CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

American literature has been enriched by the significant contribution of Mark Twain. It was Twain who gave new dimensions to American Literature. Before the arrival of Mark Twain, American Literature was dominated by imagination. It was Twain who pioneered new realism in American fiction. There is a beautiful interplay of realism and imagination in his works.

Mark Twain was born on November 30, 1835 in Florida, Missouri, situated on the banks of the river Mississippi. In his childhood he was very fragile and prone to be ill. Twain was the third child of John Marshall Clemens and Jane Lampton Clemens. Samuel Langhorne Clemens is the real name of Mark Twain. His father was professional minded and he tried his fortune in several professions as a shopkeeper, as a lawyer and as a farmer, also. In 1837, his father became the commissioner of the Salt River Navigation Project. He also worked as a Justice of Peace in Florida. Twain was influenced by his parents considerably. His mother Jane Lampton Clemens had a remarkable influence on him. From her he inherited several
peculiar qualities, tastes and tendencies. It was from her that he also learnt the skill of lending fact and fiction very well. Like her he also had a love for the red colour and developed an interest in animals especially in cats. His father had a judicial bent of mind so he could not understand his son. Still, Twain was influenced by his father greatly. Like him, he too, adopted several professions. But his mother influenced him more than his father. In 1839, the family moved to Hannibal, Missouri. Sam was very much influenced by its beautiful sites.

Hannibal is a harbour on the river Mississippi, the largest river in North America and it breaks the United States of America down the middle in a very theatrical way. It was not a healthy and hygienic place. A strange kind of monotony existed there which was broken occasionally by circus parties or theatrical troupe or by lectures. This place is of great significance in the novels of Clemens. Hannibal was not a land of peace. Murders, robberies and drunkenness were very common to this place. Sam watched all these things happening before his eyes:

"He watched a murdered man dying at noon in the main street with a heavy Bible callously laid on his struggling breast, and he was there one night when a widow shot down a ruffian who
was clamouring about her house and threatening to rape her
and her daughter. He saw a slave dead for some trivial
offence."

Twain got admission in a primary school at Hannibal when he was four and
a half year old and by this time he was living with his uncle John Quarles.
It was at this time that he got attracted towards Calvinism whereas his father
was a follower of Presbyterian. Calvinism influenced him throughout his
life. Spiller is very right when he says:

"In old age his incurably Calvinist mind saw all the events of his
life from birth in 1835 in Florida as a chain of causation forged by
some power outside his will. "

During his school days, he got several medals for his excellence in spellings.
Though, Twain got a very little schooling and left the school at the age of
twelve, many of his skills developed during this period. In his early years,
Clemens sporadically wrote for publication, but only when he went West to
Nevada and after an unsuccessful trial at Silver mining, had to find a new
means of survival and he became a full time newspaper-man, specially, a
humorist. For a time he followed a second career, as well, that of a lecturer.
His success in this provided him with a reliable source of fund when he was financially pressed. Often when in need of money he would make a lecture tour around the world and then he would write a book about his experiences.

**Twain's** first success was an account of his 1867 trip to Europe and the Holy Land. To a large extent he defined himself and his America through the eyes of Europe, especially in "*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*", but also in "*Huckleberry Finn*". He spent his time in Condon, Berlin, Florence and most significantly Vienna, where he and his family lived for nearly two years. His Austrian experiences enriched and conditioned his thinking at the end of the century and brought new life to his writings. Besides regaining self-confidence, he was now able to collect generous remuneration from his writing.

In 1848, Twain became an apprentice to Joseph P. Ament who was the publisher of Missouri Courier. Soon, he gave up this apprenticeship to work in a Journal published by his elder brother Orion in Hannibal. Samuel worked as a compositor and a journalist. But this journal ended in failure for Orion had not the capability to manage it. His successful beginning as a printer's apprentice when he was only thirteen led him from
Orion's Journal to St. Louis where he worked in the Evening News and earned some money and moved to visit New York, Philadelphia, Muscatine and Cincinnati before he returned to his brother's printing establishment in Keokuk, Iowa. He worked as a printer from 1853-1857.

