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AN ANALYSIS OF MARK TWAIN'S ORAL INTERPRETATION ON THE READING TOUR OF 1884-1885

THESIS

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By

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This oral interpretation thesis analyzes the influences on Mark Twain's reading, traces his development as an oral interpreter, and studies his techniques for revising selections of his literature to make them more suitable for oral delivery. This study concentrates on Twain's 1884-1885 reading tour with George W. Cable because in that period Twain made his greatest advances as an oral interpreter. The impact that this tour had on Twain's later reading is also analyzed. It was discovered that the interpretation theories developed by Twain are consistent with contemporary theory and practice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The volumes of books, letters, journals, and newspaper columns that Mark Twain produced in his seventy-five years hold the attention of numerous critics. Each year, more and more critics appear in professional journals to advance their theories, trying to explain the enigmas of Mark Twain. These new critics join the ranks of older Twainian scholars led by Bernard DeVoto, Henry Nash Smith, Charles Neider, and Frederick Anderson, present curator of the Mark Twain Papers.

Twain was indeed a paradox. He suppressed his sympathetic feelings with biting satire, changed from Presbyterian to agnostic, never felt secure in either camp,[1] and he confused even himself by lecturing on several tours after he had vowed to "quit the platform forever."[2]

His writings were the critics' main fields of operation for fifty years following his death. However, in the late 1950's and early 60's, a succession of events caused a marked expansion of Twain studies. The expansion was preceded by a revived interest in Twain's writings. This was achieved by the "enthusiastic reaction of the critics when Charles Neider published a complete collection of Twain's short-stories."[3] This book was unique because Neider gathered thirteen of Twain's sketches from his travel books and included them, quite properly, as short-stories in themselves.[4]

Just two years later, in 1959, "came the stunning success of Hal Holbrook, a young actor who catapulted to fame on Broadway and elsewhere by impersonating Mark Twain."[5] At that time, "Twainophilia" became quickly unrestrained. TV specials paying tribute to Twain in May of 1960 kept the trend alive. Also, in 1969, The Mark Twain-Howells Letters were released for publication after being long suppressed.[6]

On December 3, 1962, Clara Clemens Samossoud died. She was the last survivor of Twain's four children. Before her death at age 88, she authorized publication of her father's bitterly anti-religious essays in the form of a book, Letters From the Earth, edited by Bernard DeVoto.[7] It is interesting to note that Samossoud released this material to silence Russian scholars who claimed that Twain's latter works were protected so they would not embarrass the United States government. The Russians theorized that Twain had become disillusioned with the democratic system near the end of his days.[8]

Upon her death, Clara Clemens Samossoud, by the power of her will, released for the first time literally thousands of pages of Twain's unpublished writing. This is the collection presently owned by the University of California at Berkeley.[9] Among these papers are sketches and manuscripts of speeches[10] that were mainly responsible for the study of Twain expanding into the area of his "alternate career." That was his term for his work on the platform.[11]

Newsweek magazine says that, of all these events, Hal Holbrook "probably deserves more individual credit for the

Mark Twain boom than anybody else."[12] This acknowledgement is important when considering the vast number of column inches printed during the sixties and seventies which dealt specifically with Mark Twain's speaking.

In the last fifteen years two excellent works have been published that deal with Mark Twain's artistry as a speaker. One of these works was written by Fred W. Lorch and is entitled The Trouble Begins at Eight, the title being derived from Twain's lecture advertising. Lorch's research earned him the Iowa State University Press Annual Award for the most outstanding book by an Iowa author in the year 1966.[13] It is felt that this is the finest work on Twain's speaking to date.

The other excellent publication was published in 1976 by the University of Iowa Press and was edited by Paul Fatout. This book is a direct result of the papers released by Clara Samossoud at the University of California at Berkeley.[14] It is near complete collection of Twain's speeches which span 53 years and is titled appropriately Mark Twain Speaking.[15] Fatout's work proved to be imperative for this study.

Lorch's The Trouble Begins at Eight includes two chapters on Mark Twain's reading and reading tours, but it necessarily concentrates on Twain's lecturing years. This study reverses the emphases of the Lorch book. It concentrates on Mark Twain's development as an oral interpreter, and therefore, the major portion of the research is centered around Twain's reading tour with George W. Cable in 1884-1885, which is the time that Twain made his greatest advances in the art of reading.

Since this thesis was to deal with Mark Twain's oral interpretation, a number of abstracts of dissertations and theses were reviewed. Of the many in the area of Mark Twain's speaking, few were written mainly on Mark Twain's reading. In fact, only two studies were discovered which appeared relevant to this thesis.

One of these studies is a dissertation written at the University of Southern California, copyright 1962.[16] This dissertation, unfortunately, was unavailable to consult for inclusion in this study. However, its value is probably limited because it lacked information that is now in public domain.

Secondly, a thesis written by Sandra Boyce at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [17] was available for consultation. Boyce's work is valuable in that it is a production thesis reflecting the tour of 1884-1885. Boyce worked diligently to produce an accurate manuscript which includes the actual readings Twain and Cable performed on the tour.

When the preliminary research for this thesis was being conducted, a statement was found that Twain once made concerning his first attempt at reading as a trade. This was on the tour of 1884-1885. He said that he thought reading would be a simple process; that "it would only be necessary to do like Dickens--get out on the platform and read from the book. I did that and made a botch of it."[18]

It was surprising to learn that Lorch dismissed that statement as mere exaggeration, because it is found in Twain's

highly criticized *Autobiography*. The *Autobiography* has fallen into disrepute among Twain scholars because of its numerous factual errors. Yet, these errors are centered around dates and places and names. Twain explained in the preface to his *Autobiography* that he never intended it to be a diary of facts; moreover, it was to be a journal of general recollections and opinions:

> In this autobiography it is my purpose to wander whenever I please and come back when I get ready . . . a form and method whereby the past and present are constantly brought face to face, resulting in contrasts. . . .[19]

Therefore, this, and sufficient additional information from sources other than Twain's *Autobiography* were discovered to merit taking an approach opposite to the approach that Lorch took in dismissing the statement. This study accepted Twain's recollection that he "made a botch" of reading on the tour of 1884-1885 as truth, and establishes that that statement is, beyond all reasonable doubt, a factual one.

As the research continued, it was discovered that most of the published work on Mark Twain's reading took a speech critic's approach, rather than an oral interpreter's approach, when evaluating Twain's reading ability. Of course, some of the criteria by which speeches are criticized apply equally to the evaluation of reading. However, it is understandable that speech critics researching Twain's reading would not investigate the persona that a specific selection of his literature suggests and the difficulty he must have encountered in trying to project a certain persona.

Another trend in speech research on Twain's reading has been to avoid comparing what Twain read before the tour of 1884-1885 with what he read during the tour. This thesis compares the reading that Twain used at different periods of his life and thus provides a good picture of Twain's development as a reader. In addition to this, this study analyzes Twain's method of converting written material to what he belived was an oral style, and why he changed what he did.

Initially, it was the purpose of this thesis to avoid the popular historical and speech approaches to the tour of 1884-1885. However, it was soon discovered that it is impossible to ignore the historical aspect of the tour completely because movements of that period were important to the success of the tour. It was also important to the relationship of Twain and Cable, and thus effected even their reading. One cannot escape history.

Therefore, this thesis endeavors to concentrate, whenever possible, on the oral interpretation point of view. It investigates, from an oral interpreter's standpoint, the problems Twain faced in his reading and contrasts his discoveries of how to improve his reading skills with contemporary oral interpretation theory and practice.

In light of the evidence presented, this thesis has shown that even an experienced professional speaker such as Mark Twain can encounter difficulty when he attempts to read aloud. Thus, there is a difference between speaking and reading.

Secondly, this study traces Mark Twain's development as a reader and evaluates why he encountered the problems he did, and why he chose to solve them as he did.

As a third value, the influences on Twain's reading have been cited, just as the influences on his writing and speaking have been investigated in other studies.

Finally if this body of research has any claim to originality, it is in its analysis of Mark Twain's conversion of his written material to a style more suitable for oral delivery.

To aid the reader in understanding the order of chapters in this paper, these remarks are necessary:

Chapter II reveals that, during the lecture years, Twain developed certain preferances concerning audiences, advertising, and the kinds of places in which he liked to speak. He learned to adapt to each new situation, and basically, learned what worked and what did not. Understanding what lecturing taught him, helps one to understand his approach to reading and the many angry letters about George W. Cable that Twain wrote to his wife during the tour of 1884-1885.

Chapter III brings out the influences that prepared Twain for reading and how his reading theory developed.

Chapter IV recounts the history of the tour and shows how certain incidents effected Twain's reading.

Finally, Chapter V endeavors to bring together all the influences of his lecturing years, the influences on his reading, the historical effects of the tour, and reveals

the impact that all of this had on Twain's reading during the tour.

The story of the life of Twain is nearly common knowledge. It is not felt that a biography of his life would supplement this thesis well. However, it is important that the reader be able to grasp the time period of the 1884-1885 tour, and where it entered into Twain's life. Therefore, a chronology has been included as Appendix A. The reader will note that at the time of the reading tour, Twain was nearly fifty years old, and had not yet published the major portion of his classic works.

Appendix B is a collection of reviews from various newspapers which reported on the readings of Cable and Twain. These are included for easy reference and are valuable materials.

NOTES

[1]Albert Bigelow Paine, _Mark Twain: A Biography_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), p. 1582.

[2]Fred W. Lorch, _The Trouble Begins at Eight_ (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa University Press, 1968), p. 261.

[3]"Twain: A Yearning for Yesterday." _Newsweek_, 2 May 1960, 52.

[4]Charles Neider, ed., _The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain_ (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. ix.

[5]"Twain: A Yearning for Yesterday," p. 52.

[6]James Woodress, et al., _Eight American Authors_ (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1971), p. 276.

[7]"Transition." _Newsweek_, 3 December 1962, 73.

[8]Woodress, p. 319.

[9]Woodress, p. 319.

[10]Woodress, p. 278.

[11]Lorch, p. ix.

[12]"Twain: A Yearning for Yesterday," p. 53.

[13]Lorch, p. vi.

[14]Woodress, p. 278.

[15]Paul Fatout, ed., _Mark Twain Speaking_ (Iowa City, Iowa: The University of Iowa Press, 1976), pp. 647, 680.

[16]R.D. Wallace, "An Analytical-Historical Study of the Factors Contributing to the Success of Mark Twain as an Oral Interpreter." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 1962.

[17]Sandra Boyce, "A Reader's Theatre Production Reflecting a Study of the 1884-1885 Reading Tour of Mark Twain." Unpublished master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972.

[18]Charles Neider, ed., _The Autobiography of Mark Twain_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 176.

[19]Neider, _Autobiography_, pp. xi-xii.

CHAPTER II

MARK TWAIN'S ALTERNATE CAREER

When Mark Twain was fifteen years old a mesmerizer arrived in Hannibal, advertising a show in which he "promised marvels."[1] The town had heard little about mesmerism and was not readily excited by the unknown. But after the first night, the few who attended the show were so ecstatic about the accomplishments of the mesmerizer, and they related so many unbelieveable tales concerning the show that the rest of the town turned out in mass thereafter. Twain later wrote:

> I was at the age at which a boy is willing to endure all things, suffer all things short of death by fire, if thereby he may be conspicuous and show off before the public; and so, when I saw the 'subjects' perform their foolish antics on the platform and make the people laugh and shout and admire I had a burning desire to be a subject myself.[2]

So young Sam Clemens volunteered to become mesmerized with a group of other aspiring subjects, but he failed to fall into the trance. He then had to take his seat and watch a man named Hicks perform for an enthusiastic crowd. Sam Clemens was jealous of how the audience made a "hero of Hicks and would crowd around him when the show was over." They would "manifest in many ways that they were proud to be acquainted with him."[3]

On the fourth night, ambitious Sam Clemens could contain himself no longer. This time when the mesmerizer tried

to put him into the trance, he pretended to fall asleep. He said:

> I was cautious at first and watchful, being afraid the professor would discover that I was an imposter and drive me from the platform in disgrace; but as soon as I realized that I was not in danger, I set myself the task of terminating Hicks usefulness as a subject and usurping his place.[4]

Sam Clemens did indeed fulfill his intention. He put on an act that the little town of Hannibal long remembered. After the fourth night, the hypnotist needed no new subjects for the rest of his stay. Sam kept the audience so entertained that he was the only necessary subject.

Sam's acting was so good that, thirty years later, when he tried to confess the truth to his mother, she would not believe him. That is what prompted him to write, "Carlyle said, 'A lie cannot live.' It shows that he did not know how to tell them."[5]

The fame he acquired locally for his amazing performances while supposedly under hypnosis gave Twain his first glorious taste of the platform. The singular joy he experienced which comes only from audience approval no doubt had influence on recalling him to the platform in later years.

His preparation and training for his writing career was extensive and is easily traceable, but his preparation for lecturing, what he called his "alternate career," is not as prominent.[6]

The first source of influence on Twain's speaking ability was also the first source of influence on his humor: his

mother. At one time he acknowledged his mother's influence on his speech by saying:

> There was something moving in her voice and manner that was irresistibly pathetic. I know now that she was the most eloquent person whom I have met in all my days, but I did not know it then. I had been abroad in the world for twenty years and known and listened to many of the best talkers, before it dawned upon me that in the matter of moving and pathetic eloquence none of them was the equal of that untrained and artless talker . . . that obscure little woman with the great heart and enchanted tongue.[7]

Sam Clemens attended a Presbyterian church when he was young and was influenced no doubt by preaching for he desired at that age to become a minister. He said it was "the most earnest ambition I ever had." But he did not aspire to the ministry because he really wanted to be a preacher, "but because it never occurred" to him "that a preacher could be damned. It looked like a safe job."[8]

Mark Twain's first notable attempt at public speaking was when he was twenty years old. He had gone to work for his brother, Orion, as a journeyman printer. He was invited to accompany his brother to a banquet honoring the birth of Benjamin Franklin. It was an elaborate affair with many "prominent guests." After the dinner, "members of the printer's fraternity were called upon to speak." Shouts began to call for Sam Clemens to say a few words. "Sam rose, blushing, and began his remarks in an embarrassed, stammering fashion. He presently rallied his powers as he went along and before he sat down, had convulsed his hearers with a remarkable production of wit and humor."[9] The report of

Sam's speech appeared the next day in the Gate City, a Keokuk newspaper. It described the speech as being "replete with wit and humor." It also reported that his speech was "interrupted by long and continuous bursts of applause."[10]

After his first successful speech there is no indication that he had interests of pursuing public speaking. There is, however, indication that his family and relatives perceived his ability, for they encouraged him to prepare for the law. But Twain had no love for law, and at that time had only one love and desire: he wanted to become a riverboat pilot.[11]

Nine years later, Twain, having been forced west to California by the Civil War and east again by his failure at silver mining, was a reporter on the Virginia City Enterprise. His second big success in speaking came at that time. He had been covering the state legislature for his newspaper and had become a favorite with the government leaders. Consequently, he was elected to serve as governor at the Third House--a fake legislature organized to make fun of regular House procedures and personalities. He made his acceptance speech by mocking some of the speaking habits and peculiar traits of prominent legislators. His bigger success came when he delivered his annual message several weeks later. But between those two events was one of the most important events in Twain's life. When Twain arrived back in Virginia City, the town was excited about the coming of Artemus Ward. He was a tremendously popular writer and lecturer, dealing

mostly with humor. He and Twain were friends from the start. Ward encouraged Twain to have his writings published in Eastern journals. Ward did not know of Twain's speaking talent and, therefore, it is doubtful that he encouraged him to pursue lecturing. Twain saw Ward perform and admired him to the point of idolatry until he himself became better and saw that Ward's techniques were weak.[12]

Twain's admiration of Ward is expressed in his lecture of the season 1871-1872 where he included a long portion about Artemus Ward.[13]

One may easily see how Twain's mother, the influence of preachers, and meeting and observing professionals like Artemus Ward could help prepare him for speaking. But Twain was not just a speaker, he was a humorist and storyteller. His lectures were humorous and filled with stories. How did he prepare for his alternate career? Albert Bigelow Paine suggests in his biography that Twain was simply born with the natural talent. Could there be other reasons? It seems probable that there are.

