

Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*: A Discussion Guide

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Cover Illustration

**The cover illustration is from the 1889 first edition of
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.**

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PREFACE TO THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

The purpose of this book is educational. I have read, studied and taught Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and I wish to pass on what I have learned to other people who are interested in studying Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. In particular, I think that the readers of this short introduction to Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* will be bright high school seniors and college first-year students, as well as intelligent adults who simply wish to study *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* despite not being literature majors.

This book uses a question-and-answer format. It poses, then answers, relevant questions about Twain, background information, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. This book goes through *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* chapter by chapter. I recommend that you read the relevant section of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, then read my comments, then go back and re-read the relevant section of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. However, do what works for you.

Teachers may find this book useful as a discussion guide for the novel. Teachers can have students read chapters from the novel, then teachers can ask students selected questions from this book.

The quotations from the novel come from this source:

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. Edited by Bernard L. Stein.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON MARK TWAIN

- Samuel Langhorne Clemens (later Mark Twain) was born on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri, but grew up in nearby Hannibal (his family moved there in 1839), which became the village (called St. Petersburg) in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Hannibal was located on the Mississippi River and had 2,000 inhabitants.
- Sam was the sixth child of John Marshall Clemens and Jane Lampton.
- Sam's father owned a grocery store.
- Sam's Uncle Quarles had a farm on which slaves worked. Sam sometimes stayed at the farm during summers, and he saw slaves being beaten.
- Hannibal, Missouri, was a slave-holding community. The slaves were mostly household servants.
- When Samuel L. Clemens was 12, his father died. Young Sam dropped out of school, then began work as an apprentice in a printer's shop to help support his family. Then he worked under his brother, Orion, at the newspaper called the *Hannibal Journal*.
- In June of 1853, Sam left Hannibal and started traveling, working for a while as a journalist and printer in places such as St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Iowa, then becoming a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River. The man who taught him the Mississippi River was Horace Bixby, pilot of the *Paul Jones*.
- Sam served briefly in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, but deserted and headed West to search for gold (unsuccessfully).

- He became a reporter and humorist for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*, where he adopted the pen name Mark Twain. One story of the name's meaning is that it is the cry given when a river man measures the depth of water in the Mississippi River and finds that it is 12 feet (two fathoms). "Mark Twain" means "Note that there are two fathoms of water." (A fathom is six feet.) Two fathoms of water is enough water for a riverboat not to be in danger of hitting bottom. Sam used the pen name Mark Twain for the first time on February 2, 1863. Another account of the origin of the name is that Sam used to call out "mark twain" when entering a favorite Western saloon. In this case, "mark twain" meant "mark two more drinks on my tab."
- As a reporter, Twain was a social critic. In San Francisco, he wrote about the inhumane treatment of illegal Chinese immigrants and of the poor.
- In 1869, Twain's published the book (his 2nd) that was the most popular of all his books during his lifetime: *Innocents Abroad*. This humorous book tells of his travels to Europe and the Holy Land.
- On February 2, 1870, Sam married Olivia Langdon. Her family was prominent in Elmira, New York. Sam and Olivia soon moved to Hartford, Connecticut.
- Twain's next book was *Roughing It*, published in 1872. This humorous book told of Sam's experiences prospecting for gold.
- In 1873, Twain published his first novel, *The Gilded Age*, which was co-written by Charles Dudley Warner, about corruption during the 1800s.
- Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876.
- Twain published *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1881.
- Twain published *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885.
- Twain published *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1889.
- Many of Twain's investments failed and he became deep in debt, but he went on long speaking tours and earned the money needed to pay his debts and have some money of his own.
- Although Twain was a humorist, late in life he grew deeply pessimistic and pondered the existence of the nature of God (if God in fact does exist).
- Twain died of angina on April 21, 1910.
- In *The Mysterious Stranger*, Twain wrote, "The Human race in its poverty, has unquestionably one really effective weapon — laughter. Power, money, persuasion, supplication, persecution — these can lift at a colossal humbug — push it a little, weaken it a little, century by century, but only laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand." Twain often used humor to mock colossal humbugs.