As a typesetter on Orion's Hannibal Journal, he provided miscellaneous material. When he began his ambitious trip to the sources of the Amazon, he contracted with the 'Keokuk Daily Post' to provide travel letters at $500 each, which he meant ultimately to collect as a book to be called "Snodgrass Dierrea". This contract resulted in the three "Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass" letters of October, 1856 from St. Louis and of November, 1856 and April, 1857 from Cincinnati. The second letter is about a train ride from Keokuk to Cincinnati and the third in which Snodgrass is left with a bawling abandoned infant. In 1857, the quench for extraneous areas and rapid wealth attracted him with an unexpected zeal for commercial exploitation of the Amazon to amass fortune in the collection of coco; this was the first of his spectacular failures. This made him take an apprenticeship under Horace Bixby, an expert pilot on the Mississippi River for a payment of five dollars from Twain. He borrowed this amount from his brother-in-law A. Moffett. Bixby made him an expert pilot only in eighteen months. This experience along with his boy-hood memories provided the
richest material for his great works. The excitement of this period was its freedom, glamour that thrilled his heart. He had always dreamt to be an expert steam-boat pilot from his early childhood and this dream was fulfilled when he came back to his native country. This job enabled him to have knowledge of every aspect of life. The sea-shore life thrilled him. He became aware of the beauty and mystery of his surroundings and the river became a "strong brown god", "a deity" and a symbol of "happiness and immunity." His pilot life represents freedom from the debasement of humanity.

Later he got a job in Pennsylvania as a steers-man along with his younger brother Henry. But he left the job very soon because of a vehement quarrel with the pilot. In 1861 when the civil war raged between the Unionists and the Confederates he joined an ill-organized company called 'Marian Rangers' to fight the Unionists. But he was very confused. Being a slaveholder himself he was with Confederates who emphasized on the permanency of the Negro slavery. On the contrary he was a supporter of freedom and liberation so he could not bear this wickedness which was in fact an attack on human dignity and was the refusal of the social justice. He took retirement from army life but this made him so restless that he decided to go West with his elder brother Orion who was recently appointed as
secretary to James W. Nye, the Governor of Nevada. During his journey to Nevada he faced a lot of difficulties which he has depicted in "Roughing It".

Though Clemens took silver mining with a cheerful zeal, taking delight in dreams of unexpected and abundant wealth, the severe punishment of the rude living conditions and the drawing-off his savings from his piloting career unnerved him. In August 1862 he went to the office of Virginia City Territorial Enterprise. At that time he was very dirty, uncombed as he had made a long journey by bullock-cart, to accept a $2500 a week job as a reporter. Soon he achieved success as parliamentary reporter for the "Territorial Legislature."

"Since reporting facts gave little leeway for artistic elaboration, this period of his life might pass, in part, as a disciplinary trial by fire. But one glance at what he wrote as a reporter shows that the unbuttoned wide open atmosphere of Nevada journalism permitted him plenty of room to stretch his arms, scratch himself, belch, and generally relax his way through reporting. The conventions of tall-talk, of journalistic hoaxes (such as the petrified man and the bloody massacre that Clemens invented to fill dearth in news) and of inter paper
rivalries, exercised his imagination thoroughly".  

The period between the travelling correspondent and the Sandwich Islands trip was a turning point of his literary career.

"The reporting and letters to the Territorial Enterprise of Virginia City from 1862-1864 represent a crucial state in his evolution."  

In 1864 Clemens left Nevada and Clemens came to San Francisco and found a place in "Morning Call." He began a lifelong prepossession with causes. He defended the underdog and the defeated through as his mother used to do in Hannibal.

In San Francisco he fought for the harassed Chinese immigrants; the overcharging of his servants by taxi-drivers, the dissection of living animals, corrupt political groups (Tammany Corruption), exploitation of original inhabitants in Congo, the bondage of Russian Slaves, the limitations of Copyright and so on. But all this was not firm in his reforming enthusiasm:

"He refused to publish material attacking coal exclusive rights or Standard Oil out of loyalty to his father-in-law, a coal magnet and H.H. Rogers, a Standard Oil executive friend."
In 1866, the Sacramento Union sent Twain on a tour to Sandwich Island (presently known as Hawaii Island). Here, he started working as a travel correspondent and for this job he often visited Europe and later on went on a world tour. This was the time when he was lecturing, too as he was distressed for money. In 1867 (June-November) he sailed on the Quaker City for an extended trip of Europe and the Holy Land (Palestine). The voyage was arranged by the San Francisco' \textit{Daily Alta California}.' For this journal Twain wrote a number of travelling letters. Meantime, he also wrote for the New York '\textit{Tribune}’ and '\textit{Harold}'. But he never wished to be an author. This intimate desire he expressed once in a letter to his mother and sister:

"But I had my mind made up to one thing- I wasn't going to touch a book unless there was money in it, and a good deal of it."\textsuperscript{6}

Twain's rise to celebrity was impressive. His sparkling personality and his quotable phrases caught on fast and he soon began lecture tours. His 1867 trip to Europe and the Holy Land produced his first major work "\textit{The Innocents Abroad}" (1869)
Onwards, his popularity continued to grow. As he was about to begin his career as a newspaper editor in Buffalo in 1869, he looked back over his first thirty-four years as, "a foolish life made up of apprenticeship." These included his early professions as printer, steam-boat pilot, soldier, miner, journalist and lecturer and even after finding his profession as a writer, he became involved in disastrous financial try outs as a publisher and as a manufacturer of typesetting machine. But in 1884 his daughter Susy's death and some other misfortunes made him increasingly alienated from the good humored wit on which his popularity rested. He began investing in the harles L. Webster publishing company. His nephew was managing that company. In the hands of his nephew his book "Huckleberry Finn" (1885) made good business. A successful stroke was the publication of the memoirs of General Grant. Mark Twain produced them laboriously and feverishly for the author died of cancer. Clemens paid a royalty check of $ 200,000 to the widow. It was the highest payment in the history of publication.

Twain never learnt anything from his father's failures. He ever remained detached from his object of desire and his contemplation bent upon mining. It is unbelievable that he should have exhilarated himself with the deception of financial pride:
"What is surprising is the way at least the Grant memoirs justified the vision, because succeeding books including the supposedly great bonanza of an authorized life of Pope Leo XIII, barely paid for themselves."^8

In 1881 Twain realised that the typesetter was the greatest requirement of contemporary publishing. Perhaps, he was on the right track. His zeal for invention was limitless; he wrote to his brother:

"All the other wonderful inventions of the human brain sink pretty nearly into common place contrasted with this awful mechanical miracle. Telephones, telegraphs, loco-motives, cotton-gins, sewing machines, Babbage calculators, Jacquard looms, perfecting presses, Ark-wright's frames—all mere toys, simplicities! The Paige compositor marches alone and far in the lead of human invention".^9

Though, the invention had already taken $190,000, poured in at the rate of $3,000 a month, this inventor still tended to make minor changes so as to improve it:

"Eventually-irony of fate-the' Mergenthaler Company' so long
scorned and derided, for twenty thousand dollars bought out the rights and assets and presented that marvelous work of genius, the mechanical wonder of the age, to the Sibley College of Engineering, where it is shown as the costliest piece of machinery, for its size, ever constructed. "10

But the Webster Company went more and more in debt for they published a ruinous project "A Library of American Literature" and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." (1889) and "The American Claimant" (1892) could do a little to recover these losses. "Tom Sawyer Abroad' saw a great failure in the spring of 1894. Twain with his family started living in Europe from 1891 to 1895. Clearly, his uncontrolled excitement for travelling did little to improve his condition. B.B. Rogers, (Twain's admirer) an Oil executive took his financial problems in his capable hands and improved his financial condition. Mrs. Clemens saw financial failures as moral disgrace and made him payoff his creditors. He paid off all of his debts within four years by making a world lecture tour in 1895-96 and by depicting them in "Following the Equator" (1897). But in 1896, after the death of his wife and another daughter Clara, he returned to America in 1900 after a long gap of nine years.
Ironically, the works produced during this period are among Twain's best works. In 1872, Twain made a victorious tour to England for which he always had ardent and zealous feelings. On his return, he worked together with his Hartford neighbour friend Charles Dudley Warner for his novel "The Gilded Age" (1873). He made another tour to England which resulted in a glorious lecture series. When he returned to America that series was followed by "Old Times On the Mississippi" (1875) published in "Atlantic Monthly" along with "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1876).

