ocuh!  

Tom's boyish love affair with Amy Lawrence and Becky Thatcher was also a great source of humour in the novel. At first he had been in love with Amy Lawrence, but later when he saw Becky his heart ached for her and his efforts and feats to win her love in the school campus were the best humoristic instances in the novel. Let us observe it in the words of the author himself when he says about Tom's chafing and repining. "But when he saw this small new comer (Becky) his soul was all ablaze with bliss in a moment. The next moment he was "showing off" with all his might – coiffing boys, pulling hair, making faces in a work, using every art that seemed likely to fascinate a girl, and win her applause."

It has to be noted here like Tom, Mark Twain too had girl friends in his school days here he says about it in his autobiography. "I recall Mary Miller. She was not my first sweet heart but I think she was the first one that furnished me a broken heart. I fell in love with her when she was eighteen and I nine but she scorned me I recognized that this was a cold world ... As I remember it I soon transferred my worship to Artimisia Briggs ..."

For winning the heart of Becky, Tom even became ready to be thrashed by the teacher. One day he came late to the school and he was asked an explanation by the teacher. Generally for such questions he would use befitting lies, but this time he boldly told that he had stopped to talk with Huckleberry Finn, an outcast of the village. Eventually he got good thrashing by the pedantic teacher, and Tom was asked to sit with girls as a punishment. Poor soul the teacher did not know that this punishment was a blessing in disguise for Tom, for he had got an unprecedented opportunity of sitting with his soul mate Becky. Here, starts a series of humorous incidents in the conversation of the two. Tom offers a peach and thus wins her love and draws various creatures for her sake. Besides that his talk about dead
rats, circus and his becoming of a circus clown and his proposal of engagement to Becky and their childish frolicking will surely tickle the readers of the novel.

One day Tom presented a brass knob to Becky. But Becky insulted him by pelting the gift to the ground. Unable to digest such an insult he wanted to become a pirate and so did he do along with his friends Huckleberry Finn and Joe Harper. All of them made it to the island on a raft with the required ration, which had been stolen from their houses. There they sojourned for some time. During this stint there, Tom one night came to his Aunt Polly's house. Here his aunt's paltering and others consolation and Tom's lurking under the cot are very funny and humoristic.

Later Tom came to the village church stealthily along with his friends and hid in the attic of the church. People came in throngs to attend the funeral prayers of Tom's gang for they believed that Tom and Party had drowned in the river. Their listening to the funeral speeches and prayers is though sad yet humoristic. Their entry into the church through the rear door when their funeral ceremony was going on and the people mistaking them as ghosts, kindly assault all the onlookers and the readers of the novel. That's why the author Mark Twain puts about his humour on an occasion saying that, "Against the assault of the laughter nothing can stand." 31

Thereafter Tom became a hero amongst all the school children. Everybody looked at him with dignity. Here again we have a series humorous instances when Tom willfully flirts with Amy Laurence in order to tease his real love Becky Thatcher. Becky's talk with another girl Mary Austin makes us pathetic and humorous when she says to Mary Austin anything means it is not towards her in particular, but it is generally referred to Tom who was very near to her in the crowd. Listen to her, who says in her own words:

"why, Mary Austin! You bad girl, why didn't you come to Sunday – school"?

'I did come – dint you see me?'
'why, no! Did you? Where did you sit?
'I was in Miss Peters class, where I always go. I saw you.

"Did you? Why, it's funny I didn't see you. I wanted to tell you about the picnic.""32

All the above funny fuss had been done by Becky in order to win over her lover Tom but Tom was pretending as if he had been none to her, forgetting their supposed engagement. To teach him a lesson Becky too started to flirt with a boy. This maddened Tom and his little soul was all flared with jealousy. All these incidents evoke instant humour in any kind of reader, for such humorous instances are rather common in anybody's life. It is true when Mark Twain, the author says in his preface to the novel that, "Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try pleasantly to remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in."33

Even the beginning of the novel itself is humorous, where Aunt Polly looking for Tom, discovers that he has been eating jam on the sly while getting the negro boy, Jim, to do all the household work that had been given to Tom to do. His encounter with not only Aunt Polly and also with Mary and Sid are very funny. On one Monday morning Tom's feigning a toothache to dodge the school is another incident which tickles us to the core. Let us go through the dialogue which had been beautifully written by Mark Twain, 'Tom moaned out'

"Oh, don't, Sid, Don joggle me,

Why what's the matter Tom? I must cal Auntie'.

'No, Never mind it'll be over by and by, maybe. Don't call anybody.

'But I must! Don't groan so, Tom, its armful. How long you been this way?
"Hours, Ouch! Oh, don’t stir so, Sid you’ll kill me."

"Tom, why didn’t you wake me sooner? Oh, Tom, don’t!"

It makes my flesh crawl to hear you. Tom, what is the matter. I Forgive you everything, Sid (Groan). Everything you’ve ever done to me. When I’m gone……

Sid flew down stairs and said.