INTRODUCTION TO *A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT*

- Camelot is the court of King Arthur in sixth-century England.
- Merlin the magician is one of the chief enemies of Hank Morgan the Connecticut Yankee.
- The Yankee believes in many modern ideas:

- The separation of church and state.
 - Freedom of religion, including the right to choose which religion to believe.
 - Progress.
 - Science and technology.
 - Freedom of speech.
 - Newspapers to distribute news to the people.
 - Equality, meaning that no one can claim to be better than anyone else simply because of their ancestors.
 - Democracy.
 - Education and literacy. (By “training,” the Yankee means education. His Man Factories are schools.)
 - Meritocracy, meaning that you get the job if you are qualified to do it instead of getting it because of your noble birth, even if you are an ignoramus.
 - Free trade.
- The Yankee is opposed to many things:
 - An established church that is supported by the state. In this case, it is the Roman Catholic Church, because it is the ONLY church in sixth-century England. Protestantism won’t come into existence until Martin Luther (1483-1546) starts it hundreds of years later.
 - Aristocracies and nobles.
 - The divine right of kings.
 - Slavery.
 - Ignorance and superstition, including belief in magic.
 - Hunger, poverty, and misery.
 - Classes of society, in which one class looks down on another.
 - You will read about many horrible things in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, but they have a basis in reality. The notes in our edition give the sources of accounts of many of these events, but some happened in 19th-century America and not in 6th-century England.
 - Twain satirizes King Arthur’s England, but he also satirizes 19th-century America. (Many of the ideas of 19th-century America are still current today.) Twain’s satiric sword has two edges.
 - Twain shows that our modern-day, scientific society poses its own dangers. For example, today the United States has weapons of mass destruction that would amaze King Arthur’s Knights. Science has made modern warfare horrific.
 - The end of the novel shows the forces of superstition and ignorance destroying the progress

made by the Yankee. Finally, a spell by Merlin works. That spell is a symbol of the power of superstition and ignorance — power that can overwhelm and destroy progress. At the same time, the end of the novel shows the dangers of science when it is applied to creating weapons of mass destruction.

- The Yankee is against the Roman Catholic Church because it engages in power politics. The Yankee does find that many of the priests who work with the common people are kind and decent human beings, but the priests who are higher in the hierarchy are more interested in gaining power over people than in helping people — something that Jesus would not like.
- The Yankee believes that the Roman Catholic Church in 6th-century England supported these things: hereditary nobility, social inequality, superstition, and the meek subservience of the masses to authority and tradition.
- At the end of the novel, superstition and ignorance overwhelm and destroy civilization. In other words, progress is not guaranteed. It is possible for a civilization to slip back into darkness.
- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* is satire. In Mark Twain's original preface to the novel, he wrote, "My object has been to group together some of the most odious laws which have had vogue in the Christian countries within the past eight or ten centuries, and illustrate them by the incidents of a story." Using satire, Twain mocks these laws.
- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* is also a historical novel that is set mainly in 6th-century England.

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

PREFACE

- **Did all the laws and customs written about in this novel actually exist in the 6th century?**

This is the first sentence of the first paragraph of Mark Twain's Preface:

The ungentle laws and customs touched upon in this tale are historical, and the episodes which are used to illustrate them are also historical.

In the Preface, Twain explains that all the laws and customs that he writes about as belonging to Camelot are real laws and customs, but that they did not necessarily exist in Camelot although they did exist at other times and in other places.

We should note that Twain planned to add an Appendix to the novel that explained the historicity of the laws and customs, but that he never wrote it. Fortunately, we do have an appendix to the novel. The author of the Appendix (Explanatory Notes) is Bernard L. Stein, who has done some of what Twain planned to do. Many of the notes point out the historicity of the laws and customs that Twain writes about.

- **What is Mark Twain's peculiar idea of history?**

This is the rest of the first paragraph of the Preface:

It is not pretended that these laws and customs existed in England in the sixth century; no, it is only pretended that inasmuch as they existed in the English and other civilizations of far later times, it is safe to consider that it is no libel upon the sixth

century to suppose them to have been in practice in that day also. One is quite justified in inferring that whatever one of these laws or customs was lacking in that remote time, its place was competently filled by a worse one.