In 1874, he built a luxurious residential house in Nook Farm a unique Literary Area of Hartford. Getting a very cold reception by some Boston Newspapers to his Whittier Birthday speech late in 1877 (in which three drunken Western tramps impersonate Longfellow, Emerson and Holmes) again deepened his feeling of insecurity. So, he decided to sail for an extended stay in Germany. Later on, he travelled through Switzerland, Italy and France, he recorded all these experiences in his "A Tramp Abroad" (1880). He came back in 1879 and concentrated on the publication of "The Prince and the Pauper" (1882). He made a tour to river Mississippi to expand the 'Atlantic' articles into "Life on the Mississippi".
Twain disliked the fatigued hard labour of dignified and decent big city journalism and a quarrel between one of his intimate friends and a bartender who had special police connections brought him into conflict with a strong city-machinery in San Francisco. So, he quickly retired to mining again, mean while, in 1863 he came in contact with some of the well-known writers of the age specially Artemus Ward on the latter’s Western lecture tour. He had seen the great story-teller in action

"the adroit timing change of pace and deadpan obliviousness to the point of one's own wit."11

Twain wrote under his guidance and started sending articles to his volumes of sketches. Ward himself was a great humorist, Twain assimilated Ward's characteristics of humour. Twain's meeting with Ward provided him a notion of literary employment which changed his life from the previous one. Ward influenced Twain excessively.

Mark Twain was not the first pseudonym adopted by Samuel Langhorne Clemens. His early trials in newspapers were signed with such pseudonyms as "W Epaminodas Adrastus Blab", "Grumbler", "Rambler" "Peter Pencilcases's Son", "John Snooks", "Josh" "Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass", and "Quintus Curtius Snodgrass". The characters behind these
fictitious names are usually the standard ones of the crude and vulgar yokel in his first clashes with civilization, or of the supercilious and bumptious editor. During his service in 'Morning Call' Clemens adopted his popular non-de-plume Mark Twain which was taken from the river boat custom of testing the depth of a channel with the help of a rope which was knotted at measured intervals. Thus, the pen-name of Clemens means "two fathom deep". It stands for the water that reaches the second knot.

Mark Twain was also a Mississippi leadsman's call i.e. twelve feet safe water. Clemens took this pseudonym as being a humorist he wanted to write freely. This could be done only with the concealment of his identity. His marriage had a very powerful impact on his career. When Clemens was on the tour to Europe, one day his boat was anchored in the Bay of Smyrna. His companion Charles Langdon showed him a small-sized ivory portrait of his previously disabled sister Olivia. Clemens was intensely influenced by her beauty. In 1867, on returning to New York where he attended a Dickens reading, Clemens met Olivia Langdon, her family and her brother suddenly. The zeal created by her picture was justified. Above all, her father Jervis Langdon, a wealthy businessman was fascinated by Clemens. Frequently, he started visiting her home in Elmira, New York.
In 1870 Clemens married Olivia. Twain proved an ideal husband. After his marriage he moved to Buffalo with his bride and continued to render articles to *Express* and got a job of writing humorous articles for the *Galaxy Magazine*. His choice of a wife from genteel Eastern society was his consequent adoption of Hartford, Connecticut. Twain used to submit the day's manuscript to Olivia for her approval and she edited them silently with her pencil. After his marriage almost everything which he produced by his pen was passed to her for her approval. The fact that he never confided in her before he delivered the Whittier Birthday speech only confirmed her authority in his eyes. In later years, he even knowingly planted passages that he knew Livy would disapprove of solely for the pleasure of being reproved and then arguing over the issue with Livy. He took inordinate pleasure in the offending passage anyway. Twain surrendered himself to his wife's well-polished influence for he never had so cultured a family background. He loved Olivia intensely and felt her need in his life deeply, as It is revealed in his love-letters. His boy-like worship reveals a tenderness that cries out for motherly carefulness. Olivia whom he used to call Livy lovingly influenced him immensely. As A. H. Quinn rightly remarked:

"In 1870 he (Twain) married Olivia Langdon of Elmira, New York, to his great fortune, far from restraining his creative
power, as has sometimes been suggested, she saved him by her criticism from those lapses into bad taste of which the notorious speech at the Whittier Dinner was an example, and from which he Himself would have been the greatest sufferer." ¹²

It can never be forgotten that Livy took great interest in her husband's esteem and his writings. She always encouraged him to produce his best. But it is not possible that Livy intervention in any serious way with his mental endowments. Twain had always

"a certain eager anxiety to become refined and respectable, to mix with 'quality' Mrs. Clemens was probably helping only an ardent apprentice." ¹³

On a reading tour along with Cable he wrote letters to his wife. The kind of comments that he could make to his wife, who was a bible reader and also a fanatical Sabbath observer, proves that he was not unduly shackled by his wife. In one of his letters Twain wrote:

"His body is small, but it is much too large for his soul. He is the pitiful human louse I have ever known" ¹⁴
Few people would any longer accept the thesis that Olivia and Howells emasculated Sam's energetic prose and fastened him into a straight-jacket of puritan propriety. Instead of all this, Livy became a source of inspiration for Twain. As Paine had observed:

"She became his editor during those happy courtship days—a position which (she) held to her death. The world owed a large debt of gratitude to Mark Twain's wife, who from the very beginning and always, so far as in her strength she was able, inspired him to give only his worthiest to the world."

Van Wyck Brooks pointed out the mother role of Olivia in their married relation, and there are countless anecdotes about how she and her daughters dusted off papa after he had committed this or that social blunder. Twain faced a sequence of tragedies in his life-time. This sequence began with the death of his father. In 1858, he lost his younger brother Henry in a violent outburst of the steam-boat in Pennsylvania and Twain held himself personally responsible for all this because sometimes before his leaving New Orleans, Henry and Sam discussed what should be done if some calamity comes and Sam found that following his counsel Henry returned to the boat to help the struggling people. Consequently, Henry breathed bad air into his
lungs and faced a slow and painful death. Twain claimed that he had already seen a dream which gave him a preview of his brother's burial.

In 1872, the death of his premature baby whose name was Langdon broke him completely. It was Twain's mistake that he exposed such a fragile child to cold in a heedless manner during a carriage ride. Before this mishap he stopped writing for the "Galaxy" and took interest in the "Express" which saw a fall in April, 1871. Now, Clemenses had to leave their luxurious and well equipped home which was gifted to them by the Langdons on their wedding. Their Hartford house was a bulky and ostentatious building. His living standards were very high. His ways of entertainment were very costly. They had to move to Quarry Farm, near Elmira, an idyllic retreat owned by his wife's sister and her husband. It was the place where Clemens wrote some of his greatest works famous as Octagonal (having eight sides) study.

In 1893 when he was fifty eight his heavy investments proved injudicious. His publication house was unsuccessful and he was ruined financially. But he never accepted bankruptcy. He cleared off his debts dollar for dollar and earned money by making lecture tours around the
world. Along with this, he also published a number of sketches and short-stories. When he was on a trip he passed a statement to the press:

"The law recognizes no mortgage on a man's brain, and a merchant who has given up all he has, may take advantage of the laws of insolvency and start free again for himself. But I am not a businessman, and honor is a harder master than the law. It cannot compromise for less than 100 cents on the dollar and its debts never outlaw."  

In the year 1889 he set up his own publishing firm to publish his books, but he enlarged it to publish the memories of General Grant. But he was not successful. Besides this their daughter, Jean, was found to be epileptic. Meanwhile his unstable health failed. He was wrecked by Bronchitis and rheumatism which became worse due to overexertion. In 1896, his favourite daughter, Susy of Meningitis and in the following year, his wife Livy became disabled. Such a sequence of calamities was enough to make a man insane. No wonder if Twain was totally shattered. All these tragedies got place in his great works for it is said, "Art is the term of an artist signed with fate".  

Twain lost interest in life. All the illnesses and deaths in the family contributed to his pessimism.
Twain had really a happy family but the tragedies that occurred one after another broke him. Either it was the death of his brother, daughter or son, every time he held himself responsible. Perhaps, driven by a sense of guilt Clemens started taking pleasure and interest in swearing, smoking and even in misbehaving with others.