One aid to his speaking that has received little attention is his phonographic memory.[14] He could hear accents and recreate them years later both through writing and orally. On the riverboat and in the silver mines he heard born storytellers exhibit their art. He recreated and improved their stories and techniques. His good memory also helped him when delivering the lecture itself for he was never stumped for a

word. Memory has always been important to good public speaking.

On October 2, 1866, Twain delivered his first public lecture. Having just returned from a five month stay in the Sandwich Islands as a special correspondent for the Sacremento Union, Twain was full of fascinating facts and tales. His fame in the region was growing rapidly. So he advertised his first lecture with ingenious hand bills proclaiming, "The trouble begins at 8 o'clock."[15]

Fifteen hundred people attended his first lecture. Many were friends and many had read his stories so much that they felt acquainted. Twain was so worried about being a failure that he planted people in the audience to laugh upon receiving a subtle cue. If these planted friends had known what he planned to attempt, they probably would have remained in the safety of their homes. Twain once revealed to James Russell Lowell at a later lecture that he planned to try a special technique which he had employed successfully at his first lecture. After Twain explained exactly what the special technique was, Lowell, who was sitting on the platform with Twain said, "I think you are dangerous company. I am going to move to the other end of the platform and get out of the way of the bricks."[16]

The special technique which Twain used successfully that first night was to take a moldy old joke which everyone in San Francisco had heard three or four times, and hated three or four times, and he told it over and over until he made his audience see the satire. He was successful, although he admitted

extreme fear upon first meeting the audience and said that "the memory of it was indestructible, but that it had its compensations, for it made him immune to timidity before audiences for all time to come."[17]

His first lecture complete, his fame began to spread eastward. But before he branched out on a national lecture tour, he lectured only regionally to perfect his technique. He was aware that Artemus Ward's techniques were only workable once. They would not stand repetition. So Twain was always trying new tricks, and most of them were oral.

Twain's success as a speaker can be attributed to many sources. His talents, his exposure, his natural appeal, his phonographic memory, his understanding of humor and humorous techniques, his observation of Artemus Ward, Petroleum V. Nasby, and other professionals and his reputation all helped him attain the summit of success. But still, it is the belief of this author that the one insight which Twain possessed and which made him the top lecturer on the Lyceum circuit was his insight into communication.

It must be admitted that other humorists of Twain's time were equal to him in delivery and technique. Twain set himself apart by realizing that some of his material could bear repetition and some of it could not. He remembered which lecture he delivered where so that he would not repeat it in the same city. He once said the following: "I know a great many secrets about audiences--secrets not to be got out of books, but acquired only by experience."[18]

Twain also knew that every audience was different and special. He knew that their ability to enjoy and his ability to make them enjoy his performances could be easily hampered by the environment and conditions surrounding the lecture. For instance, he almost refused to lecture in a church building because the people felt more reserved in such formal surroundings. He once told James Redpath, "I never made a success of a lecture delivered in a church yet."[19]

Mark Twain illustrated how he felt about delivering lectures in church buildings when he wrote the following passage in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. He needed his audience to be relaxed.

> For a full hour the lecturer had flooded his audience with the killingest kind of jokes and they had remained silent. After the program was over and he had turned wearily to leave, a number of old graybeards came up to him, wrung his hand, and declared that his lecture was the funniest thing they had every heard, and that it was all they could do to keep from laughing right out loud in the meeting.[20]

Another condition that infuriated him was the custom of committee people placing themselves on the stage behind him. The slightest move by a person behind him could ruin his timing.

Another way which helped Twain to be successful over and over was his ability to write for a specific audience. He could always design his lectures and write new material for a special audience. He would get information about well-known local citizens and make up jokes about them. A humorous story about any person is much more funny if one knows that person.

An example of writing for a special audience was the time Twain was giving a benefit lecture for an orphanage. He said the following:

> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I am well aware of the fact that it would be a most gigantic fraud for you to pay a dollar each to hear my lecture. But you pay your dollar to an orphan asylum, and have the lecture thrown in! So if it is not worth anything it does not cost you anything! There is no expense connected with this lecture. Everything is done gratuitously, and you have the satisfaction of knowing that all you have paid goes for the benefit of the orphans. I understand that there are to be other entertainments given week after next for the same object, the asylum being several thousand dollars in debt, and I earnestly recommend to you to attend them and not let your benevolence stop with this lecture. There will be eating to be done. Go there and eat and eat and keep on eating and pay as you go. The proprietors of the skating rink have generously offered to donate the asylum the proceeds of one evening, to the amount of a thousand dollars, and when that evening comes, go and skate. I do not know whether you can all skate or not, but go and try! If you break your necks it will be no matter; it will be to help the orphans.
>
> Don't be afraid of giving too much to the orphans, for however much you give, you have the easiest end of the bargain. Some persons have to take care of these sixty orphans, and they have to <u>wash</u> them. Orphans have to be washed! And it's no small job, either, for they have only one wash tub and it's slow business. They can't wash but one orphan at a time. They have to be washed in the most elaborate detail, and by the time they get through with the sixty, the original orphan has to be washed again. Orphans won't stay washed. I've been an orphan myself for twenty-five years, and I know this to be true. There is a suspicion of impurity and imposition about many ostensibly benevolent enterprises, but there is no taint of reproach upon this for the benefit of these little waifs upon the sea of life, and I hope your benevolence will not stop here. In conclusion I thank you for the patience and fortitude with which you have listened to me.[21]

Twain also knew what kind of audiences he preferred and why. He knew where he was likely to be successful and where he would fail. He had one criterion on which he based success: whether he could make the audience laugh or not.[22]

He preferred city audiences to country ones because city people were more sophisticated in their perception of humor. He preferred large audiences to small ones for financial concerns. He also preferred audiences in which the men far outnumbered the women because "Ladies are cowards about expressing their feelings before folk; men become cowards in the presence of ladies."[23]

Another of Twain's communication insights is illustrated by his custom of preparing the audience for a humorous lecture to have them in the right mood when they took their seats. He did this by way of clever advertising, such as the handbill he wrote for his first lecture (see Appendix C).

Twain's preparation for his lectures was only one minor element among the many that contributed to his acceptance all over the world.

In his early years on the circuit he employed the use of unique introductions to get his lecture off to the right start. In his lectures, as in his writings, he enjoyed looking at the back side of tradition and attacking it from its blind side. This is what he did with his introductions. He said that people had a habit of introducing a guest with a long string of beautiful adjectives and by building him up a good deal. It gave a man a lot to live up to. Therefore, when he was in his early years and was not known by sight, he would use this satirical introduction:

> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: By request, I will ask leave to introduce the lecturer of the evening, Mr. Clemens otherwise Mark Twain--a gentleman whose great learning,

> whose historical accuracy, whose devotion to science, and whose veneration for the truth, are only equaled by his high moral character and his majestic presence. I refer in these vague and general terms to myself. I am a little opposed to the custom of ceremoniously introducing a lecturer to an audience, partly because it seems to me that it is not entirely necessary, I would much rather make it myself. Then I can get in all the facts.[24]

After that introduction had exhausted its usefulness because audiences began to recognize him by sight, he used a slightly different way to poke fun at traditional introductions. He would say:

> I never had but one public introduction that seemed to me just exactly the thing--an introduction brimful of grace. Why it was a sort of inspiration. And yet the man who made it wasn't acquainted with me; but he was sensible to the backbone, and he said to me: 'Now you don't want any compliments?' Of course I did not want any compliments at all. He said: 'Ladies and gentlemen--I shan't fool away any unnecessary time in this introduction. I don't know anything about this man; at least I only know two things; one is, that he has never been in the penitentiary; and the other is, I don't know why.' Such an introduction puts a man at his ease right off.[25]

Twain stumbled onto the idea of self introductions early in his career. He was going to give a lecture at Cooper Institute in New York and Senator James W. Nye, former governor of Nevada and a favorite with Californians, was to introduce him. However, Nye failed to show up, so Twain gave his own introduction and blistered Nye for his absence with a punishing satire. Twain later said "I introduced myself as well as he could have done it, that is, without straining myself."[26]

Stumbling onto the value and benefit of self introductions, Twain began to perfect it with body language, stammering, and looks of fright. He would slip out of the eaves on the platform,

shuffling toward the speaker's stand. With one hand in his pocket, he proceeded as if he had no particular destination in mind and was completely unaware of the assembled house. He would then look up and surprisingly discover his audience which had been watching him all that time. He would feign indecision as to whether he should run out or stand still. "Proceeding in the direction of the lecturn, he walked slowly and hesitatingly around it, as if seeking the most comfortable place to stand."[27] After gazing into the audience for a while with an idiotic stare, as if he were looking for someone, he would begin his introduction. Many times the audience thought he was the Master of Ceremonies until he revealed his identity and brought the house down.

The greatest insight to Twain's personal approach of lecturing comes from his article, "How to Tell a Story."

First he makes a distinction between the humorous story and the comic story; or, as we would say today, a joke.

He says, "The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of the telling; the comic story and the witty story, upon the manner."[28]

Whereas the joke must be short and to the point, the humorous story "may wander around as much as it pleases, and arrive nowhere in particular."[29]

Twain considered that difference to be supremely important to his success on the platform. As long as he relied on stories and not jokes, he could rely on being well received. He explains still further:

> The humorous story is strictly a work of art--high and delicate art--and only an artist can tell it; but no art is necessary in telling the comic and witty story; anybody can do it. The art of telling a humorous story --understand, I mean by word of mouth, not print--was created in America and has remained at home.
>
> The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it.[30]

The technique which Twain mentions in the above paragraph may have impressed him as he listened to Ben Coon use it when he told the original "Jumping Frog" story at Angel's Camp.[31] Twain describes Coon's oral style as follows:

> He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle flowing key to which he tuned his initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter.[32]

Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that Twain's contact with certain strange and colorful personalities had a definite effect on the shaping of his career.

He, of course, had other techniques which he relied upon heavily. After he had prepared his audience for his lecture with the use of witty advertising and had the audience "turned on" by his unusual introduction, his next step was to project the character of Ben Coon. With that complete, he had these final techniques to utilize:

> To string incongruities and absurdities together in a wandering and sometimes purposeless way, and seem innocently unaware that they are absurdities, is the basis of American art. Another feature is the slurring of the point. A third feature is the dropping of a studied remark apparently without knowing it, as if one were thinking aloud. The fourth is the pause.[33]

Twain mentions the difficulty of making "the pause" effective throughout many of his own critical works. He said that it is "an exceedingly important feature in any kind of story."[34] It has to be delivered just right. One cannot wait too long or too short a time, for the pause is a "dainty thing."[35]

"For one audience the pause will be short, for another, a little longer, for another, a shade longer still. The faces of the audience tell him when to end the pause."[36]

James Redpath, the top lecture agent of the day and the director of the Boston Lyceum Bureau, convinced Twain to sign a contract for a lecture tour for the season 1868-1869.[37]

Twain began his tour with a new lecture entitled, "The Vandal Abroad," at a salary of one hundred dollars per night. By the end of that season he had earned $8,000 for approximately 55 lectures.[38] That comes to an average of $145 per lecture.

It has been said that Twain rarely consulted his notes during a lecture. He did have notes on the lecturn just in case he became flustered, but it is said that he never used them. But it is possible, because of the nature of his notes, that he used them a great deal without anyone noticing.

He had a peculiar method of writing notes for his lectures. To aid his memory he found it convenient and expedient to have notes constructed partly of tiny sketches. These notes were humorous in themselves, for Twain had not talentin art and did not mind showing it. For instance, a note referring

to the white washing of the fence in Tom Sawyer looked like this: (fence white washing).[39]

After Twain signed on with Redpath, his fame grew and his career became more brightly colored with success upon success. His writing sold more than ever which helped keep him into the market of the highest demand.

Twain, like most great lecturers of his time, eventually traveled to England. He was afraid of giving a performance in London, however, for fear he would be too crude for their sophisticated tastes.

Artemus Ward had already won fame and affection for American humor before Twain gave his first London lecture; it was on Monday evening, October 13, 1873. His title was "Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands."

His special technique that night was "appearing on the platform in evening dress, assuming the character of a manager announcing a disappointment."[40]

He said, "Mr. Clemens had fully expected to be present." Here he stopped a moment to let the announcement take effect. Sounds of disappointment rose out of the audience. Then he continued. "I am happy to say that Mark Twain is present, and will now give his lecture." The audience roared its approval.[41]

Twain's lecture was a total success. The London people loved him. As always, his encore was gracious and sincere, which is one attribute that endeared him to his audience. He was not overflowing with trite comments to show his gratitude. Instead, on this occasion he said:

> I only wish to say (here Mr. Clemens faltered as if too much affected to proceed) I am very grateful. I do not wish to appear pathetic, but it is something magnificent for a stranger to come to the metropolis of the world and be received so handsomely as I have been. I simply thank you.[41]

So one sees that Twain's ability was even appreciated by the sophisticated British. His alternate career had reached a peak. From there on it would be physically tiring to him, but he still loved to talk.

Consequently, in 1874, because he was physically exhausted and no longer wished to be separated from his wife, he retired from lecturing. He thought that it was a permanent retirement, but ten years later he found himself on the platform once more, engaged in a reading tour with George W. Cable.[42]

Once again Twain retired for what he believed was forever, but by 1895 he was miserably in debt. At the age of sixty there was only one quick means by which he could revive his bank account: a world tour. So he went on his world tour, pulled himself out of debt, and quit the platform once more. This time it was final. Never again did he lecture for money.[43]

Four years before his death, at the age of seventy-one, Twain gave what was billed as his "Farewell Lecture."[44]

Even though he had vowed to never again lecture for pay, when he was asked to lecture for the Robert Fulton Memorial Association at the rate of $1,000, in Twainish style, he agreed; but only on the condition that he could contribute the $1,000 to the Fulton Association. So on April 19, 1906 Twain delivered his Farewell Lecture at Carnegie Hall.[45]

Even in his last lecture, Twain tried a new technique. Of course, he used his tested ones, such as writing a burlesque on the achievements of Robert Fulton. But the new one he used was truly unique. General Grant, president of the Fulton Association, was sitting next to the platform. Therefore, in the middle of a sentence, Twain would pretend that he had forgotten a certain detail about Robert Fulton, and so, in a secretive manner, he would lean over and ask General Grant a question. Pretending to receive an answer, Twain would proceed from exactly where he had quit.[46]

The crowd on hand was aware that it was witnessing "the close of a heroic chapter in a unique career."[47] Perhaps it is ironic that Twain delivered his last lecture on the inventor of the steamboat, that magnificent invention which helped a young Sam Clemens get a taste of different walks of life which strengthened his understanding of human nature.