Twain's view of history is peculiar. He assumes that if a bad law exists in 19th-century America, then if it did not exist in 6th-century Britain, then a worse law existed. This is a view of history that believes in steady progress, but the plot of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* goes against the idea of steady progress. In this novel, progress is made for a short time, but it all comes crashing down. This is the plot of the Camelot story as well. In the Thomas Malory story, King Arthur was a wise and a humane King, who created a civilized society, but it all ended with his death. (Malory wrote the *Morte d'Arthur*.)

Actually, civilizations can make progress for a while, then disappear. We had the civilizations of Greece and Rome, then when they disappeared, the Dark Ages ensued. (They were Dark because of a lack of learning.) Just because a law or custom exists in 19th-century America does not mean that the same or a worse law existed in 6th-century Camelot.

Hank Morgan, the Connecticut Yankee, might believe such a theory of history.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION

• What do we learn about the Connecticut Yankee before he ends up in Camelot?

Apparently, Mark Twain himself is the man who meets the Connecticut Yankee in a museum. A bullet hole is in some medieval armor, and the Yankee says that he himself put the bullet hole there.

On p. 4, we read:

I am an American. I was born and reared in Hartford, in the State of Connecticut — anyway, just over the river, in the country. So I am a Yankee of the Yankees — and practical; yes, and nearly barren of sentiment, I suppose — or poetry, in other words. My father was a blacksmith, my uncle was a horse doctor, and I was both, along at first. Then I went over to the great arms factory and learned my real trade; learned all there was to it; learned to make everything: guns, revolvers, cannon, boilers, engines, all sorts of labor-saving machinery. Why, I could make anything a body wanted — anything in the world, it didn't make any difference what; and if there wasn't any quick new-fangled way to make a thing, I could invent one — and do it as easy as rolling off a log. I became head superintendent; had a couple of thousand men under me.

We find out that the stranger is a Connecticut Yankee. This carries the connotation of a non-sense, practical man. His biography bears that out. Early in life, he trains both to be a blacksmith and a horse doctor, and later he went to work in a great arms factory, where he learned many skills in manufacturing machinery.

In these jobs, we see the Industrial Revolution at work. At first, horses were immensely important. That is why the jobs of blacksmith and horse doctor were important. Once the Industrial Revolution started, machines became more important than horses.

• If you want to do some research, explain what the Industrial Revolution is.

The Industrial Revolution occurred from roughly 1750 to 1850. In it, the society changed from

mainly agricultural and commercial to one that relied on complex machinery. These changes occurred gradually.

• **How does the Connecticut Yankee wind up in Camelot?**

On pp. 4-5, we read:

At last I met my match, and I got my dose. It was during a misunderstanding conducted with crowbars with a fellow we used to call Hercules. He laid me out with a crusher alongside the head that made everything crack, and seemed to spring every joint in my skull and made it overlap its neighbor. Then the world went out in darkness, and I didn't feel anything more, and didn't know anything at all — at least for a while.

Of course, Hercules is the name of an immensely strong ancient hero. His Greek name is Heracles; Hercules is his Roman name.

After receiving this hit on the head, the stranger whom Twain has met wakes up in Camelot, where he is taken captive by a knight.

We should note that this beginning is not scientific. Here we have an odd occurrence that cannot be explained by science. Nearly all the rest of the novel relies on science and not on fantasy, except for the end when Merlin is finally able to cast a spell.

• **What kind of society allows a knight to challenge and capture a stranger?**

The Connecticut Yankee has done absolutely no one any harm, yet the knight challenges him to “just” (p. 5). The word “just” means joust. Seeing that the knight means business, the Connecticut Yankee climbs a tree. The knight then captures him and takes him to the castle.

The kind of society in which such a thing can happen is one that is xenophobic, conformist, and lacks civil rights. The word “xenophobia” means fear of strangers, and the stranger challenges the Yankee simply because he is a stranger.