The motif for his behaviour is elucidated in an interchange with his wife who remarked: “Dear, one does not act honorably for the sake of reward or even approbation.” But he replied:

"I do, I want payment in some coin for everything I do. If I can't get peace and joy in return for propping up my blatherskite of a crumbling soul, then- I 'l let her rot and the quicker the better." ¹⁸

Still, he is admired and readers are amused by Twain, the celebrity, who sold his pseudonym and his carefully composed face to advertise pipe-tobacco, cigarettes, whisky and post-cards. The tragedies are the essential feature of Clemens' life. A general view of the writer's personality and its expression in a metaphysic is inseparable from a more thorough consideration of his moral and emotional responses, both in his family and social relations, and also in his intellectual life.
If Twain was not afraid of literary condemnation, it was because he rejected conventional part of theology concerned with death, judgment and destiny as is shown in "Extracts From Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven". But this did not officially absolve him from the blame of being unworthy which expressed itself as a strong burden of bitter repentance. As a child, he perceived all the disastrous ruin of the town as a method chosen by the Almighty to teach little Sam a perfect moral lesson. When his wife died, he removed his own religious doctrines because he thought it might have contributed to her reward and punishment.

Had he died as a child as his family expected, or had he drowned in the Mississippi River, like several of his boyhood chums, then something in our literature would be tangibly missing, and we would find lacking our linkage point with the nineteenth century especially with its humour, in the form of an actual man whom one can admire and feel affection toward. Clemens never abandoned his boyhood. He carried his miraculously preserved and enthusiastic memories of his early and middle adolescence into maturity. Through these memories he filtered his adult experience. Once he wrote an unknown correspondent at the age of 55:
"And yet I can't go away from the boyhood period & write novels because capital (that is, personal experience) is not sufficient by itself and I lack the other essential: interest in handling the men and experiences of later times."  

The success of boy-literature, "Huckleberry Finn" and "Tom Sawyer" always inspire in readers countless clear images of their own childhood which they have forgotten or matured out of. The "Prince and the Pauper" and "Joan of Arc" are primarily victorious as children's books. The whole climate of his boyhood was kept alive in his unconscious. He changed all its intense harmonious sequence and pulsations to the printed page.

Among the great writers of nineteenth century America, Twain stands out by virtue of his' anti-literature'. This popular frontier humorist was fond of shocking his readers and his audiences by striking dramatic attitudes and by frequently asserting that he did not write literature, the word literature was anathema to him and he boasted that he was not an artist. Provoked by a critic's remark that high and fine literature was wine, Twain once wrote:

"Yes, high and fine literature is wine. And mine is only water; but everybody likes water" (Letter to Howells dated 15th
In fact, as a lecturer, the mature Mark Twain was very possibly the only humorist who presented himself as a common man uninfluenced by national regionalism. He convinced his countrymen, of his essential fellowship, his temperamental affinity with them:

"This miracle he wrought by the frankest and most straightforward revelation of the critical experiences in his own life, the lives of those he had known with perfect intimacy."

Mark Twain’s humour and satire always had a motive to reform society. On 31st July 1906, in discussing a recently published issue of American humorists Mark Twain noted that the volume:

"... reveals the surprising fact that within the compass of these forty years wherein I have been playing professional humorist before the public, I have had for company seventy-eight other American humorists, they became conspicuous and popular, and by and by vanished... why have they perished? Because they were merely humorists. Humour is only a fragrance, a
"decoration it must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly reach, but it must do both if it would live forever.""^21

Mark Twain was in fact a professional. He invented many things and knew the tricks to sell them. He was a perfect business man.