As Paine wrote, "He became completely saturated with the river--its terms, its memories, its influence remained a definite factor in his personality to the end of his day."[48]

NOTES

[1]Charles Neider, ed., The Autobiography of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 50.

[2]Neider, Autobiography, p. 51.

[3]Neider, Autobiography, p. 51.

[4]Neider, Autobiography, p. 51.

[5]Neider, Autobiography, p. 58.

[6]Fred W. Lorch, The Trouble Begins at Eight (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1968), p. ix.

[7]Lorch, p. 10.

[8]Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), p. 84.

[9]Paine, p. 107; Lorch, pp. 7-8.

[10]Lorch, p. 8.

[11]Lorch, p. 8.

[12]Paine, pp. 239-240; Lorch, p. 14.

[13]Lorch, p. 16.

[14]Charles Neider, ed., The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain, rev. ed. (New York: International Collectors Library, 1957), p. 19.

[15]Paine, p. 292.

[16]Neider, Autobiography, p. 147.

[17]Lorch, p. 30.

[18]Lorch, p. 237.

[19]Lorch, p. 238.

[20]Lorch, p. 238.

[21]Lorch, pp. 95-96.

[22]Lorch, p. 242.

[23]Lorch, p. 240.

[24]Lorch, p. 305.

[25]Lorch, p. 305.

[26]Lorch, p. 65.

[27]Lorch, p. 214.

[28]Mark Twain, *How to Tell a Story and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1897), p. 3.

[29]Twain, p. 3.

[30]Twain, p. 4.

[31]Lorch, p. 12.

[32]Neider, *Autobiography*, p. 1.

[33]Twain, p. 8.

[34]Twain, p. 9.

[35]Twain, p. 9.

[36]Twain, p. 182.

[37]Paine, p. 373.

[38]Paine, p. 373.

[39]Paine, p. 1290.

[40]Lorch, p. 139.

[41]Paine, p. 491.

[42]Lorch, p. 261.

[43]Lorch, p. 261.

[44]Paine, p. 1287.

[45]Paine, p. 1287.

[46]Paine, p. 1288.

[47]Paine, p. 1290.

[48]Paine, p. 148.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCES ON MARK TWAIN'S READING

In the previous chapter, the influences that prepared Twain for writing and lecturing were highlighted. He was well prepared for both pursuits. However, the physical strain of traveling the lyceum circuit caused Twain to vow he would "quit the platform forever"[1] following the lecture tour of 1874. Ten years passed before he was sufficiently moved to break that vow. Apparently the prevalence of "Authors' Readings"[2] in the early 1880's attracted Twain's interest. This is understandable considering that Twain had only recently come into national recognition as an author. During the lecture years he thought of himself as a journalist instead of an author.[3] Therefore, seeing other authors gaining recognition by reading their works on the platform, Twain, no doubt, was anxious to become involved in Authors' Reading also. This desire culminated in the reading tour of 1884.

Authors' Readings began as an outgrowth of the lyceum movement. Yet, Authors' Readings, which were fathered by Charles Dickens' reading tour in 1867,[4] did not gain great recognition until the Chautauqua movement fanned the spread of such readings in the late 1870's.

The first Chautauqua was established in 1874 at Chautauqua Lake in New York.[5] "While the original purpose was

the study of the Bible . . . the course of study was expanded to include secular subjects . . . lectures, music, and readings. . . ."[6]

The Chautauqua inspired a need for knowledge in its participants. "An intense, almost fanatical interest in education took possession"[7] of many people connected with the institution. Since Chautauqua's became prevalent all over the country, it is a matter of little wonder that Authors' Readings became popular as a form of instruction and entertainment. "As the Chautauqua became more varied, public reading became an essential part."[8]

When Twain could no longer resist the platform, he made plans for a reading tour and explained his desire by saying, "I had never tried reading as a trade and wanted to try it."[9]

Twain was not incidentally prepared for public reading as he was for writing and lecturing. His appeal in lecturing was his natural gift as a story-teller. He had been telling stories since his childhood when he told his first humorous tale, at the age of about ten, to Jimmie McDaniel, of whom Twain said, "I thought he would laugh his teeth out."[10] The importance of that experience is that it was easily transferred to the platform of a humorist. All of Twain's previous story-telling experience was applicable in the art of lecturing.

In dealing with reading, however, a discipline that Twain considered more difficult than lecturing, his experience was rather sketchy. Most of his experience was gained by reading to children and to friends of the family, a setting that was quite different from the popular conception of Authors' Readings.

More important still is the fact that his private reading experience was not totally applicable to the public reading situation.

It was in 1867 that Twain was first exposed to an Authors' Reading. The author was Charles Dickens,[11] and by Twain's own account of that event, it is evident that he found the art impressive and delightful:

> What is called a 'reading,' as a public platform entertainment, was first essayed by Charles Dickens, I think. He brought the idea with him from England in 1867. He had made it very popular at home and he made it so acceptable and so popular in America that his houses were crowded everywhere, and in a single season he earned two hundred thousand dollars . . .
>
> Mr. Dickens read scenes from his printed books. From my distance he was a small and slender figure, rather fancifully dressed, and striking and picturesque in appearance. He wore a black velvet coat with a large and glaring red flower in the buttonhole. He stood under a red upholstered shed behind whose slant was a row of strong lights--just such an arrangement as artists use to concentrate a strong light upon a great picture. Dickens' audience sat in a pleasant twilight, while he performed in the powerful light cast upon him from the concealed lamps. He read with great force and animation, in the lively passages, and with stirring effect. It will be understood that he did not merely read but also acted. . . .[12]

Twain was obviously impressed by Dickens' performance and he goes on to say that the audience was greatly moved. Even though this occurred in 1867, Twain did not seem to entertain the possibility of trying his hand at reading for nearly twenty years. It could be that he was too involved in lecturing and did not consider himself an author at that time. Nevertheless, the memory of seeing Dickens remained in his mind and he certainly applied what he learned that night to his own reading later.

As a matter of passing interest, Twain enjoyed the evening of Dickens reading for yet another reason. It was the night he first met Olivia Langdon, the woman who would become his wife and first editor.[13]

The next reading Twain witnessed, as far as we know, took place in Boston's Music Hall, in 1868 or 1869.[14] The date is not certain, but it is not vastly important to the issue.

On the date in question, Twain accompanied Petroleum V. Nasby and Josh Billings, fellow lecturers, to hear a newcomer to the platform, De Cordova. Twain and his companions were concerned about the competition De Cordova might present for he had authored some "dismally humorous things . . . they had met with a deal of favor and given him a pretty wide name."[15]

The crowd on hand was immense and completely filled the hall to a standing-room-only situation. When De Cordova approached the reading stand that was elaborate and "had a Dickens' arrangement of tall gallows frame adorned with upholsteries and stood behind its overhead row of hidden lights,"[16] the audience greeted him with an approval that Twain felt was unwarranted for a novice.

Twain's apprehension and jealousy were something he did not endeavor to conceal when recalling the event. In fact, he even admitted that he had hoped for De Cordova's failure. Twain's worries subsided, however, when he "found he (De Cordova) was going to read a humorous story--from manuscript."[17] Upon learning this Twain said, "I felt better and hopeful but still anxious."[18] Even after De Cordova began reading and was having

a bit of success Twain believed he would ultimately fail, because, as Twain recalled, "I saw that he did not know how to read."[19] Twain's suspicions proved correct. The audience cooled to his reading quickly, and De Cordova was left with a dead audience on his hands.

Lorch sights this event as proof that Twain was convinced by 1869 that no literature should be read from the book. He supports that contention as follows:

> The reader, Mark Twain was convinced, must dispense with the book, for in reading from manuscript or printed page you are telling a story second hand. 'You are a mimic, and not the person involved; you are an artificiality, not a reality; whereas telling the tale without the book you absorb the character, just as in the case of an actor.' Great actors, he maintained would never be able to captivate an audience if they came on stage reading from a book.[20]

Lorch has presented a good case here, except for the aspect of time. He is quoting Twain from a period well after the tour of 1884,[21] and is assuming Twain believed that in 1869. This distinction must be clarified in order to better trace Twain's development as an oral interpreter.

If Lorch's view were true, if Twain were convinced that reading all literature from the book was a prelude to failure, why would he forget that knowledge and learn it again in 1884? Why would he treat himself to embarrassment by reading from the manuscript during the first week of the 1884 tour and triumphantly discover an answer that he knew quite well years earlier? The different opinions on this issue results from different foci. Pertaining to Twain's words, "When I found he was going to read a humorous <u>story</u>--from manuscript--I

felt better and hopeful, but still anxious," Lorch focuses on the word, manuscript.[22] The present argument, however, focuses on the word Twain underlined when writing the phrase, "humorous story." It is felt that Twain emphasized that word because he was citing it as the major reason for presuming De Cordova would soon have a disheartening audience.

There are a combination of two reasons which could account for Twain stressing the word "story," and which could also prove Twain believed De Cordova would fail for other reasons than simply because he read from manuscript.

(1) Twain's experience in lecturing had taught him to carefully memorize every story he told. He believed ardently that this was imperative for humor in story-telling. So it may be that he was stressing the description, "humorous story," and applying his knowledge of lecturing to the reading situation.

(2) The second reason that Twain believed De Cordova's audience would reject him was because he had no experience and had not tried his reading for country audiences before bringing it to the Music Hall in Boston where a lecture's financial worth was assessed. Even the great and experienced lecturers tried their material on country audiences before bringing it to Boston. Twain supported this practice when he said, "Sometime lecturers who were 'new to the business' did not know the value of 'trying it on the dog,' and these were apt to come to the Music Hall with an untried product."[23]

De Cordova's influence, although Twain makes no direct comment about what he learned, probably worked to confirm still further his already firm opinion that all humorous stories had to be memorized if they were to be successful.

The conclusions of this theory must be faced. If Twain knew in 1869 that humorous stories had to be memorized and told rather than read, why would this knowledge not prevent him from reading humorous stories on the 1884 tour? The answer is somewhat simple. In 1884 Twain had difficulty with Huckleberry Finn, a story that Twain believed contained a great deal of depth and truth. Therefore, its purpose was one of pathos, not humor. Otherwise he would have criticized Dickens as he did De Cordova, for not having his manuscript memorized. However, Dickens' purpose, as Twain's was in reading Huckleberry Finn, was one that was too serious for humor alone to satisfy. [This subject is treated in depth in Chapter V.]

Approximately one year prior to the De Cordova reading, Twain heard Petroleum V. Nasby read his famous lecture, "Cussed by Canaan," at The Opera House in Hartford.[24] Twain took extensive care in describing the technique of Nasby.

> He (Nasby) had been on the platform with that same lecture--and no other--during two or three years, and it had passed his lips several hundred times, yet even now he could not deliver any sentence of it without his manuscript. His appearance on the stage was welcomed with a prodigious burst of applause but he did not stop to bow or in any other way acknowledge the greeting, but strode straight to the reading desk, spread his portfolio open upon it, and immediately petrified himself into an attitude which he never changed during the hour

> and a half occupied by his performance, except to turn his leaves--his body bent over the desk . . . I was all curiosity to hear him begin. He did not keep me waiting . . . he raised his face slightly, flashed a glance upon the audience, and bellowed this remark in a thundering bull-voice, 'We are all descended from grandfathers.' Then he went right on roaring to the end, tearing his ruthless way through the applause and laughter and taking no sort of account of it. His lecture was a volleying and sustained discharge of bull's-eye hits . . . and his success was due to his matter, not his manner. . . .[25]

Although Twain was bothered that Nasby had to read his lecture and felt that it lost potential as a result, he did concede to Nasby's success because the humor depended on the matter and not the manner of delivery. This supports the belief already expressed in this paper: In the era of the late 1860's Twain was not yet opposed to one's reading all literature from manuscript when on the platform, he was simply opposed to the idea of reading humorous stories and other such humor whereby the success of it could only be reaped by the manner of telling.

At this point one might conclude that this argument, too, draws from sources that Twain wrote in his old age and assumes Twain had the same opinion years earlier. Even though the "manner and matter" theory is expressed in Twain's essay, "How to Tell a Story," evidence suggests that he had developed this theory well before the Nasby lecture. In a letter to his wife while on a lecture tour Twain wrote, "The same old practising on audiences still goes on--the same old feeling of pulses and altering manner and matter to suit the symptom."[26] As Twain reveals, "manner and matter" was already an old theory.

Twain's personal reading experience beyond the immediate family and close friends was quite varied, considering the nature of events at which he read.

In the winter of 1875-1876 Twain read at a concert in Philadelphia for the short period of fifteen minutes. It appears that he was an added attraction for that concert and was paid handsomely for his reading. However, the amount of $300 must have struck Twain as excessively modest for he "berated the manager as a skin-flint, and remarked of the concert that he could get up a better one 'with a barrel of cats.'"[27]

Although Twain did not care for reading at concerts, he permitted Redpath, his agent in early lecturing days, to involve him in the Boston Music Hall on November 21, 1876, for an event called a "Grand Double Entertainment." This, too, was a concert.[28]

Evidently Twain was not an overwhelming success at this event for the Boston Transcript reported only some of the selections which Twain read, and said nothing of the quality in its November 22 edition.[29]

"Beginning with 1880 the record of readings increases somewhat, though most of the performances appear to have been given for charitable purposes."[30] In that year Twain read at a private house, gratuitously, and in 1881 he read at the chapel of his pastor, Joseph Twichell, again for free. This time he read Uncle Remus's "Tar Baby" and said that he had "a most rattling high time."[31]

From an oral interpreter's view, one can easily see how the milieu of these early readings was vastly different from the more formal Authors' Readings.

On February 28, Twain read for the literary society at West Point. "Whether Mark Twain was paid for the performance is not clear, but his program gave so much delight that on two later occasions he was again invited by the cadets to read."[32] This, perhaps, was the only instance in which Twain read for an audience that could be even remotely compared to the kind of audiences he would meet on the 1884 tour. Even so, differences of considerable dimension can also be observed, such as the intelligence of the cadet audience of West Point being substantially above a random country one.