The knight knows that the Yankee is a stranger because he does not dress like other people do. This arouses his suspicion that the Yankee might be a foe. There are no civil rights here. What we have is might makes right. The knight is armed, and the Yankee is not, so the knight takes the Yankee prisoner. The Yankee has not committed a crime; he is taken captive simply because he does not look and act like everybody else. If the Yankee (and others) had civil rights, they could not be arrested unless they were suspected of committing a crime or of plotting to commit a crime.

Sir Kay is like Tom Sawyer beating up the new boy in town.

CHAPTER 1: CAMELOT

• **According to legend, Camelot was a time of peace and prosperity, but what does the Connecticut Yankee see when he sees Camelot?**

The Yankee sees a number of things:

1. He sees a beautiful countryside. The environment here is in good shape.
2. He sees a road. The road is basically a winding path. Horses use it — they are the main means

of transportation in Camelot. In addition, marks are on the road, but the wheels that made the marks are not big. Camelot is a pre-Industrial Revolution society.

3. He sees naked children. The first child he sees is a girl almost 10 years old, wearing nothing but “a hoop of flame-red poppies” (p. 10).

4. He sees poverty. The people he and the knight see are lower class. They live poorly. On p. 11, we read:

At intervals we passed a wretched cabin, with a thatched roof, and about it small fields and garden patches in an indifferent state of cultivation. There were people, too; brawny men, with long, coarse, uncombed hair that hung down over their faces and made them look like animals. They and the women, as a rule, wore a coarse tow-linen robe that came well below the knee, and a rude sort of sandal, and many wore an iron collar. The small boys and girls were always naked; but nobody seemed to know it.

Both the houses and the adults are poor.

5. The Yankee sees slavery. The iron collars that many of the people are wearing show that they are slaves. At this time, the Yankee does not realize that they are slaves.

6. The Yankee sees a society with classes of people. On p. 11, we read:

All of these people stared at me, talked about me, ran into the huts and fetched out their families to gape at me; but nobody ever noticed that other fellow, except to make him humble salutation and get no response for their pains.

In this society, the king, the nobility, and the knights (who are nobility) are at the top, and everyone else is below them. We will read more about classes in this society later. At the very bottom, of course, are the slaves.

CHAPTER 2: KING ARTHUR'S COURT

• Write a short character analysis of Clarence. By the way, what is a page?

On p. 15, the Yankee sees Clarence for the first time:

This was an airy slim boy in shrimp-colored tights that made him look like a forked carrot, the rest of his gear was blue silk and dainty laces and ruffles; and he had long yellow curls, and wore a plumed pink satin cap tilted complacently over his ear. By his look, he was good-natured; by his gait, he was satisfied with himself. He was pretty enough to frame.

Clarence is very young. When Clarence tells the Yankee that he (Clarence) is a page, the Yankee replies that he (Clarence) is no more than a paragraph (p. 15). We find out that Clarence is a friendly sort. On p. 15, we read:

He began to talk and laugh, in happy, thoughtless, boyish fashion, as we walked along, and made himself old friends with me at once; asked me all sorts of questions about myself and about my clothes, but never waited for an answer — always chattered straight ahead, as if he didn't know he had asked a question and wasn't expecting any reply [...]

Clarence is also a source of information for the Yankee. He tells the Yankee that the year is 528

— the Yankee comes from the year 1879.

Clarence is kind-hearted. He tells the Yankee that he will help to get word to the Yankee's friends about the Yankee's capture — not knowing, of course, that the Yankee's friends won't be born for centuries.

By the way, a page is "A boy who acted as a knight's attendant as the first stage of training for knighthood" (*The American Heritage College Dictionary*).

The Yankee gives Clarence his name: "Now, Clarence, my boy — if that might happen to be your name — I'll get you to post me up a little if you don't mind. What is the name of that apparition that brought me here" (p. 17).

Clarence's real name is Amyas le Poulet (114).

• **How does the Yankee determine to tell whether he really is in Camelot?**

We find out that the Yankee has a vast knowledge of such things as the dates of eclipses. He finds out from Clarence that the date is June 19, 528.