“I wish to state, by way of advertisement that medical colleges desiring assorted tramps for scientific purposes, either by the gross, by cord measurement, or per ton, will do well to examine the lot in my cellar before purchasing elsewhere, as these were all selected and prepared by myself, and can be had at a low rate because I wish to clear out my stock andet ready for the spring trade."^22

His friends and reporters were sufficiently interested in Clemens' reading Stevenson, Kipling. He liked Browning but not other poets. He disliked Jane Austen, Thackeray, Addison and Goldsmith:

"To me his prose is unreadable,-like Jane Austen's. No, there's a difference. I could read his prose on salary but not Jane's. Jane is entirely impossible. It seems a great pity that they allowed her to die a natural death." (Letters dated 18 January,
Twain never liked Hawthorne and Poe. Perhaps, he was influenced by the realization that these writers "pointed out what he lacked", as Professor Grant shrewdly observed. Twain's complaint was that Hawthorne and George Eliot wrote 'prose', their works consisted of careful piling up of details and of a laborious analysis of motives and feelings. But Twain admired Howells. Praising a novel by him, he wrote:

"you make all the motives and feelings perfectly clear without analysing the guts out of them, the way George Eliot does... ...I can't stand George Eliot and Hawthorne and those people; I see what they are at, a hundred years before they get to it, and they just tire me to death. And as far The Bostonians I would rather be damned to John Bunyan's heaven than read that."

(Letter dated 21st July, 1885)

He was a great critic of his contemporaries for he found that they were obsessed with technique. In a letter to Howells he pointed out the difference between 'prose' and 'poetry':

"prose wanders around with a lantern and laboriously schedules and verifies the details and particulars of a valley
and its frame of crags and peaks, then poetry, comes and lays bare the whole landscape with a single splendid flash. " (Letter dated 23rd February, 1906)

In revising the "Prince and the Pauper", for instance, Twain not only sought mature literary judgment, but requested Howells and Edwin Pond Parker to read the manuscript to their children for their reactions. His reputation is based firmly on the significant achievement of his books about boys. With or without the approval of professional and academic critics, the books would have held the safe place in the heart of the reading public that they continue to occupy. Clemens himself called: “Tom Sawyer a hymn to boyhood” and it is with a kind of reverent awe that most readers experience the clarity skill and naturalness of this account of how it felt to grow up in a Missouri river-town. 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' (1876) is really a delightful book, as Kenneth S. Lynn remarked,

"it confirms the profoundest wishes of the heart. Even though it deals with grave-robbers, slow starvation, cruelty and brutality, it ultimately exonerates the values of the small town in which Clemens grew up, and by extension, the small town that each of us carries in his memories if only as a kind of historic heritage."23
'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' (1885) is a sequel that soared even higher than its predecessor. It has been the subject of the most extravagant praise and the most detailed critical analysis of all his books because it is certainly one of the half-dozen books America has ever produced. It is superior to Tom Sawyer for having a more serious and disturbing view of the same small town.

Though, Twain is famous for his humour, his own efforts at definition and distinction of his role as a humorist betray the accuracy of a comment he made for his Autobiographical Dictation on 28 March, 1907

"Humor is a subject which had never had much interest for me. This is why I have never examined it, nor written about it nor used it as a topic for a speech. A hundred times it has been offered me as a topic of these past forty years, but in no case has it attracted me. "24

He took interest in politics and took strong political stand from time to time, but it never interested him very continuously, partially because of his extended visits abroad. He was violently anti-monarchial (except when royalty paid personal court to him) and his aim as a writer is always insistently democratic:
"Indeed I have been misjudged, from the very first, I have never tried in even one single instance, to help cultivate the cultivated classes. I was not equipped for it, either by native gifts or training I have seldom deliberately tried to instruct the masses, but have done my best to entertain them. To simply amuse them would have satisfied my dearest ambition at anytime; for they could get instruction elsewhere, and I had two chances to help to the teachers one: for amusement is a good preparation for study and a good helper of fatigue after it. My audience is dumb, it has no voice in print and so I cannot know whether I have won its approbation or only got its censure. "25

His writings express defects in national character. He appears to have been fairly well-informed on world-affairs, although his sense of public propriety sometimes prevented his saying what he thought, or even prompted him to say the opposite. This was particularly true in regard to England's role in Boer War while he developed her actions in this particular crisis; he felt England had to be supported as the last bastion of civilization and personal liberty in Europe. **Twain** was a representative author. **Dixon Wecter**, editor of **Twain's** papers, once wrote:

"In the activities of the eternal man as well as in character and
temperament, Mark Twain was a representative American from idyllic and ante-bellum boyhood in a' river-town, to maturity enmeshed in the cross purposes of the Gilded Age which he christened and thence to the sunset years of mingled hope and disillusion in the progressive Era. "26
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