Finally, in that year Twain also read to the African church in Hartford. Uncle Remus's "Tar Baby" was once again his selection.[33]

We have seen thus far that Twain's experience in reading, although not totally applicable to Authors' Readings, was certainly better than no experience at all. Nevertheless, it was not sufficient, even combined with his lecturing knowledge, to preclude his having difficulty when attempting to read on the tour of 1884, as shall be seen in Chapter V.

NOTES

[1]Fred W. Lorch, The Trouble Begins at Eight (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1968), p. 261.

[2]Charles Neider, ed., The Autobiography of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917), p. 175.

[3]Lorch, p. 153.

[4]Neider, p. 260.

[5]Mary Margaret Robb, Oral Interpretation of Literature in American Colleges and Universities (New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), p. 126.

[6]Robb, p. 127.

[7]Robb, p. 127.

[8]Robb, p. 128.

[9]Neider, p. 176.

[10]Neider, p. 74.

[11]Neider, p. 176.

[12]Neider, pp. 176-177.

[13]Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), p. 353.

[14]Neider, p. 167.

[15]Neider, p. 167.

[16]Neider, p. 167.

[17]Neider, p. 167.

[18]Neider, p. 167.

[19]Neider, p. 167.

[20]Lorch, p. 156.

[21]Neider, pp. 166-167.

[22]Lorch, p. 155.

[23]Neider, pp. 166-167.

[24]Neider, p. 168.

[25]Neider, pp. 168-169.

[26]Dixon Wecter, ed., The Love Letters of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 162.

[27]Paul Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 190.

[28]Fatout, p. 190.

[29]Lorch, p. 153.

[30]Lorch, p. 153.

[31]Lorch, p. 153.

[32]Lorch, p. 154.

[33]Lorch, p. 155.

CHAPTER IV

THE READING TOUR OF MARK TWAIN IN 1884-1885

The public does not allow a public figure to alter his private views without thinking he has gone back on his word, no matter how much time has lapsed between such statements. Mark Twain frequently found himself in this predicament, especially regarding his many public statements in which he announced his retirement from the platform, only to reverse that decision and return to the platform later.

Twain explained this paradox to reporters in New York while on the 1884 reading tour:

> Lecturers and Burglars never reform. I don't know how it is with burglars--it is so long since I had intimate relations with those people--but it is quite true of lecturers. They . . . say they are going to leave the lecture platform, never to return. They mean it, they mean it. But there comes, in time, an overpowering temptation to come out on the platform and give truth and morality one more lift. You can't resist.[1]

It was perhaps this attitude that compelled Twain to once again seek the platform and his old way of life in the early 1880's. Twain developed many schemes for a reading tour, most of them too outrageous to be practical. As early as 1881, Twain proposed to Redpath that he might make a short tour with the "Roughing It" lecture, but the plans fell through. It is here important to note that each subsequent plan Twain invented after the first plan fell through was centered around a reading tour, not a lecture tour.

Years prior to this time, Twain expressed his interest in reading by way of a letter to Josh Billings in 1873, in which Twain advised him to try readings for "they are all the rage now."[2]

Later, in 1878, Twain proposed to the great cartoonist, Thomas Nast, the idea of a joint tour in which Twain would read from his works and Nast would illustrate the readings as they developed.[3]

Twain seemed bent upon the prospect of reading which was enjoying great popularity on the lyceum circuit. "Readings" were fathered by the lecture movement which can be traced back to Josiah Holbrook and the year 1826.

> Commercial lecturing began by way of an article by a New England Manufacturer, Josiah Holbrook, published in 'The American Journal of Education,' in October, 1826, suggesting the establishment in every community of a lyceum in which educational lectures might be presented. Within two years, at least one hundred such lyceums were in existence.[4]

The movement mushroomed and continued to grow steadily until 1876 when commercialism "killed that industry dead."[5] No longer could small towns afford to pay the prices that managers required. Thus lectures and Author's Readings dissipated almost to non-existence so that there was a "happy and holy silence for ten years."[6] Nevertheless, Authors' Readings were the more prevalent of the two until 1887 when many authors agreed with George Washington Cable, "that an author reading from his own pages was no longer a novelty."[7]

Returning to Twain and his early plans for a reading tour, one should first examine his proposal to Joel Chandler Harris, otherwise known as Uncle Remus. Twain approached Harris with a modest plan of a joint reading tour, but as it turned out, Harris was too shy to attempt such an undertaking. There might have been other problems, as Mary Cable Dennis, one of George Washington Cable's daughters recalled upon first meeting Twain and Uncle Remus.

> One day we were told that Mark Twain, whose stories we knew, and Uncle Remus, whose stories we loved, were coming to see father, and that we might come into the drawing room when they came. . . . Imagine the surprise of one of our little band of youngsters when she saw her beloved Uncle Remus. A rather small, quiet, unassuming man. . . . 'He isn't a dear old colored man at all, he's just a white man." . . . Mr. Harris, however, was too timid to read his own stories aloud when asked to do so, even when his audience was composed almost entirely of children, but others wanted them (the stories read) so Mark Twain and Father took turns in reading to us the stories of Uncle Remus.[8]

Twain should have seen from that that Harris was certainly not ready for the platform. Twain, however, must have loved the stories of Remus so much that he wanted to include him still. So he customarily permitted the original plan to grow into one that Tom Sawyer might have conjured. It was high-sounding in every detail. "After meeting with Uncle Remus and George W. Cable in New Orleans, Twain conceived a more elaborate traveling authors' troupe: himself, Harris, Cable, Howells, and Aldrich."[9]

Twain's plan was this:

> He proposed to gather about him what he called a menagerie of literary notables . . . charter a well appointed Pullman car equipped with dining facilities, and move about the country in style and comfort.[10]

Twain also referred to this as a circus, revealing that he wanted it to be great fun for all involved. In the end, however, all were forced to decline and only Cable accepted his offer. Thus, the scene was set for one of the great tours of Twain's life.

Twain later admitted to a reporter of the Minneapolis Tribune that he probably would have attempted the tour alone had Cable also declined, but he said, "I want good company on the road and at hotels. A man can start out alone to rob the public, but it's dreary work. . . ."[11]

The history of the tour of 1884 has been well documented by such books as Cardwell's The Twins of Genius and by excellent journal articles. Therefore, it is unlikely that this chapter will add much to the content of historical research, other than bringing these sources together. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recount the history of the tour and make general observations in order to analyze the reading of the tour in a manner which could be significant to research in the realm of oral interpretation.

For the sake of clarity, the remainder of this chapter is divided into four sub-headings: "The Relationship of Twain and Cable;" "The Route of the 1884-1885 Tour;" "Humorous Incidents and Occurrences of Historic Result;" and the "Conclusion" including financial returns.

The Relationship of Twain and Cable

If it is a law of nature that opposites attract, the relationship of George Washington Cable and Mark Twain may have

existed only as a result of that law. In effect, Mark Twain was Cable's anti-thesis. Cable was decidedly religious by all accounts while Twain's tendencies ran quite the other direction. Cable was a recent subject of fame and not accustomed to the result whereas Twain had been living in the spotlight for years. Cable was a miser and Twain was a devoted spendthrift.

Cable and Twain first made acquaintance on Monday, June 13, 1881. At this time, Twain "was 46, was a world figure, famous as a lecturer and humorous writer."[12] On the other hand, "Cable had just caught the attention of the public with his two fresh, promising volumes."[13]

The two apparently enjoyed one another's company from the start for in 1882 Twain paid a visit to Cable at his home in New Orleans.[14] And the following year, Twain invited Cable to lecture in Hartford.[15] However, Cable's reputation of having a thin, nasal voice prompted this letter from Cable to Twain in order to allay any doubt Twain might have had concerning Cable's abilities:

> . . . I have now delivered my 3rd lecture here and shall give it again on the 4th, 5th & 6th on the 12th, 14th & 16th. I am proud of my success thus far; the small hall continues to be packed full-aisle and all, and every lecture has been pronounced better than the one before it. My theme was badly chosen. Had my subject been a hit I should have made a ringing success, & even as it is my success is emphatic . . . So you see I shall have tried my lecture wings before I get to Hartford. . . .
>
> I wonder how large Unity Hall is. I should only be glad if it held as many as 500--Now don't fret--I'm leaving it all to you--but I want you to know some things. Unless a hall is absolutely _bad_ for speaking in, I can make 500 hear me as easy as one. . . . Gilman tells me that as he passed along the outer corridor of Johns-Hopkins

> Hall yesterday afternoon, & was going by the closed door of its entrance while I was inside speaking, he asked the janitor why he was sitting with his ear to the key hole. The janitor replied that he was hearing the lecture and added that I spoke so distinctly that he did not lose a single syllable. You see I want you to feel assured of my vocal powers. . . .[16]

The tone of this letter strikes one as that of a novice, one who takes compliments seriously. At the mentioned event on April 3, 1884, Cable read at Unity Hall in Hartford, instead of lecturing as he had planned. Evidently Cable became concerned about his voice and engaged an elocutionist for private voice lessons later that month. After weeks of training, he made a success of reading as a profession, although his training contributed little to that success.

1884 was a lean year for lecturers, but Twain was set on making a tour, and he had selected George Washington Cable as the man to accompany him. So Twain hired James Burton Pond, nicknamed Major Pond to attend to details and travel with the performers as manager. Major Pond, therefore, sent letters to Cable in the summer of 1884 and the two finally agreed on a salary for Cable of $450 a week,[17] plus expenses. Cable insisted that a clause be written into his contract which stated that he would not be required to travel on Sunday.[18] This was a condition that Twain reluctantly agreed to, and he soon regretted that clause very much.

Cable's religious fervor often perturbed his rather profane partner. Twain wrote several letters to his wife in which he complained about Cable's religion. In one such letter he wrote:

> Livy dear you cannot imagine anything like this idiotic Sunday superstition of Cable's. I would throttle a baby that had it. It is the most beggarly disease, the pitiful, the most contemptible mange that ever a grown creature was afflicted withal. The only time that man shows trepidation is when some quarter of a minute of his detestable Sabbath is threatened. . . . O do you know for a year or two he was longing to hear Beecher, but would not cross the river on Sunday? He wouldn't cross the bridge on Sunday.[19]

Cable's religion troubled Twain from the outset. For the first two nights after the two embarked on the tour, Cable would appear in Twain's room, Bible in hand, and proceed to orally interpret the scriptures. Twain allowed it as long as his temper could take the strain, but by the third night Twain informed Cable, "See here, Cable, we'll have to cut this part of the program out. You can read the Bible as much as you please, so long as you don't read it to me."[20]

Twain's inability to put up with Cable's idiosyncracies was a one-sided affair. Cable could tolerate Twain's profanity and incessant smoking with no complaints whatsoever, which is a credit to Cable. Cable can also be admired for never writing one negative word about his partner in his many letters to his wife. Cable's attitude toward Twain is captured well by a reply he once made to one of Twain's questions. Once Twain and Cable were traveling in the smoking coach together and Twain asked him why he chose to ride in a place where the environment was likely to offend him. Twain pointed out that many in the coach smoked and would occasionally swear to which Cable answered, "I know, Mark, I don't do these things, but I can't help admiring the way you do them."[21]

Cable's miserly attitude was another point of irritation for Twain. Twain, paying Cable's expenses, became incensed at Cable's silent refusal to spend any of his own money. Cable had Twain pay for his food, about which Twain said, "When Cable paid his own expenses, he starved himself, and when someone else paid them, his appetite was insatiable."[22] Cable even had Twain pay for his laundry and refused to buy stationery. Twain wrote Livy on this matter and said, "He has never bought one single sheet of paper or an envelope in all these 3 1/2 months--sponges all his stationery, (for literature as well as stationery purposes, from the hotels)."[23] As the letter continued he seemed to grow more angry the longer he stayed on the subject and finished with, "His body is small, but it is much too large for his soul. He is the pitifulest human louse I have ever known."[24]

Twain even vented his rath publicly on this matter, using the cloak of satire. From a stage of the tour he remarked one night, "If it weren't for that fellow Cable this company would have some chance of paying its board bill before it leaves town."[25]

Perhaps it was Cable's refusal to read for charity, something which Twain did often, that enraged Twain the most. Indication has it that Livy wrote to her husband sometime toward the end of the tour, asking him to ask Cable if he would read for a charity in Hartford. Twain answered:

> Detroit, February 13
>
> Livy darling, if they want Cable they must apply to him themselves--as for me, I wouldn't vaguely suggest it to him for any money. He might & may say yes, if they ask him, but I'll never believe it till I see it. He is one of the most spoiled men, by success in life, you ever saw. I imagine that if a charity wants his in-his-opinion-almighty-aid, that charity will have to pay dollars for it. I don't believe he would do anything for nothing. I don't believe he lays over Sundays, gratis: I believe he keeps an account against God. Of course I may be all mistaken, but no matter, I think these things. And he would be quite right to decline to read in Hartford for nothing. It is not his town: he owes nothing to its charities. Don't you allow yourself to be in any way, directly or indirectly, concerned in the applying to him.
>
> Hang it, I believe he did read for a ladies' charity in New Orleans for nothing. And so, after all--
>
> No--I've ransacked my memory, & I was wrong--he told the ladies he would charge his regular price--& he did, & collected it. No, he wouldn't read in Hartford for nothing; he wouldn't read in Heaven for nothing.[26]

It would be to distort history if the peculiar relationship between these extraordinary men were not investigated further. One must realize, for instance, that Twain often wrote letters of wrath to release his anger. Therefore, many of his comments about Cable cannot be taken as Twain's true opinion of the man. The letter which seems to reveal a calm, reflective Twain, considering his true reaction to Cable, is one which Twain wrote to William Dean Howells toward the end of the tour. That letter includes the following excerpt:

> It has been a curious experience. It has taught me that Cable's gifts of mind are greater and higher than I suspected. But--
> That "But" is pointing toward his religion. You will never, never know . . . how loathsome a thing the Christian religion can be made until you come to know and study Cable daily and hourly. Mind you I like him; he is pleasant company; I rage and swear at him sometimes, but we

> do not quarrel; we get along mighty happily together; but in him and his person I have learned to hate all religions. He had taught me to detest the Sabbath-day and hunt up new and troublesome ways to dishonor it.[27]

While on the tour Twain was also under a great deal of pressure. He had recently set up his own publishing business, run by his brother-in-law, Charles L. Webster. Twain wrote daily letters to Webster, instructing him on the publication of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. In addition, Twain was burdened by, "which stocks to sell, which to consider buying, what to do about the Historical Game, and the Perpetual Calendar, what to do about the bed clothes fastener, . . . which people to bring suit against, and how to proceed with negotiations for General Grant's memoirs."[28]

Any man with the worries Twain had, traveling constantly, getting up early and to bed late, performing an average of nine times a week, was bound to be easily irritated. So it must, therefore, be concluded that the relationship between Cable and Twain was, all things considered, a close and happy one. They remained in touch for the rest of Twain's life.

The Route of the 1884-1885 Tour

The chief reasons Twain undertook this tour were recreational, financial, and promotional. The latter reason, promoting the sales of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, was solely responsible for the route the tour took. Twain had the tour arranged so that it would place him in Canada on the proposed date of the book's release. In this way, he could secure a copyright in Canada as he received one in the

United States. He even had the tour return him to Canada four or five weeks after his first visit in case the book was delayed in printing.[29]

Twain included as many large cities on the route as he could because he was convinced such mass exposure would improve book sales. That is why the tour frequented cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and Ontario, Canada.