‘Oh, Aunt Polly, come! Tom’s dying’,

Dying!’

No one can restrain from laughing, after reading such an interesting humorous incident. Tom hates going to school and he always likes to roam about the village like Huckleberry Finn the juvenile Pariah of the village, who was the son of the town drunkard.

Here Tom reluctantly started to school and on the way he met Huck. There started humorous conversation again on split bean and other charms. Then both of them decided to meet in the night to go to grave yard to charm the witches. Tom requests Huck to meow back of his Aunt Polly’s house. Then Huck says, " Last time you kep’me a meowing around till Old Hoss went to throwing rocks at me, and says, “Dern that cat” So I have a brick through his window but don’t you tell. ‘I won’t. I couldn’t meow that night beaus Auntie was watching me but I’ll meow this time.”

Everybody who reads such humoristic incidents surely go back to their early teens, when they too did the same things like the hero of the novel. But such humorous boyish pranks are always disliked and forbidden by the parents in general. That’s true, even Mark Twain himself confessed it in his note book written in 1879 on humour. Here he says in it” The funnlest things are forbidden”.

As premeditated by Tom and Huck, they reach the graveyard only to witness the murder scene of Dr. Robinson by Injun Joe and the crime was
cunningly thrown upon Muff Potter, who was in drunken state. But the fact was known to Tom and Huck. When the final hearing came in the court Tom revealed everything to the Judge in order to save Muff Potter, an innocent ruffian. Here again we witness a number of humorous incidents like, signing a bond with blood by Tom and Huck, Muff Potters snoring in his slumber in the hog house, and Tom’s fears about Injun Joe etc. Among all these comic incidents the finest one is the court trial where. Tom’s incoherent talk erupts the court hall with laughter; the audience could not contain their laugh even though the wise Judge ordered them, repeatedly to maintain calm and peace. Here is the humorous dialogue for us.” Tom hesitated and looked confused.

“Speak out, my boy – don’t be diffident. The truth is always respectable. What did you take there?” (Said the Judge)

“Only a ---- a ------dead cat.”

There was a ripple of mirth, which the court checked.”37

Such humorous examples are numerous in the novel. Tom’s role of Missouri Robin hood, his contemplation of becoming a pirate, all his boyish pranks like love affair with Becky and Amy Lawrence are store houses of humour in the novel, which had been authored by the master Mark Twain, who was the genuine master of not only southern humour of America but also of the whole English literature. This fact was well mentioned by John C. Gerber when he says about Mark Twain’s humour as “The principle effects of the pose on Twain’s humour are apparent in the humor’s variety, continuousness, and economy. The variety is self evident. When added to his narrative personae like Huck Finn, Tom and Hank Morgan, his repertoire of poses gives him a range in comic viewpoint that few other humorists if any have enjoyed.”38

In The Prince and the Pauper the other select novel of our study, we have a galore of humorous incidents. The novel, seemingly a simple novel, handles several divergent themes and ideas simultaneously. Foremost is the
basic idea of the exchange of roles between the Prince Edward and the Pauper Tom Canty and the constant reference to their twin fates. Prior to meeting each other, both boys have dreams of living the life of the other. Both are, in a sense, innocents who learn a great deal about life as a result of their exchanging clothes and roles. Likewise, the dreams of each are shattered as a result of the exchange. This exchange which had been done out of boyish pranks leads various humorous incidents in the novel.

Ironically both The Prince and Pauper live at first in an extremely restricted society. Tom Canty has no freedom to do what he liked at the same time the Prince Edward too. This fact was well attested by the statement of Hamlin L. Hill when he says about restricted life or Edward and Tom as, “Like Huck Finn, who did not want to be “Civilized” and who rejected the confinements of society, Tom Canty has no freedom and is constantly beaten and restricted in his home environment. Likewise, the young Prince is confined to his royal apartments and has little or no freedom.”39 In fact the freedom that both young boys desire exist only in their dreams. Thus again their dreams of a Utopian world are also a great source of humour in the novel. Of Tom, Mark Twain writes in the novel, “His old dreams had been so pleasant, but this reality was so dreary.”40

Coming back to our main theme humour in this chapter, the novel was written basically for the entertainment purpose only. This novel was authored by Mark Twain in 1882 to amuse his two little daughters Suzy and Clara. Basically the novel is a social satire, particularly compelling in its condemnation of the inequality that existed between the classes in England at the time of 1547. The basic idea of the novel is, Twain's satiric expose of the concept that "Clothes make the man", when the two young boys exchange clothes, the Prince immediately becomes the Pauper and is thus treated like a Pauper and, likewise, the Pauper is treated like a Prince merely because he is dressed in royal robes. Though the subject matter of the novel is of satiric nature yet it has a lot of humour in is for the much of the humour in the novel originates in the inability of each of the boys to function in a world that is so familiar to the other.
Beginning with Tom’s mock court the humour travels through the incidents like the humours chatting of Tom and Edward, Edward and Miles Hendon, Edward and the band of the Robbers, etc. Surely the novel is an attack on the inhuman laws and practices of 1547 in England, yet the novel produces such humourous incidents which will last on our memory for a long time.