On p. 17, we read:

I knew that the only total eclipse of the sun in the first half of the sixth century occurred on the 21st of June, A. D. 528, O.S., and began at 3 minutes after 12 noon. I also knew that no total eclipse of the sun was due in what to me was the present year — i.e., 1879. So, if I could keep my anxiety and curiosity from eating the heart out of me for forty-eight hours, I should then find out for certain whether this boy was telling me the truth or not.

If the eclipse occurs, then the Yankee will know that he really is in Camelot in the year 528. After all, no eclipse is due in what the Yankee regards as the present year: 1879.

• **What are the Knights of King Arthur's Court like? What do they do for entertainment?**

On p. 19, we read:

In the middle of this groined and vaulted public square was an oaken table which they called the Table Round. It was as large as a circus ring; and around it sat a great company of men dressed in such various and splendid colors that it hurt one's eyes to look at them. They wore their plumed hats, right along, except that whenever one addressed himself directly to the king, he lifted his hat a trifle just as he was beginning his remark.

1) We find out that one of the ways the knights of the Table Round entertain themselves is by drinking. When the Yankee sees them, they are drinking from "entire ox horns" (p. 19), although a few were still eating bread and beef-bones.

2) They also entertain themselves by watching dog-fights — something they are much interested in. Of course, not only the knights are interested in the dog-fights, but also the ladies and the musicians.

3) They also entertain themselves by telling and listening to stories — of a bloody and gruesome sort. On p. 20, we read:

As a rule, the speech and behavior of these people were gracious and courtly; and I noticed that they were good and serious listeners when anybody was telling anything — I mean in a dog-fightless interval. And plainly, too, they were a childlike and innocent lot; telling lies of the stateliest pattern with a most gentle and winning naivety, and ready and willing to listen to anybody else's lie, and believe it, too. It was hard to associate them with anything cruel or dreadful; and yet they dealt in tales of blood and suffering with a guileless relish that made me almost forget to shudder.

CHAPTER 3: KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

• What hints do we have of the relationship between Queen Guenever and Sir Launcelot?

(Note: Some editions use the spelling “Lancelot.”)

Some hanky-panky is going on between Sir Launcelot and King Arthur's wife, Queen Guenever. Some six or eight prisoners address her, and they tell her that Sir Kay the Seneschal captured them. Immediately, everybody present feels surprise and astonishment. The queen looks disappointed because she had hoped that Sir Launcelot had captured the prisoners.

As it turns out, he had. Sir Launcelot first rescued Sir Kay from some attackers, then he took Sir Kay's armor and horse and captured more knights. All of these prisoners were actually captured by Sir Launcelot, not by Sir Kay at all.

Two passages let us know that something is going on between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever.

1. The first is subtle; she looks disappointed when Sir Kay says that he captured the knights (p. 23):

Surprise and astonishment flashed from face to face all over the house; the queen's gratified smile faded out at the name of Sir Kay, and she looked disappointed; and the page whispered in my ear with an accent and manner expressive of extravagant derision

2. The other is much more overt and occurs after Guenever learns that the knight who really captured the prisoners was Sir Launcelot (p. 24):

Well, it was touching to see the queen blush and smile, and look embarrassed and happy, and fling furtive glances at Sir Launcelot that would have got him shot in Arkansas, to a dead certainty.

• Write a short character analysis of Sir Kay the Seneschal. What is a seneschal anyway?

1. Sir Kay is a foster brother to King Arthur. He is not much respected by the other knights or by Queen Guenever, at least not as a fighting man. We see that by the way that people react when the six or eight prisoners say that Sir Kay captured them — everyone is surprised and astonished. They plainly do not believe that Sir Kay could have accomplished such a feat. Of course, he did not — Sir Launcelot did. No one doubts that Sir Launcelot could accomplish such a feat.

2. Sir Kay is a good storyteller. On pp. 23-24, we read:

Every eye was fastened with severe inquiry upon Sir Kay. But he was equal to the

occasion. He got up and played his hand like a major — and took every trick. He said he would state the case exactly according to the facts; he would tell the simple straightforward tale, without comment of his own; “and then,” said he, “if ye find glory and honor due, ye will give it unto him who is the mightiest man of his hands that ever bare shield or strake with sword in the ranks of Christian battle — even him that sitteth there!” and he pointed to Sir Launcelot. Ah, he fetched them; it was a rattling good stroke.