The exact cities in which the pair read, and the dates of these readings have been prepared by Sandra Boyce and published as a chart in her thesis, "A Reader's Theatre Production Reflecting a Study of the 1884-1885 Reading Tour of Mark Twain."[30] Boyce compiles her chart from a comparison of three sources, so it is obvious such material is readily available and need not be presented here.

In short, however, the tour included fifteen states, and two countries. It lasted four months, from November 5, 1884, when it opened in New Haven, Connecticut, until February 28, 1885, when it closed in Washington D.C.[31] Overall, the tour consisted of 103 engagements held in 85 cities, and it attracted considerable attention.[32]

The pace of the tour was tiring. An excellent example of a typical day was recorded in a diary kept by Ozias W. Pond, brother of Major Pond, who traveled with the group for a short while in the absence of his brother. Ozias Pond recorded the following:

> Monday, Jan. 5th. Left Cincinnati at 8:15 A.M., arriving in Louisville at 12:20. Then we were all invited to a reception at the Press Club 4:30 P.M. Afterwards we went to the Pendennis Club, registered and drank some Appotonaris water. We had a large audience at Leidderkranz Hall, although it rained very hard.[33]

Maintaining such a brisk pace required, no doubt, a great deal of stamina. Twain's temper often flared because of the early risings. Ozias Pond recorded such a case in his diary. It seems that Twain was forced to get up rather early one morning to catch a train. "He didn't feel like getting up so early and vented his anger by squaring off with the window shutter and knocking it completely out in one round."[34]

Humorous Incidents and Occurrences of Historic Result

The history of the tour contains many day-to-day, humorous events. This should not be surprising, considering the reputation of the leader. Nevertheless, two of these instances are worth mentioning.

While traveling by train from Springfield, Illinois, in route to St. Louis, the engine and the following car derailed just prior to a river crossing. "Most of the passengers, including Mark, rushed for the doors. Mr. Cable and myself being the only passengers who seemed to retain their self possession."[35] Evidently Twain was embarrassed by his reaction when he saw the danger had passed. He said later "he thought the train was going into the river, and he would rather fall on top of the train than have the train fall on him." He said that that river was "perfectly familiar to him, and he could pilot us all safely."[36]

Any tour starring performers of the Twain-Cable quality attracted the interest of the press and the public. Therefore, many offers of gratuitous lodging came from wealthy townspeople and politicians along the route. Many times these gestures of charity were offered as a manner of gaining recognition for the host. Consequently, the host would wish to give the celebrities an open-buggy tour of the town, and thereby, allow the public to admire his society. Twain refused most such offers because he had learned in his early lecture days that rest was better acquired in hotels. Hosts usually over worked him. He wrote to his wife about this in 1869:

> After the natural wonders are visited then we have to call on other inanimated wonders with dull faces, but with legs to them that show them to be human: the mayor; the richest man; the wag of the village (who instantly assails me with stale jokes and humorous profanity); the village editor--& a lot more of people I take no possible interest in & don't want to see. And when by some divine accident one of them isn't at home what a fervent prayer of thankfulness rises up in my heart.
>
> I have only to submit to these inflictions when I am the guest of somebody & cannot refuse to suffer in return for his hospitality. . . .[37]

The above letter explains the reason for Twain refusing nearly every offer of housing while on the reading tour. However, he did accept the offer of the cartoonist, Thomas Nast, who was an old and dear friend.

In the middle of the night, the large collection of clocks in the Nast home were performing their duties so loudly that Twain could not sleep. He was so outraged by this racket that he got out of bed and stopped every clock

in the house. He then returned to bed and slept so well that he nearly missed the early morning train. Since a delay of that sort would have caused him to miss his next reading, Nast asked him about the wisdom of his actions. Twain was not bothered in the least. He said, "Well, those clocks were all overworked, anyway. They will feel much better for a night's rest."[38]

Nast was inspired by Twain's actions to draw a caricature of Twain wrestling with the offending clocks. This event, and the one previously mentioned, are well worth recording because each was excellent newspaper material. Thus, the events amounted to free publicity for the tour.

One reason Twain undertook the reading tour was to provide funds for his newly established publishing firm. Yet, results of what seemed at the time, insignificant events, could have made the tour a vast financial success had Twain read every night for charity. These insignificant events brought Twain into contact with three great books while on the tour: one he would read, one he would write, and one he would publish. The money he would gain from these books would be many times the amount of tour profits.

One day while Twain and Cable were browsing through a bookstore, Twain came across a copy of Sir Thomas Malory's _Morte Arthure_. After looking it over curiously for a while, Twain asked Cable if he knew anything about the book. Cable said, "Mark that is one of the most beautiful books in the

world. Let me buy it for you. You will love it more than any book you ever read."[39]

Cable did buy it for him, and Twain certainly loved it. It soon inspired one of Twain's classics, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.[40] In fact, Twain became immediately enchanted by the old English language for he began calling Ozias Pond, Sir Sagramore--Kinght of the Lake, which is evidenced by this telegram Twain sent to Pond during the tour to cheer him from a sickness:

> Now with you well, Sir Sagramore, thou good knight and gentle that there be two that right wonderly do love thee, grieving passing sore at they heavy travail. And we will meet that thou prosper at the hand of the leech and come lightly forth of thy hurt and be as thou were tofore!
>
> Sir Mark Twain
> Sir George Cable[41]

By 1884, General U.S. Grant and Mark Twain had been friends for many years. Just three years prior to the tour, Twain had suggested to Grant that he should write his memoirs.[42] Grant, however, was not in need of money at the time, and he did not care to undertake an exhausting literary exercise to gain monies he did not require. 1884 found Grant in quite a different situation. His business partner, by most unethical procedures, left Grant in a ruin near bankruptcy.[43]

It was at that time Grant wrote several articles for Century magazine concerning famous battles of the Civil War. For this work Grant was paid $500 per article,[44] a rate which he felt was more than adequate. This source of easy money inspired him to write and sell his memoirs.

Twain was unaware of these developments because he was touring New England at the time. Twain first discovered the General's intentions, quite by chance, as he was returning to his hotel after giving a reading in early November at New York City's Chickering Hall.

Two men were walking in front of Twain and he heard one say, "Do you know General Grant has actually determined to write his memoirs?"[45]

That was sufficient information to cause Twain to check into the matter. The next morning Twain went immediately to Grant's residence and arrived in time to prevent his signing a contract with the Century Company. Twain pointed out that the contract only offered Grant ten per cent of the profits, whereas, he should certainly have seventy-five per cent.

Grant was incredulous and said he doubted that any firm would give him such a percentage. At that point Twain judiciously called Grant's attention to the fact that the Century Company had only paid him $500 a piece for articles that were easily worth $5,000. Twain then suggested that his firm, Charles L. Webster & Company, be allowed to publish the book and give Grant seventy-five per cent of the profits, "running expenses," to be paid by the publisher.[46]

Grant was still unsure and agreed only to consider the matter. So Twain continued on his tour with a new and unneeded worry. As a result, he spent hours each day writing letters to Charles Webster and giving him instructions on how to carry out the negotiations for publication of the Grant memoirs.

In the end, Grant agreed to let Twain's firm publish the book. It was a good arrangement for both of them. Grant earned the largest royalty check in the history of the world, one totalling $200,000.[47] That was only the first check. Eventually, his wife collected nearly half of a million dollars in belated royalties. Twain received great advertising for his publishing house, made a handsome return from his share, and was inspired to write, "Private History of a Campaign that Failed."[48]

The effects of these constant negotiations of the 1884 tour were certainly not positive ones. Twain had far too many projects going all at once, but if any man could direct many campaigns simultaneously, Twain had the disorganization to do it.

Conclusion

The exact financial returns from the tour are inconclusive. It appears, however, that mid-way in the travel, Twain had averaged $165 per reading, above expenses.[49] Some indication of net receipts is given in a letter from Webster to Twain, dated February 14, 1885. Webster wrote: "total recd. from Pond since the beginning--$14,168.50."[50] If expenses were already paid, as they must have been, Twain profited handsomely from this venture. A logical assumption based on an average of $165 for each of the 103 performances would concluded that Twain made nearly $17,000.

Shortly after the tour, Twain wrote, "I am frightened at the proportions of my prosperity. It seems to me that whatever I touch turns to gold."[51]

Overall, the tour was a great success by every consideration. "It made money, . . . it attracted large and appreciative audiences both East and West; and it contributed significantly to the reputation of both authors."[52]

NOTES

[1]Paul Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 211.

[2]Fred W. Lorch, The Trouble Begins at Eight (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1968), p. 153.

[3]Albert Bigelow Paine, ed., Mark Twain's Letters (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917), p. 302.

[4]Robert T. Oliver, History of Public Speaking in America (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965), p. 459.

[5]Charles Neider, ed., The Autobiography of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 176.

[6]Neider, p. 176.

[7]Philip Butcher, George W. Cable: the Northampton Years (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 3.

[8]Mary Cable Dennis, The Tail of the Comet (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 43-45.

[9]Fatout, p. 204.

[10]Lorch, Twain, p. 162.

[11]Lorch, Twain, p. 162.

[12]Guy A. Cardwell, Twins of Genius (Chicago: Michigan State University Press, 1953), p. 2.

[13]Cardwell, p. 2.

[14]Cardwell, pp. 5-6.

[15]Cardwell, p. 99.

[16]Butcher, pp. 12-13.

[17]Samuel Charles Webster, ed., Mark Twain: Business Man (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1946), p. 268.

[18]Cardwell, p. 8.

[19]Dixon Wecter, The Love Letters of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 234.

[20]Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), p. 784.

[21]Paine, *Biography*, p. 784.

[22]Lorch, p. 173.

[23]Wecter, p. 237.

[24]Wecter, p. 237.

[25]Fatout, p. 208.

[26]Wecter, p. 237.

[27]Fred W. Lorch, "Cable and His Reading Tour with Mark Twain in 1884-1885," *American Literature*, 23 (January 1952),

[28]Lorch, "Cable and His Reading Tour," p. 484.

[29]Webster, p. 269.

[30]Sandra Boyce, "A Reader's Theatre Production Reflecting a Study of the 1884-1885 Reading Tour of Mark Twain." Unpublished master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972.

[31]Cardwell, p. 64.

[32]Paul Fatout, ed., *Mark Twain Speaking* (Iowa City, Iowa: The University of Iowa Press, 1976), p. 656.

[33]Kjell Ekstrom, "Extracts from a Diary kept by Ozias W. Pond during the Clemens-Cable Tour of Readings in 1885," *Archiv fur das Studium der neuren Sprachen*, 188, 110.

[34]Ekstrom, p. 111.

[35]Ekstrom, p. 111.

[36]Ekstrom, p. 111.

[37]Wecter, p. 122.

[38]Paine, *Biography*, p. 787.

[39]Paine, *Biography*, p. 790.

[40]Paine, *Biography*, p. 790.

[41]Ekstrom, p. 112.

[42]Albert Bigelow Paine, ed., *Mark Twain's Notebook* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 175.

[43]Neider, p. 238.

[44]Paine, *Notebook*, p. 175.

[45]Paine, *Biography*, p. 799.

[46]Neider, p. 240.

[47]Paine, *Biography*, p. 816.

[48]Paine, *Biography*, p. 812.

[49]Fatout, *Speaking*, p. 220.

[50]Webster, p. 303.

[51]Paine, *Biography*, p. 831.

[52]Lorch, "Cable and His Reader Tour," p. 471.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF THE READING TOUR OF 1884-1885 AND ITS EFFECT ON TWAIN'S LATER READING

The reputation of a speaker is a chief consideration of rhetorical critics evaluating the import of any given speech. Therefore, it is appropriate to this study to investigate the reputations of both Mark Twain and George W. Cable as they were in 1884.

The popular conception, and a natural one, is that Cable moved in Twain's shadow. Considering the impact of Twain's life and writings upon present society and that Cable is all but forgotten, it is difficult to conceive the situation in its true light. The fact is, Cable had arrived at the "apex of his career."[1] Never again would he be the celebrity that he was in those four months. Conversely, Twain's greatest years remained hidden in the future; the bulk of his classic works had yet to issue from the press. The paradox of this situation is still more surprising. The public saw Cable as a promising young novelist, while at the same time, the public thought of the near fifty-year-old Twain as a man at the close of his literary life.[2]

Cable was a product of timeliness. His novels and numerous articles supporting and pleading for Black rights made him a favorite of the North. Even during the reading tour,

his writings caused great public reaction which brought him instant fame and the admiration of thousands.[3] That this sudden notoriety thrust upon Cable caused moments of jealousy for Twain is well revealed in Twain's letters. Twain had never attempted a joint tour before, and he learned that he did not enjoy sharing the limelight. In truth, sharing the limelight would have probably never bothered Twain in the least, had he not shared it with one so able to compete for that spot. Cable's reviews were often better than Twain's, which, no doubt, disturbed the vastly more experienced performer.

However, Twain failed to realize that Cable's notoriety was achieved by writing the proper articles at the most proper of times, something Cable could not control.[4] Even Twain had difficulty competing with a man riding the crest of a movement.

Understanding that Twain was more widely known than Cable, but only slightly so, is important when analyzing the strained relationship of the performers and its effect on their reading and programming.

Twain Made a "Botch" of Reading

Twain's many years of lecturing prior to 1884 taught him to be flexible. He learned to deal with the most precarious situations and trained his wit to save him from certain failure. In those years, Twain developed adaptability, a keen communication insight. It may seem strange, therefore, that a man

with thousands of hours of speaking experience, learning to adapt to each new environment, could not make an easy transition to the art of reading. But in reality, it does not seem strange that Twain had trouble transcending the arts, for reading and speaking are two largely different disciplines, which Twain learned and admitted.[5]

When writing his autobiography, Twain recalled the 1884 reading tour:

> It was ghastly! At least in the beginning. I had selected my readings well enough, but had not studied them. I supposed it would only be necessary to do like Dickens--get out on the platform and read from the book. I did that and made a botch of it. . . .[6]

Some scholars, like Lorch, dismiss this statement as "scarcely accurate"[7] since Twain had already performed as a reader a number of times, and also, because the statement is found in his Autobiography, a source criticized for its factual errors.[8]

It is felt, however, that this statement can be accepted as fact because it can be verified from sources other than Twain's autobiography.

The following are reasons why Twain "made a botch" of reading during the early days of the tour.

(1) Most readings Twain gave before the tour were for purposes of charity and none of the selections approached the inherent difficulties of the advance sheets from Huckleberry Finn.

(2) As Chapter III revealed, the audiences and events for which Twain read before the tour, in contrast with the

audiences paying to hear him read during the tour, appear to be vastly different.