Tom fortunately got the hospitality of the king and there arose a lively humours discussion between the two. Here Edward innocently says to Tom that who will dress and undress his sisters at the offal court then Tom says:” None, sir wordlist have them take off their garment and sleep without like the beasts? 41 The comment may be sordid yet it is humorous, for the two girls had only one dress each. In such circumstances how can they (Tom’s family) afford attendants too?

In a spur of boyish pranks, Edward the prince and Tom Canty the pauper unwittingly trade they identities and Edward comes out of the Royal palace and learns the harsh realities of life. Dressed in rags of Tom Canty the pampered Prince was jeered and mocked by his own subjects. Here Edward comes to Christ Hospital where no one cares and respects him. The infuriated prince reprimands the orphan boys who were boisterously playing in the ground, taking no notice of the prince. Then one boy mockingly calls the Prince a beggar and some other boys scornfully bent to their knees and called the prince as the prince of the Royal Rags. They set several dogs upon him and thus he was chased back into London streets. Edward wanders around, not knowing where to go until he is finally collared by John Canty, Tom’s father and was dragged off to Offal court.

At the Offal court also we have a lot of humour and fun when Edward the prince says that he is the real prince of England. True, every reader knows this dramatic irony but not the Canty family and this riff raff of the Offal court. There arises a chaotic and humorous situation when Edward says that his mother was dead and his father was in the Royal Palace.
Even the case of Tom Canty is also very humorous, for he had been facing a lot of problems in the Royal court. He didn't know the royal etiquette and the other required genteeelness of the palace. Here we can see Tom's precarious and humorous condition in the Royal palace. Tom waited for some time for the return of the little prince Edward, but he didn't come. Unable to wait for some more time Tom Canty tried to escape from the rear door of the Princes' chamber unfortunately his effort was promptly thwarted. The author says about the situation, "he (Tom) softly opened the door to the ante chamber, resolved to fly and seek the prince, and through him, protection and release. Six gorgeous gentlemen servants and two young pages of high degree, clothed liked butterflies, sprung to their feet and bowed low before him. He stepped quickly back and shot the door. He (Tom) said "Oh, they mock at me! They will go and tell. Oh! Why come I have to cost away my life?"42

Not only such above scenes are humorous, yet we have a lot of that stuff in the novel when Tom encounters "The Lady John Grey" the sister of Edward the King's meeting Tom, was also a store house of humorous situation. Tom’s foolish talk and the King's profane talk tickle us to the core. That why the novel was immortalized in the hearts of the readers, elevating it's writer Mark Twain to the highest pedestal. Arthur Laurence Vogelback opined the same about the author when he puts it, “But... with the publication of The Prince and the Pauper in 1881, there sprang up sudden and widespread recognition of unusual qualities in Clemens the writer, qualities which caused many reviewers to express astonishment that such a humorous work could have been written by Mark Twain."43

In addition to the above mentioned humours senses, still we have such funny matters, between the prince Edward and the Robbers gang, and between the price Edward and Miles Hendon and between the prince and the peasants and the priests. Even at the climax of the novel also where the situations were very serious in identifying the real Prince, humour has its share when Tom Canty says," To crack nuts with!" The author describes of
the scene when he beautifully says, "poor child, the avalanche of laughter that greeted this nearly swept him off his feet."

Thus ends the novel creating humours flutter among the readers as well as among the critics and Literary Journals. The Atlantic Monthly befittingly called the novel as "Mark Twain's New Departure".

Next comes, at last in the series the other book for our study Life on the Mississippi. This book (1883) is put together in a curious fashion. Its core is Mark Twain's account of piloting on the river, first printed in the Atlantic Monthly in 1875 under the title Old Times on the Mississippi. Seven years later Twain set about extending this material into a full size book, and he revisited the Mississippi in order to gather new material. Old Times became Chapter IV-XVII of life on the Mississippi. Twain added to these nucleus three chapters which complete the account of his apprenticeship as a pilot, and introduced it by three other chapters. Then he filled up the rest of the book with material gathered on the 1882 trip or suggested.

True, this book is absolutely an autobiographical account of Twain's piloting career and also the history of the river and its frontier. And at the same time humour our primary matter of this chapter is not found in abundance as one finds in the other novels of study, yet there are some tinctures of humorous incidents here and there in the book which will surely amuse the reader. Here is a beautiful incident of that sort when Twain says about his boyish dreams and ambitions in the chapter IV. "When I was a boy, there was but one permanent ambition among my comrades in our village on the west bank of the Mississippi river. That was, to be a steam boatman. We had transient ambition of other sorts, but they were only transient. When a circus came and went, it left us all burning to become clowns; the first Negro minstrel show that ever came to our section left us all suffering to try that kind of life; now and then we had a hope that if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates."
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