Sir Kay’s pointing to Sir Launcelot gets everybody’s attention and arouses interest in his tale.

3. We also see that Sir Kay is a liar — but then, all the Knights of the Round Table tell lies. Six or eight prisoners are present, but Sir Kay’s story includes many more. They are not present yet, but they will arrive once they have healed themselves of their wounds. Clarence knows that Sir Kay is lying. On p. 24, we read:

Everybody praised the valor and magnanimity of Sir Launcelot; and as for me, I was perfectly amazed, that one man, all by himself, should have been able to beat down and capture such battalions of practiced fighters. I said as much to Clarence; but this mocking featherhead only said:

“An Sir Kay had had time to get another skin of sour wine into him, ye had seen the accompt doubled.”

We see right away that Sir Kay lies. The story that he tells comes from Malory, and Malory’s version of the story is printed on pp. 2-4 in “A Word of Explanation.” (Sir Thomas Malory wrote the *Morte d’Arthur*.)

In Malory’s version, Sir Launcelot slew two giants and set free “threescore ladies and damsels” (p. 2) — that is, 60 ladies and damsels. In Sir Kay’s version, of the story, Sir Launcelot slew seven giants and set free 142 “captive maidens” (p. 24).

According to Malory, Sir Launcelot rescued Sir Kay from three knights. According to Sir Kay, Sir Launcelot rescued him from nine knights.

By the way, this is the definition of a seneschal:

Seneschal: “An official in a medieval noble household in charge of domestic arrangements and servants; a steward or major-domo.” — *The American Heritage College Dictionary*.

• **Write a short character analysis of Merlin.**

- 1) Merlin is the bad guy in this novel. He is opposed to the Connecticut Yankee.
- 2) Merlin represents magic, superstition, and ignorance, while the Yankee represents science, progress, and knowledge.
- 3) Merlin is very old. He has a white beard. He wears a “flowing black gown” (p. 24).
- 4) Merlin also is a poor storyteller. He has one story that he tells in the third person so as not to appear conceited. (The story is about him and King Arthur.) The other people in the hall have heard it so many times that they are tired of it and go to sleep when he tells it — including King

Arthur. The tale is one of magic. King Arthur acquires a sword and a magic sheath from the lady of the lake, and Merlin is able to turn King Arthur and himself invisible for a while. This tale also comes from Malory.

• **Mark Twain is a Realist writer as opposed to a Romanticist writer. Do some research and explain what Realism and Romanticism are.**

As a Realist writer, Twain wants to show things as they really are. Very often, he does that in a satiric way. The Romanticist view of things, on the other hand, is often not realistic.

For example, Tom Sawyer reads a lot of Romanticist adventure books. From these books, he gets an unrealistic view of the world. For example, he reads about Robin Hood, and he gets the idea that all robbers are honorable. Because of that notion, he wants to be the leader of a band of robbers. Twain, however, is a Realist writer, and he knows that robbers are not honorable men. The robbers that we see in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* — Injun Joe and his companion — are despicable.

In contrast to Twain, Sir Walter Scott is a Romanticist writer. He wrote such books as *Ivanhoe*, which glorified knight-errantry. Twain, however, being a Realist writer, mocks knight-errantry in his novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. For example, the Yankee goes on a quest while wearing plate armor. He begins to sweat in the hot sun, and he would like to get his handkerchief in order to wipe away the sweat. However, his helmet is of a kind that he can't remove by himself to get at his handkerchief, which he is keeping in his helmet. Therefore, all he can do is cuss at his uncomfortableness. Later, a fly gets in his helmet, and it buzzes and flies around, lighting on his lip, then on his nose, then on an eye, and all the Yankee can do is endure the discomfort.

I once saw a *New Yorker* cartoon that mixed elements of the Romanticist and the Real. The cartoon showed a beautiful castle on top of a mountain, but at the bottom of the mountain, beside the road that led up to the castle, was a bunch of garbage cans.