(3) Following the performance of November 8, 1884, Twain wrote his wife and complained of having difficulty with his reading in Springfield.[9] Part of his problems there could have resulted from a political rally which the _Springfield Republican_ reported was making "considerable noise in the streets."[10]

(4) Twain rewrote portions of _Huckleberry Finn_ to convert them into "flexible talk."[11] Why would he do that had he not discovered those selections to be the most troublesome? Evidently the _Huckleberry Finn_ selections were the only pieces he rewrote to give them an oral style because no other revisions exist from that tour. Naturally he wanted those readings to be especially delightful since that book's promotion was a main consideration of the tour.

The remaining reasons which could have caused turmoil for Twain in the early days of the tour are conjectural. Though they are factual, only one source exists to support each one.

(5) Twain reported that before the tour there had been a "happy and holy" silence in the land for ten years. In that time, a whole "generation had come to the front who knew nothing about lectures and readings and didn't know how to take them, nor what to make of them. They were difficult audiences, those untrained squads, and Cable and I had a hard time with them sometimes."[12] Even today an oral interpreter is often heard to voice the same complaint. Sometimes a brilliant reader's theatre production, though well presented, can meet with a dull

reception because the audience is not educated to the art. This phenomenon certainly caused trouble for Twain and Cable.

(6) Twain said he had not "studied" his readings.[13] Twain here made the error that many beginning students of oral interpretation make: Before they ever attempt to read, they assume that the manuscript's presence makes study unnecessary and that it will prevent loss of communication. They expect to "get out on the platform and read" and let the words communicate themselves. Twain learned quickly that the simple reading of words did not render the most effective presentation of the literature. With all the projects Twain had going at that time, it is doubtful that he devoted much time to practice. Besides, he always considered the first week as preparation for the Music Hall performance in Boston, which was the performance that determined the marketability of the program.[14]

(7) In readings before the tour, Twain had only to project a persona which was essentially Mark Twain. He only had to be himself. Presenting the persona of Huckleberry Finn, however, was a new and probably difficult matter.

(8) Twain had many projects which required his daily attention. He was trying desperately to get Huckleberry Finn published in time to sell it during the Christmas season. Securing the right to publish Grant's memoirs became an unexpected pressure at the beginning of the tour. Consequently, Twain wrote a stream of letters to Webster during the day always giving precise instructions on how to best proceed with these projects. Such pressures, along with those of traveling

and attending press conferences and receptions, did not leave him at his best for performing. "Unless I get a great deal of rest," Twain wrote George Isles, "a ghastly dulness (sic) settles down upon me on the platform. . . ."[15]

Although most reviews are favorable to Twain in the early part of the tour, one important review was not. This review was written by a reporter of the New York Times. He said that Twain "confined his efforts to such ridiculous matter as aged colored gentlemen, the German language, and himself."[16] The tone of his review is not overly derogatory, but it does give Cable a respectable edge.

One cannot gain proof from reviews that Twain truly "made a botch" of his early readings, but the important aspect is that Twain himself did not feel polished. He thought he was presenting an inferior performance, and the performer must be comfortable to be at his best. As Twain wrote his wife in 1869: "Another botch of a lecture! . . . They say I didn't botch it, but I should think I ought to know."[17] Chances are good that Twain felt this way about the 1884 tour.

How Twain Corrected his Reading Problems

The first action Twain took toward making his reading more effective was to dispense with the book.[18] He felt that "reading from the book renders the nicest shadings of delivery impossible."[19] Therefore, he set about the task of memorizing his selections. His main reason for disliking the book is that it crippled his most effective weapon--the pause. Chapter II discussed Twain's

view of the pause extensively. In short, he had more faith in the pause, than he did in words themselves. Concerning the pause in reading, Twain wrote:

> The pause is not of much use to the man who is reading from a book because he cannot know what the exact length of it ought to be; he is not the one to determine the measurement--the audience must do that for him. He must perceive by their faces when the pause has reached the proper length, but his eyes are not on the faces, they are on the book. . . .[20]

That is the basic reason that Twain decided to commit his selections to memory. Other reasons include the inability of a reader to make real the impromptu delivery available to a lecturer. "Studied fictions which seem to be the impulse of the moment and which are so effective: such as, for instance, fictitious hesitancies for the right word, . . . fictitious unconscious side remarks, fictitious unconscious embarrassments, fictitious unconscious emphases placed upon the wrong word with a deep intention back of it . . ." are not available to the reader.[21] Twain evidently felt too restricted when he was reading from manuscript. In any case, if he felt that his "impromptu narration" was being hindered by the book, a characteristic that reporters often credited for his great success as a lecturer, it is understandable that he would rid himself of the book. Actually, the concept of memorizing a reading is not out of keeping with present oral interpretation philosophy. If a reader has studied the literature as he should have studied it, the resulting performance could be done without the manuscript. Chances are the reader will have it memorized. The book or manuscript is carried simply to befriend the literature and to symbolize the art of reading.

Secondly, Twain rewrote portions of Huckleberry Finn because, as he said, "Written things are not for speech; their forms are literary; they are stiff, inflexible and will not lend themselves to happy and effective delivery. . . ."[22]

The following is the actual rewrite of a reading Twain often delivered on the tour of 1884. The episode given here is from Chapter Sixteen of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. In the reading program he often titled it "Huck Saves Jim."[23]

For the sake of clarity these explanations are essential. What Twain emphasized is underlined as he did so in his manuscript, what he added is in parentheses, and what he excluded from the original has a line drawn through it, but leaving it still readable. Twain begins in the middle of the second paragraph, adding an introduction.

Huck Saves Jim

(Night after night they kept a sharp lookout for Cairo, where the Ohio River comes in; for there they would land and try to escape far north and easy away from the domain of slavery.) Jim said if the two big rivers joined together there, that would show. But I said maybe we might think we was passing the foot of an island and coming into the same old river again. That disturbed Jim--and me too. So the question was, what to do? I said, paddle ashore the first time a light showed, and tell them pap was behind, coming along with a trading-scow, and was a green hand at the business, and wanted to know how far it was to Cairo. Jim thought it was a good idea, so we took a smoke on it and waited.

There warn't nothing to do, now, but ~~to~~ look out sharp for the town, and not pass it without seeing it. He said he'd be might sure to see it, because he'd be a free man the minute he seen it; but if he missed it he'd be in the slave country again and no more show for freedom. Every little while he jumps up and says:

"Dah she is!"

But it warn't. It was only Jack-o-lanterns, or lightning bugs; so he set down again, and went to watching, same as before. Jim said it made him all over trembley and feverish to be so close to freedom. Well, I can tell you it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he was most free--and who was to blame for it? Why, me. (The thought struck me cold.) It couldn't get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way. (O, I had committed a crime!--I knowed it perfectly well--I could see it, now.) It got to troubling me so I couldn't rest; I couldn't stay still in one place. It hadn't ever come home to me before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did; and it staid with me, and scorched me more and more! I tried to make out to myself that I warn't to blame, because I didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner; but it warn't no use, conscience up and says, every time, "But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could a paddled ashore and told somebody." That was so--(yes, it was so)--I couldn't get around that, no way. That was where it pinched. Conscience says to me, "What had poor Miss Watson

done to you, that you could see her nigger go off right under your eyes and never say one single word? What did that poor old woman do to you, that you could treat her so mean? Why, she tried to learn you your book, she tried to learn you your manners, (she tried to learn you to be a Christian), she tried to be good to you every way she knowed how. That's what she done."

I got to feeling so mean (and treacherous) and so miserable I most wished I was dead. I figeted up and down the raft, abusing myself to myself, and Jim was fidgeting up and down past me. We neither of us could keep still. Every time he danced around and says, "Dah's Cairo!" it went through me like a ~~shot~~ (sword), and I thought if it was Cairo I reckoned I would die of miserableness.

Jim talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free State he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Ab'litionist to go and steal them. (It was awful to hear it.)

It most froze me to hear such talk. He wouldn't ever dared to talk such talk in his life before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he judged he was about free. It was according to the old saying, "Give a nigger an inch and he'll take an ell." Thinks I, this is what comes

of my not thinking. Here was this nigger which I had as good as helped to run away, coming out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children--children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever done me no harm.

I was sorry to hear Jim say that, it was such a lowering of him. My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it, "Let up on me--it ain't too late, yet--I'll paddle ashore at first light and tell." (O, it was a blessed thought! I never can tell how good it made me feel--'cuz I knowed I was doing right, now.) I felt easy, and happy, and light as a feather, right off. All my troubles was gone. I went to looking out sharp for a light, and sort of singing to myself. By and by one showed. Jim sings out:

"We's safe, Huck, we's safe! Jump up and crack yo'heels, dat's de good ole Cairo at las', I jis knows it! (We's safe, Huck, we's safe, shore's you bawn, we safe!")

I says:

"I'll take the canoe and go see, Jim. It mightn't be you know."

He jumped up and got the canoe ready, and put his old coat on the bottom for me to set on, and give me the paddle; and as I shoved off he says:

Pooty soon I'll be a shout'n for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck; I's a free man, en I couldn't ever ben free ef it hadn' been for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had; en you's de only fren' ole Jim's got now. (O bless de good heart o' you, Huck!")

I was paddling off, all in a sweat to *tell* on him; but when he says *this*, it seemed to kind of take the *tuck* all out of me. (It kind of *unsettled* me, and I couldn't seem to *tell* whether I was doing *right* or doing *wrong*.) I went along *slow* then, and I warn't right down certain whether I was glad I started or whether I warn't. When I was ~~fifty yards off~~ (a hundred and fifty yards off), Jim sings out across the darkness and says:

"*Dah* you goes, de *ole* *true* *Huck*; de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole *Jim*."

Well, I just felt *sick*. But I says, I *got* to do it--I can't get *out* of it. Right then, along comes a skiff with two men in it, with *guns*, and they stopped and *I* stopped. One of them says:

"What's *that*, yonder?"

"A piece of a *raft*," I says.

"Do you belong on it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Any *men* on it?"

"Only *one*, sir."

"Well, there's five *niggers* run off to*night*, up yonder above the head of the *bend*. Is your man white or black?"

I didn't answer up *prompt*. I tried to, but the words wouldn't come. I tried, for a second or two, to brace up and out with it, but I warn't *man* enough--hadn't the spunk of a rabbit. I see I was weakening. (The man says, "*Come*, answer up--is he *white* or black?"--then I hear the voice across the

water a-saying, "De good ole Huck, de good ole Huck!" ~~so I just give up trying, and up and says~~ and I just let go and give up and says:)

"He's white."

"(It took you a good while to get it out.) I reckon we'll go and see for ourselves."

"(O) I wish you would," says I, "because it's pap that's there, and maybe you'd help me tow the raft ashore where the light is. He's sick--(he's awful sick)--and so is mam and Mary Ann, (and the baby).

"Oh, the devil! we're in a hurry, boy. But I s'ppose we've got to. Come--buckle to your paddle, and let's get along."

I buckled to my paddle (like Sam Hill, and says, "I George! in luck at last!") and they laid to their oars. When we had ~~made a stroke or two~~ (gone about a hundred yards), I says:

"Pap'll be might obleeged to you, I can tell you, I can tell you. Everybody goes away when I want them to help me tow the raft ashore, and I can't do it by myself.

"Well, that's infernal mean." (And pretty soon he says: "Looky here!)--it's odd, too. Say, boy, what's the matter with your father?'

"It's the--a--the--well, it ain't anything much."

They stopped pulling. It warn't but a mighty little ways to the raft, now. One says:

Boy, that's a lie. What is the matter with you pap? Answer up square, now, and it'll be the better for you."

(Blubbering--a stage direction) "I will, sir, I will, honest--but don't leave us, please. It's the--the--gentlemen, if you'll only pull ahead, and let me heave you the head line, you won't have to come a-near the raft--please do."

"Set her back, John, set her back! ~~says one. The backed water.~~ Keep away, boy--keep to looard. Confound it, I just expect the wind has blowed it to us. Your pap's got the small-pox, and you know it precious well. Why didn't you come out and say so? Do you want to spread it all over?"

"Well," says I, ~~a blubbering~~ "I've told everybody before and then (and then and then)--they just went away and left us." (Bellows--stage direction)

"Poor devil, there's something in that. We are right down sorry for you, but we--well, hang it, we don't want the smallpox, you see. Look here, I'll tell you what to do. Don't you try to land by yourself, or you'll smash everything to pieces. You float along down about twenty miles and you'll come to a town on the left-hand side of the river. It will be long after sunup, then, and when you ask for help, you tell them you folks are all down with chills and fever. Don't be a fool again, and let people guess what is the matter. ~~Now we're trying to do you a kindness so you just put twenty miles between us, that's a good boy. It wouldn't do any good to land yonder where the light is--it's only a wood yard. Say, I reckon your father's poor, and I'm bound to say he's in pretty hard luck. Here--I'll put a twenty dollar gold piece on this board, and you get it when it floats by~~. I feel mighty mean to leave

you, but my kingdom! it won't do to fool with smallpox, don't you see?

"~~Hold on, Parker," says the other man, "here's a twenty to put on the board for me. Good-bye, boy, you do as Mr. Parker told you, and you'll be all right.~~"

"~~That's so, my boy~~--good-bye, good-bye. If you see any runaway niggers , you get help and nab them, and you can make some money by it."

"Good-bye, sir," says I, "I won't let no runaway niggers get by me if I can help it."

They went off and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don't get started right when he's little, ain't got no show--when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he gets beat. Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on--s'pose you'd done right and give Jim up; would you feel better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad--I'd feel just the same way I do now. (As fur as I can see, a conscience is put in you just to object to whatever you do do, don't make no difference what it is.) Well, then, says I, waht's the use o'learning to do right, when it's troublesome to do right, and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck. I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time.

What did Twain accomplish by re-writing this narrative to adhere, or at least lean in the direction of the oral style? Mostly, he succeeded in making himself more comfortable with the text. This effect, in turn, caused him to go full circle and forced him to study the literature as he should have studied it in the beginning.

It is doubtful that Twain instituted a system for this revision or subsequent revisions of future writings. He was a most unsystematic person and he relied on his instincts to edit his readings. His phonetic abilities were common knowledge to his friends; he probably rewrote this selection until it sounded more readable.

Art by definition defies concrete laws, but general laws can be observed which will improve the chances that the art will be appreciated. Therefore, it would destroy the beauty of Twain's art to overanalyze his revision of the Huck Finn text, but it will be worthwhile to make general observations concerning the markings he left behind.

That which Twain added to the original text served to enlarge the drama of the moment. Huck Finn's literary appeal is that "through the eyes and language of Huck, the reality hidden behind the hypocricies and false pieties is given high visibility."[24] The oral appeal Twain added was to increase the visibility of this "false morality." He may have felt this was necessary to insure that even the lowest intellect of each assembly could understand the satire. For instance, in the segment where Jim is saying, "Dah you goes, de ole true

Huck," Twain added so much to it that he nearly overexplained the satire.

Another example of enlarging the drama is the peculiar substitution of the word "sword" for "shot." The only apparent reason for such a switch would have been Twain's desire to make that metaphor more powerful and symbolic. A sword penetrating a body is slower and more painful than a shot could ever be. This would better symbolize the moral pain Huck was suffering because of his rather ill conscience.

Overall, the additions probably made Twain's impromptu narration technique applicable in his reading, too. Twain lingered more on the segments where Huck and his conscience were in conflict than he did in the written version. Lengthening those passages made it easier to convey the turmoil Huck was going through, and to act as though the decisions Huck made were truly spontaneous ones.

Twain's numerous underlinings served, of course, to emphasize the sure communication of a specific word. As he said to W.D. Howells after hearing him read, "you sent your daintiest and most delicate and fleeting points home to that audience--absolute proof of good reading."[25] This indicates reasons for Twain's markings.

Sometimes he underlined a word only for the sake of that word's grammatical purpose, such as if the word was a modifier of a preceding phrase. Thirdly, some of the underlinings include only a syllable or part of a word. Such is the case with Jim's word, "b<u>awn</u>," meaning born. Apparently, the "aw"

is stressed because Twain was observing Jim's dialect. _Huckleberry Finn_ contains seven dialects, by Twain's account, but realistically only three or possibly four are clearly visible.

Finally, that which Twain excluded is important. He excluded any segment that interfered with the steady building and denouement of the plot. Twain excluded the first one-and-a-half paragraphs because they were not important to the building of the plot. In the place of those paragraphs, he inserted an introduction, a short introduction designed to be read. This procedure he would alter in later years.

For the same reason, he excluded the episode where Mr. Parker and his friend each give Huck twenty dollars. In quiet reading at home, it is a pleasant addition to the plot, but in a presentational setting where time is important, that episode detracts from the plot.

All that was important to Twain was Huck's fight with his conscience, his decision to "tell" and turn Jim in, the testing of that decision, and Huck's final victorious round with his conscience. All else seemed extraneous.

Unfortunately, a contemporary reader, unless he is also an author reading his own works, does not have the right to extend a sentence or rearrange the wording of a sentence to suit his needs. This advantage is restricted to the author. However, editing of literature for oral presentation is considered normal and ethical, and Twain's editing teaches some important fundamentals about oral interpretation. It teaches that careful study of the literature to be presented, and the

proper stress on the proper words, will render the reading infinitely more effective than it would be without such preparation. It also teaches the reader to constantly adhere to the natural development of the plot, never allowing the overall desired effect to escape his attention.

Programming the Readings

Twain's early lectures, up until 1874, were nearly always centered around one subject. "The Sandwich Islands" lecture is a good example. In fact, only one of Twain's early lectures, "Reminiscences of Some Uncommonplace Characters I have Chanced to Meet," was centered around a variety of subjects and it never was successful.[26] It was a failure and had to be replaced shortly after the tour began. The reading tour introduced him once again to the problem of building a program, and was an extra challenge, he had to include the works of another author, George W. Cable.

Twain and Cable discussed the possible arrangement of the readings sometime in mid-1884. It is disappointing that Twain never commented on the order himself. Cable, on the other hand, left a good deal of writing about that subject. After thinking about the programming for some time. Cable wrote to Twain and told him of his conclusions:

> Oct. 13, 1884
>
> Simsbury, Conn. Oct. 25, 1884
>
> Dear Friend:
>
> Pond and I have talked and thought much over the programme. Enclosed please find the embodiment of our conclusions. We both think that more alternation than this would

> weaken and break the effect. The time here comprised is the same as originally decided on--2 hours. My memoranda make it so on the margin. The first and second numbers suffice to give the audience a sense that both stars are "present or accounted for" and the 3d and 4th give each a fair swing at their attention & interest without interruption.
>
> One item in the programme shows a suggestion which I beg to offer. It is a substitute, almost literally from your text, for the phrase "Can't learn a nigger to argue." When we consider that the programme is advertised & becomes cold-blooded newspaper reading I think we should avoid any risk of appearing--even to the most thin-skinned and supersensitive and hypercritical (sic) matrons and misses--the faintest bit gross. In the test, whether on the printed page or in the readers utterances the phrase is absolutely without a hint of grossness; but alone on a published programme, it invites discreditable conjectures of what the context may be, from that portion of our public who cannot live without aromatic vinegar. I hope you'll pardon the liberty I take, and restore the original phrase if you think I'm entirely mistaken. . . .[27]

It is odd that Twain was not the one to notice the possible ramifications of publishing such a title, but it is certainly good for the sake of both that Cable was wise enough to foresee the outcome.

Twain, apparently, did not object to Cable's suggestion as the first and most popular program suggests. Following is a copy of the program that was printed, and at times, distributed among the audience:

The Mark Twain--Cable Readings

Date etc.

1. The Music of Place Congo.
   Mr. Cable

2. Advance Sheets of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
   (Punctuation omitted)
   a. "King Sollermun."
   b. "How Come a Frenchman doan'talk like a man?"
   Mark Twain

3. Scenes from Dr. Sevier.
   a. Narcisse, Kate Riley, Richling & Ristofalo.
   (Browining and Courtship Scenes)

b. Narcisse puts on Mourning for Lady Byron.
c. A Sound of Drums--Off for the Wars.
d. Mary's Night Ride.
Mr. Cable

4. Pages from __________, __________, and __________.
a. A Ghost Story.
b. Tragic Tale of the Fishwife.
c. A Trying Situation.
Mark Twain.

(Carriages at 10 o'clock.)[28]

Twain objected to the practice of disturbing programs to the audience because it only served to cause noise and disturbance in halls that were accoustically poor at best. All of his performing life Twain became enraged by the most insignificant noises which he felt destroyed the response he was trying to effect.

The physical differences of the two performers served to create variety for the program. Twain was taller and larger than the rather fragile Cable. Cable had "a beard at least five inches in length, and a mustache each side which measured about seven inches thin and wiry like his body."[29] (See appendix.) Even their performing styles were greatly different. Cable was "now here, now there, now standing, now sitting" while Twain was "lounging loosely"[30] with "his right elbow resting in the palm of his left hand."[31] (See appendix.)

Major Pond billed the two as "Twins of Genius," a combination of genius and versatility.[32] Most critics assumed Twain to be the genius and Cable the more versatile.

The physical and performing differences of the authors were enhanced by their literary contrasts. Though both supported

black rights, the characters of their novels were often opposites, as unlike as their creators. Some said that the program dropped "from such delightful people as Narcisse, Ristofalo and Kate Riley to such earthy creatures as Huckleberry Finn."[33] Cable even sang Creole songs which added still one more dimension to the program. Nevertheless, these contrasts were healthy ones, and a needed aspect for any balanced program.

Timing concerned Twain a great deal. He diligently worked out each program so that it would not exceed two hours,[34] and so that it would have a steady crescendo.[35] He wanted the audience always coming to him for more. His own readings he endeavored to compress. Twain wrote his wife concerning his elation upon reducing the "Jumping Frog" story to thirteen minutes, and he reduced from forty-five minutes to twenty-five the story of Tom and Huck aiding Jim to escape."[36] On the other hand, Twain became adamant that Cable, too, should do the same. He believed Cable was consuming entirely too much time because he had allowed, "Mary's Night Ride," his most popular reading, to grow from "6 minutes (in New Haven to fifteen. And it is in <u>every</u> program."[37]

Obviously, hearing this reading night after night grated on Twain's nerves, even though it was often requested as the encoure number after it had been included in the program itself. Especially one phrase from this reading perturbed Twain. It was the phrase, "Cover the Child!" which occurred with frequency in the dramatic moments of the text. In later years Twain abused that exclamation around his home for any situation approaching a calamity.[38]

Cable violated other Twainian rules of good performance and performers' responsibility. Twain wrote his wife:

> . . . This pious ass allows an 'entirely new program' announced from the stage & in the papers, & then comes out without a wince or apology & jerks that same old Night Ride on the audience again. He did it 5 times in Chicago; but even that was not as bad as doing it 3 times in a little place like Indianapolis. He keeps his program strung out to one hour, in spite of all I can do. I am thinking of cutting another of his pieces out of the program.[39]

Cable here transgressed one of Twain's few holy beliefs: that material should not be repeated in the same city too frequently, a belief that Twain acquired while lecturing. Cable also allowed a "new program" to be announced and did not observe it, thus violating a performer's responsibility to his audience. Twain did the same thing himself in Springfield on November 7, but he gave the audience and explanation for the changes.[40] (See appendix.) It was Cable's not explaining the change that provoked Twain's ire.

However, even Twain slipped from his own rule on December 29, 1884, in Pittsburgh. The Post critic reported, "According to established custom there was a program, but it was one of the jokes of the evening. . . . When the program was observed, it was with an apology."[41] (See appendix.) Twain probably thought this would be a humorous slap at tradition. In any event, Cable soon discovered that there was a Twain way and a wrong way to do everything.

Twain admired Cable's reading ability, or at least, the effect he had upon the audiences. Yet, Twain said later that Cable had "taken lessons from a teacher of elocution . . . he

was . . . theatrical and artificial and not half as pleasing . . . as he had been in the splendid days of his ignorance."[42] Just by reading portions of "Mary's Night Ride," one can see that audiences must have been in tune to the flamboyant delivery styles so popular in those times. This makes it all the more amazing that Twain, who was ahead of his time in avoiding theatrical styles, attained such wide popular appeal.

In opposition, Cable's comments on Twain's reading ability were one of pronounced admiration. Cable wrote to his wife that he was proud to be able to "hold my own with so wonderful a platform figure."[43] Cable admired Twain's "careful study to achieve the right vocal effect."[44] He also said that Twain worked on each selection until he had effected a "gradual growth of interest & humor so that the audience never has to find anything less, but always more, entertaining than what precedes it."[45] Probably the highest compliment Cable had for Twain was his statement voicing his gratitude that he was able to study the master at work.[46]

Twain was not always satisfied with his own performance, however. One night after he had "torn the crowd to pieces "[47] with his unmatchable humor, he said to Cable, "Oh, Cable, I am demeaning myself."[48] The same old heartache had returned. While lecturing for lyceums, an educational institution, Twain was often hurt deeply by remarks purporting him to be a mere comedian, a lecturer with nothing of intellectual substance to offer. Still, he could not resist to humor his audiences. After years of making audiences laugh, it was probably the

only feedback that made him feel secure. During this tour, he fell prey to this temptation once more.

Introductions for their programs were fun for both of the performers. Twain had been a master of introductions for years, and the possibilities that two performers introduced to his creative faculty must have delighted him immensely. One which Twain used to introduce Cable was surely a crowd pleaser:

> Allow me to introduce to you, ladies and gentlemen, one whom I regard, the world regards and you regard, as the greatest modern writer of ancient fiction, and likewise the greatest ancient writer of modern fiction the world has ever known. One who has all the talent, all the virtues and vices blended together to make the perfect man--Mr. George W. Cable.[49]

Cable often proceeded to the lecturn and said, "I am not Mark Twain,"[50] an introduction of obvious Twainian influence.

The tour of 1884-1885 developed Twain's reading abilities far beyond what they had been before the tour began. He learned that preparing readings was difficult work and required many long hours of reflection and practice. Shortly after the tour closed, W.D. Howells, himself an accomplished reader, told Twain that he would not "read within a hundred miles" of him.[51]

This tour was marked as one of the chief tours of the decade, because both performers emerged as masters of the reading art. Following the tour, there were few readers of that era who were Twain's equal, and his partner, George W. Cable, was perhaps one of those few.

The Effects of the 1884-1885 Tour on Twain's Later Readings

Twain became enchanted with the poetry of Robert Browning in the late eighties. He studied his works with great care, as the reading tour taught him to do, before he would read them to even his house guests.[52]

In 1895, Twain was again forced to go on tour, this time it was a "World Tour," to relieve himself of numerous creditors.[53] By this time he had collected a repertoire of seventy-five readings.[54] One of these was the "Jumping Frog" story which a study of the manuscript reveals he edited similar to the way he had edited the Huckleberry Finn selection in 1884.[55] Only the episodes necessary to explain the drama of the frogs' contest are included. The humorous side-stories about the "fifteen minute nag" and "Andrew Jackson," the incredible dog, are excluded.

Another popular selection, "His Grandfather's Old Ram" was completely rewritten to achieve the oral style and convert it into what Twain called flexible talk.[56] Twain said that for reasons too evasive for him to establish, "one version will recite and the other won't."[57] Still, the effect of this rewriting is the same effect he accomplished by rewriting other stories. Twain enlarged the drama of the movement and edited out the unneeded episodes. One more observation is that the use of "I" and the indefinite "you" are far more prevalent in the oral version. This is a common discovery in present day studies contrasting the oral and written styles, such as the one conducted

by Lois Einhorn and published in The Southern Speech Communication Journal, Spring of 1978 edition.[58]

Where he truly advanced, however, was in the realm of introductions of individual selections. In 1899, in Vienna, he discovered what he considered to be a magnificent breakthrough in the art of reading.[59] He walked onto the stage carrying the book with him and began to read his chosen selection. After reading only a few lines, he remembered that something needed to be explained if the reading were to be appreciated, so he stopped, made the needed comments, and these comments led him back into the text at the point where he had stopped reading. He continued from that point without referring to the text, using it instead as something with which to gesture while he held it in his hand.

Twain called this "the new dodge, and best one that was ever invented."[60] He had discovered a practice that is prevalent in contemporary oral interpretation. He had discovered the value of contrasting the formal reading with an informal introduction, rather than having an introduction, to be read, written into the text. And just as important, he endeared himself to the literature by simply having it with him. He, however, felt that it worked because he was through with the reading before anyone knew he had started, hence the name, "the new dodge."

Overall, it is easy to see that the 1884 tour shaped Twain's reading theory for the rest of his days.

NOTES

[1]Fred W. Lorch, "Cable and His Reading Tour with Mark Twain in 1884-1885," _American Literature_, 23 (January 1952), 474.

[2]Guy A. Cardwell, _Twins of Genius_ (Chicago: Michigan State College Press, 1953), p. 3.

[3]Cardwell, p. 4.

[4]Lorch, "Cable and His Reading Tour," p. 474.

[5]Fred W. Lorch, _The Trouble Begins at Eight_ (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa University Press, 1968), p. 158.

[6]Charles Neider, ed., _The Autobiography of Mark Twain_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 176.

[7]Lorch, _Trouble_, p. 154.

[8]Samuel Charles Webster, _Mark Twain: Business Man_ (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1946), p. vii.

[9]Cardwell, p. 16.

[10]_Daily Republican_ (Springfield, Mass.), 8 November 1884.

[11]Neider, p. 176.

[12]Neider, p. 176.

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[33]Cardwell, p. 20.

[34]Lorch, Trouble, p. 175.

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[37]Wecter, p. 236.

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[47]Fatout, *Lecture Circuit*, p. 227.

[48]Paine, *Biography*, p. 786.

[49]Fatout, *Lecture Circuit*, p. 214.

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[52]Paine, *Biography*, p. 846.

[53]Lorch, *Trouble*, p. 183.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Reading Albert Bigelow Paine's official biography of Mark Twain makes it difficult to escape the conclusion that little Sam Clemens was being shaped early for his position in life.