Here are a few notes on Realism and on Romanticism:

- Realists center on the here and now with all its faults; Romanticists focus on the ideal.
- Realist writers try to render reality in detail, including in the language that people speak. If someone is physically dirty, a Realist writer will point that out. A Romanticist writer will describe the snow-white skin of a young maiden; a Realist writer will point out that the maiden badly needs a bath.
- William Dean Howells, Rebecca Harding Davis, John W. DeForest, Henry James, and Mark Twain are all Realist writers. Sir Walter Scott and Tennyson are examples of Romanticist writers.
- Realist writers tend to focus on character rather than plot. Plots tend to be believable. For example, plots can focus on running away from home or a young boy having adventures such as getting lost in a cave. Romanticist writers sometimes have unbelievable plots, such as spending 40 years to get out of prison.
- The language is realistic; that is, the language is vernacular — the way people really talk. Romanticist writers often use an elevated language as in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte*

D'Arthur. Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn uses bad grammar, while the knights in *Morte D'Arthur* talk like characters in a book.

- Realist writers often focus on the middle and the lower classes. Romanticist writers often focus on the upper classes. Sir Walter Scott writes more about knights than about farmers. Mark Twain writes much about characters with no or little money.

• In the first edition of this novel appears an illustration of Merlin. In it, the Romanticist poet Tennyson appears as Merlin. Who was Tennyson, and why would Twain approve of this drawing?

As we know, Twain was a Realist writer who hated the Romanticists. Merlin is the enemy to the Realist Connecticut Yankee, so it is appropriate for Twain to approve of casting the Romanticist (in some ways) writer Tennyson as Merlin.

Here are a few facts about Tennyson:

- Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, was an English poet who lived from 1809–92. He was the most famous poet during the reign of Queen Victoria.
- Tennyson's father was a clergyman.
- In 1832, he published a volume titled *Poems*, which included these famous poems: "A Dream of Fair Women," "The Lady of Shalott," and "The Lotus-Eaters."
- In 1842, he published another volume titled *Poems*, which included these famous poems: "Break, Break, Break," "Locksley Hall," "Morte d'Arthur," and "Ulysses." This book resulted in his being recognized as a great poet.
- In 1850, he published *In Memoriam*, an elegy sequence, and he became poet laureate of England. In 1855, he published "The Charge of the Light Brigade."
- He also published various editions of *Idylls of the King*, which consisted of poems about the legend of King Arthur and Camelot.

In chapter 13 of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck and Jim go on board a wrecked steamboat. It is foolish for Huck and Jim to go on board a wrecked steamboat that is liable to break up at any moment and drown everyone on board. In chapter 13, on p. 89, we find out that the wrecked steamboat is named the *Walter Scott*.

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) was a Romanticist writer; he was not a Realist writer. As a Realist writer, Mark Twain was opposed to the Romanticist writers, and so, as a joke, he names the wrecked steamboat the *Walter Scott*.

Sir Walter Scott wrote *Ivanhoe*, which is about knights errant, but he did not look at them Realistically, the way that Twain did in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Twain wrote humorously about the discomfort of wearing plate armor, and about sweating and not being able to get at one's handkerchief. Sir Walter doesn't do any of that.

What are some characteristics of the tales told by the Knights of the Round Table and by Merlin?

1) Exaggeration is one characteristic. (Exaggeration is a kind word for damn lies.) When Sir Kay

tells his story, he exaggerates the number of men defeated by Sir Launcelot. When Merlin tells his story, he says that he is able to turn King Arthur and himself invisible.

2) Warfare is another characteristic. Lots of fights occur in the narratives. Merlin is able to help King Arthur avoid a fight, but only through the use of magic.

3) Superstitious elements are another characteristic of the stories. Merlin turns King Arthur and himself invisible, King Arthur gets a sword and a magic scabbard (as long as King Arthur wears the magic scabbard, he will not bleed) from a supernatural being (the Lady of the Lake). (No one criticizes Merlin because they are afraid of his magic.)

4) Adventure is another characteristic. Sir Launcelot slays seven giants and rescues 142 damsels in distress.

By the way, Tom Sawyer likes stories such as these.