Twain was reared in close view of Hannibal's river society, a rough culture in which he witnessed murders, mixed with Black slaves, and met the children who would attain immortality in his greatest works.

Every task that Twain undertook, he attacked with vigor and enthusiasm. His brother, Orion, said that he was a first-rate typesetter. This led Twain into journalism and journalism prepared him for writing. Alternately, while he was young, Twain was groomed for his lecture career. He observed preachers and humorists and even experienced a few glorious moments on the platform himself, at the age of fifteen. As a riverboat pilot, he taxed his memory to memorize every inch of the Mississippi River. This conditioned his memory and helped him memorize speeches and readings to a degree of uncanny accuracy in later years. In addition, Twain's mother was quite a humorist herself, which, no doubt, aided Twain in becoming America's foremost humorist.

Fate had its eye on Twain early. It provided all the training necessary to prepare him for his work as humorous author and speaker.

Twain's prodigious success on the platform can be traced to his association with river people and mining characters like Ben Coon, the man who told him the story that inspired his "Jumping Frog" tale. From Ben Coon and others like him, Twain perceived unintended humor, the best variety, and he projected that persona in his speaking and writing.

In his years of lecturing, Twain learned to write at least some new material for each audience. By trial and error, he perfected his art, and had humor been more respectable in his day, he might occupy a greater portion of the history of American public address.

Twain retired from the platform for ten years, and in that decade, he wrote his greatest work, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Twain's desire to try reading as a trade and his need to acquire publicity for Huckleberry Finn culminated in the reading tour of 1884-1885. Despite some experience with reading in prior years, Twain met with difficulty on the tour when he attempted to read. This was caused by Twain not preparing his readings well, by ten years retirement from the circuit, and by audiences that were uneducated to the art. Twain worked diligently to improve his reading skills. He committed the literature to memory and even revised some readings so that they would assume an oral style.

Twain's development as a reader and the discoveries he made about improving his ability are encouraging in that they are in line with contemporary oral interpretation theory and practice. Twain learned to study his readings carefully, to

deliver introductions that were obviously separate and apart from the formal reading, and he learned much later, the value of befriending the literature by having the book present on the platform.

As a result, Twain became one of the most requested readers in the late 1800's, in addition to being a formidable speaker and classic author. Fate prepared him well.

In Twain's latter days, his wife and daughters died in such rapid succession that it left him bitter toward mankind. Thus, the public in general are convinced by his late attitude and writings that Twain was an atheist. It is felt that Twain himself was unsure of his relationship with God, other than his certainty that those relations were strained ones. Yet, after years of study, the impression remaining is that Twain believed in a supreme being; he simply did not believe in the Bible as the revelation of that being. Therefore, the term agnostic is is less extreme and more properly describes Mark Twain toward the end of his life.

One cannot attribute all of Twain's success in life to his childhood preparation. Twain possessed that coveted and elusive magic called charisma. This is what set him above others of similar backgrounds. Many of Twain's close friends, and even people who met him only once, likened him to a visitor from a distant star. One man even said he was like a god. Such praise may appear extreme for one who has not researched Twain well, but over and over again people remarked about the magnificent presence of the man. These remarks indicate that

Twain's supremely captivating personality certainly aided his ascent of, as he said, "the alps of fame where I stood alone at the summit, outlined by the sun." He is standing there yet.

When one sets out to investigate any area of Mark Twain, he often arrives at his destination feeling much as Admiral Byrd must have felt when he arrived at the South Pole and discovered that someone else had already been there and gained his deserved notoriety by having the advantage of priority. Twain is well-researched. Nevertheless, it is valuable to retrace the paths of scholars to see if they left any areas untraveled, or to confirm the validity of their conclusions.

In this study, it became apparent that, although much work has been invested in the historical areas of the 1884-1885 reading tour, little investigation of Twain's oral interpretation development has been published. There is even less work, not one study is believed to exist in print, which evaluates Twain's conversion of his written material into a style better suited for oral delivery. This study has only touched the surface of what could be accomplished in that realm.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF MARK TWAIN

November 30, 1835 --	Born in Florida, Missouri in conjunction with Halley's comet
1839 --	Moved to Hannibal, Missouri
1851 --	Authored First Article for _Saturday Evening Post_ of Philadelphia
November 14, 1856 --	Wrote first "Snodgrass" letter for _Saturday Post_ of Keokuk
1857 --	Began training as riverboat pilot
1861 --	Enlisted in the Confederate Army as a Second Lieutenant
1861-1862 --	Resigned from Army, set out for Carson City, Nevada and learned mining in Aurora, California
November 18, 1865 --	Published "Jumping Frog" Story which made him immediately famous
October 2, 1866 --	Delivered First Professional Lecture in San Francisco
May 1, 1867 --	Published First Book, _The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Caliveras County and Other Sketches_
July 20, 1869 --	Published _The Innocents Abroad_
February 2, 1870 --	Married Olivia Langdon
1871 --	Toured with "Roughing It" Lecture
1871 --	Published _Roughing It_
1876 --	Published _The Adventures of Tom Sawyer_
March 13, 1880 --	Published _A Tramp Abroad_
December, 1881 --	Published _The Prince and the Pauper_
1883 --	Published _Life on the Mississippi_
1884-1885 --	Reading Tour with George W. Cable

1885	--	Published The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
December, 1885	--	Published General U.S. Grant's Memoirs
1889	--	Published A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court
1895	--	Published Joan of Arc, the book Twain believed was his best work
1895	--	Published Pudd'nead Wilson
1895-1896	--	Made a "World Tour" to get out of debt
August, 1896	--	Susy Clemens died. She was Twain's favorite daughter.
1896	--	Published Following the Equator
June 5, 1904	--	Olivia Langdon Clemens passed away.
January 26, 1907	--	Received honorary Doctor of Literature Degree at Oxford University.
December 24, 1909	--	Jean Clemens died suddenly.
April 21, 1910	--	Mark Twain passed from this life upon the return of Halley's comet, as he wished.

APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

An Article from the Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, November 7, 1884

There is a marked andwide-spread interest in the readings to be given at Gilmore's Opera house to-night by Mark Twain and George W. Cable. Either of these noted writers should attract a large audience; together they are likely to crowd the theater. Each has a peculiar and inimitable stage style, each is charming in method and manner, and their program is of striking interest. It is as follows:

1.

The music of place Congo.
Mr. George W. Cable

2.

Reminiscences of Artemus Ward.
Mark Twain

3.

Scenes from old creole days and the Grandissimes.
Aurora and Monroe -- Courtship scene.
Possen Jone

a. Jules St. Ange "makes the friendship" of Parson Jones.
b. The parson and Jules at the bull ring in place Congo.
c. M St. Anges liberstes the parson from the calaboose.
d. The parting at the bayou St. John.

Mr. George W. Cable

4.

a. The captain explains a difficult point
b. The college student sailor
c. Why I resigned the editorship.

Mark Twain

Review from the Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, November 8, 1884

The joint venture of Mr. Cable and Mr. Clemens at the Opera House last evening was greeted by a very considerable audience, and bothered by the very considerable noise in the streets, to a degree. But it was a successful entertainment, the principal regret felt being that Mr. Cable did not appear in such variety of effects as on previous visits here, and as the program promised. He presented himself first and impressed every one as a romantic figure, a sort of knightly ideal, with his broad and overhanging forehead, his brilliant eyes and his long moustache over his full brown beard. He was warmly cheered, and after gracefully postponing the "Music of Place Congo" in deference to the superabundant music outside, he recited the story of "Posson Jone." It was done with far greater elocutionary effect than when he first read it here, but he has introduced into the text certain little variations (to make it more legible to the audience, perhaps,) which hurt the artistic quality. Mr. Cable's voice has strengthened by practice, and he is now able to fill the house with his slenderest tone, and to produce what effect he will by a development of his cramatic power. After he had concluded the narrative of the Florida parson he gave one specimen of the music of "Place Congo" and sang it with such fine expression and so good a voice that the audience felt defrauded to hear no more of it. When Mark Twain appeared there was a hearty welcoming applause, as there must always be for one whose humor has delighted more people than that of any other man.

Mr. Clemens, in evening dress rather more pronounced than Mr. Cable's, and with a fine exaggerated air of timidity at his entrance upon the stage, was a great contrast to his associate. He can hardly be described, with his head of ronebened curling hair, his vigorous nose, his sardonic mustache and cleft chin, -- but he looked the humorist, as no doubt he intended to. He at once informed the audience that the programs which had been distributed at great cost for their convenience were of no particular use, and he explained why they were not, at some length. Then he proceeded to prove that he was right about it by giving a number of readings not one of which was mentioned on the program. He gave a discussion between "Huckleberry Finn" and the negro boy Joe (in his new book); he narrated and illustrated his struggles with the German language and its unreasonable genders; he related one of Col. Seller's projects -- there were millions in it -- and slightly adapted it to the immediate exigencies of the political situation; he described his adventure with the young woman whom he pretended to know and didn't, and who came up with him so handsomely, and he wound up with telling a ghost story after the manner of an old negro. He positively convulsed his hearers with the deliberate fashion of his speech and the peculiar ways in which he indicated their proper emotions by the inflections of his voice. Mr. Clemens is undoubtedly as much a humorist in the reading as in the writing of his extraordinary contributions to our literature, and he gave to the familiar narratives an added touch of character.

A Review from the Melrose (New York) Journal, November 15, 1884

"Standing room only," was the sign which greeted the eyes of the Lyceum patrons last Monday evening when the grand "Mark Twain" - Cable Readings were given. And when the hour to commence arrived every seat was filled and a number were standing. It was indeed a unique combination and a rich literary treat to many in the hall, yet there were some who acknowledged that Mr. Cable failed to interest them. This was doubtless owing to the fact that his characters were strange to a Melrose audience and his writings, which have attained a great popularity, are yet unfamiliar to the majority of American readers.

Mark Twain was evidently the choice of the audience and his readings ere received with a hearty applause. His "Ghost Story" was especially successful, nearly everyone in the house giving a start at the sudden denoument.

He made a happy hit too when he invited the 12 or 15 from Malden to wait and he would try to amuse them. About 1000 waited. He gave them his famous toast on "Babies" first given at the banquet to General Grant in Chicago in 1879.

A Review from the Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) Post [formerly Gazette], December 30, 1884

TWAIN AND CABLE

A HUMOROUS ENTERTAINMENT IN A PRESYTERIAN CHURCH

The Authors and Readers Treat the Program With Utter Contempt - Absurdity, Delivered With Solemnity and Met With Unrestrained Levity

"Mark Twain" and George W. Cable had a large audience in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church last night to hear their "readings." According to established custom there was a program, but it was one of the jokes of the evening. Not a single number was observed by Mr. Samuel L. Clemens and only two by Mr. Cable, and when the program was observed, it was with an apology. Mr. Cable was first on the list with an extract from "Dr. Sevier," giving an account of Narcisse the old creole, that, "(Mistoo Inchlin)*, in fact, I can have that fifty dollo from you my-self." But Mr. Cable didn't give it. Mr. Cable has a beard at least five inches in length, and a mustache each side of which measured about seven inches thin and wiry like his body. The ends of the mustache (like) the beard, like two ropes hung down to give encouragement to his feet to jump up and catch the ends, and thus rid themselves of the dreary necessity of waiting through the endless mire of mediocrity which the owner of the long tailed mustache has chosen as their good.

*Much of this text is illegible. Unsure words are in Parentheses.

To (Order) of Self

Mr. Cable said he was under the necessity of introducing himself. His (colleague) Mark Twain had been in the habit of introducing him, but as he, Mr. Cable had been in Pittsburgh Twenty-four hours and had received a goodly portion of the Pittsburgh bloom, his partner had declined to introduce him. He was glad of (him) as his partner had partaken of enough of the (----) bloom to make it rather a doubtful experiment for (him) to appear as a reputable individual. He would therefore say for the benefit of the audience that he was Mr. Cable and the person who would follow him was the other.

According to a long established custom, Mr. Cable proceeded to say he would take liberty with the program, and instead of giving the selection credited to him, he would take another one from "Dr. Sevier." We then have an account of the visit of Narcisse to Mr. Riebling. He sat during most of the reading and devoted his attention more particularly to mimicking the tone of a woman's voice.

Mark Twain came on next and was down for a story about King Sollerman from advance sheets from his last book, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." There wasn't the slightest mention of King Sollerman or say other king. Mr. Clemens said he had declined the services of Mr. Cable to introduce him, so he considered it an honor to be introduced twice, and he had been introduced to a Pittsburgh audience seventeen years ago. He then proceeded to tell the story, how Huckleberry Finn got into a box in a German Inn by betting that he could learn the

the age of a beautiful young lady who was present. (The critic is evidently confusing "The Lady at Lucerne" with "Huckleberry Finn"--Strong.)

In An Attracted Mood

Mark wore a swallow-tailed coat, abundance of shirt front, bushy gray hair, bristly gray mustache and his right hand to his chin, his right elbow resting in the palm of his left hand. He spoke with great seriousness and deliberation and bowed his head depracatingly whenever applause broke the thread of the story.

Mr. Cable did observe the program in the third selection from "Dr. Sevier" Kate Reilly, Riebling and Ristofalo. But Mr. Clemens knocked the program end ways in the next round in substituting a story from the "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" for the "Tragic Tale of the Fishwife" and finished the tale in his next appearance. Mr. Cable substituted a couple of creole songs for his third reading, and gave a fine elocution display in "Mary's Night Ride" for his fourth appearance.

Mark Twain gave the "Tragic Tale of a Fishwife" as the concluding performance. It was exceedingly funny, being a laughable illustration of the indiscriminate use of pronouns in the German language.

Mark Twain is the same, old, slow, calm and (unimpersonable) (solemn) when other people laugh and less (solemn) when he is delivering the greatest absurdities. Mr. Cable is more gentle, and more alive to the effect he produces. Of course, Mark Twain carried off the Lion's share of the honors.

APPENDIX C

HANDBILL FOR "THE SANDWICH ISLANDS" LECTURE

First Public Lecture 27

MAGUIRE'S ACADEMY OF MUSIC
THE SANDWICH ISLANDS!
MARK TWAIN
(Honolulu Correspondent of the Sacramento Union)
will deliver a
Lecture on the Sandwich Islands,
at the Academy of Music
On Tuesday Evening, October 2,

In which mention will be made of Harris, Bishop Staley, the American Missionaries, etc., and the absurd Customs and Characteristics of the Natives duly discussed and described. The great VOLCANO OF KILAUEA will also receive proper attention.

A SPLENDID ORCHESTRA
Is in town, but has not been engaged.
Also,
A DEN OF FEROCIOUS WILD BEASTS
Will be on exhibition in the next block.
MAGNIFICENT FIRE WORKS
were in contemplation for this occasion, but the idea has been abandoned.
A GRAND TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION
May be expected; in fact, the public are privileged to expect whatever they please.

Dress Circle—$1.00 *Family Circle—50 cts.*
DOORS OPEN AT 7 O'CLOCK THE TROUBLE BEGINS AT 8 O'CLOCK

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