CHAPTER 4: SIR DINADEN THE HUMORIST

• According to Sir Kay, how did he capture the Yankee?

Sir Kay exaggerates, as is his custom. He tells many lies:

1) He met the Yankee in a far land where everyone wore the same outlandish clothing that the Yankee is wearing. (Actually, the Yankee walked the short distance to Camelot.)

2) The Yankee is wearing enchanted clothing that renders him “safe from harm by human hands” (p. 31).

3) He killed the Yankee’s 13 knights in a battle that took three hours.

4) He calls the Yankee “this prodigious giant,” and “this horrible sky-towering monster,” and “this tusked and taloned man-devouring ogre” (p. 31). Of course, the Yankee is a human being.

5) In an attempt to escape, the Yankee jumped with one bound into the top of a tree 200 cubits high. A cubit is thought to be the length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger of an adult.

6) He knocked the Yankee to the ground by throwing at him a stone the size of a cow.

One more point: Sir Kay sentences the Yankee to die on the 21st at noon. This so little concerns him that he yawns before he names the date.

• Write a short character analysis of Sir Dinaden the Humorist.

Sir Dinaden the humorist is a comic character. The Yankee says that he is a practical joker. In fact, he is. He ties some metal mugs to the tail of a dog, and it begins running around in fright. This is a cruel practical joke, but it amuses the people at court and Sir Dinadan laughs longer than anyone else. Apparently, Sir Dinadan was the first person ever to think of that joke, as he tells the story over and over of how he thought of the idea.

In addition, Sir Dinadan tells old jokes. They were old when the Yankee was a boy, and even now, hundreds of years earlier, they are still old. We see that by what Clarence says on p. 31:

However, of course the scoffer didn't laugh — I mean the boy. No, he scoffed; there wasn't anything he wouldn't scoff at. He said the most of Sir Dinadan's jokes were rotten and the rest were petrified.

By the way, we find out that Clarence is a scoffer. This will be important later, since being a scoffer means that Clarence can be freed from the superstition of the age. The Yankee will undertake to educate Clarence and make him a modern 19th-century man.

• If you feel like doing research, tell the real, non-satiric story of Sir Dinadan. (Of course, be sure to avoid plagiarism.)

Here is the non-satiric story of Sir Dinadan:

- Sir Dinadan is a character who appears in the legend of King Arthur and Camelot.
- Sir Dinadan's father was Sir Brunor Senior, aka the "Good Knight without Fear." His brothers were Sirs Brunor le Noir (aka "La Cote Mal Taile") and Daniel.
- Sir Dinadan was a practical joker, as we can see by his actions at the Sorelais Tournament.
- Sir Dinadan disguised himself and jousted well at the tournament, but eventually his disguise was uncovered and people knew who he was.
- When King Galehaut was in a bad mood after being served fish, which he hated, at the tournament, Sir Dinadan said, "Well may I liken you to a wolf, for he will never eat fish, but flesh." People laughed at this quip.
- Sir Dinadan's practical jokes affected the other knights, as seen as Sir Launcelot's jousting while wearing a dress over his armor. He unseated Sir Dinadan, and with some help by others, succeeded in dressing Sir Dinadan in women's clothing, too. Queen Guenever thought that this was hysterical.
- Sir Dinadan was mostly well liked, but he did have a few enemies. Sirs Mordred and Agravaine murdered him, although he had rescued them from being killed by Breuse Sans Pitie. He was buried at Camelot.

What kind of language do the knights and ladies use at court?

Language used in the 6th century is very coarse by 19th-century standards.

On pp. 32-34, we read:

Still, I was sane enough to notice this detail, to wit: many of the terms used in the most matter-of-fact way by this great assemblage of the first ladies and gentlemen in the land would have made a Comanche blush. Indelicacy is too mild a term to convey the idea. However, I had read "Tom Jones," and "Roderick Random," and other books of that kind, and knew that the highest and first ladies and gentlemen in England had remained little or no cleaner in their talk, and in the morals and conduct which such talk implies, clear up to a hundred years ago; in fact clear into our own nineteenth century — in which century, broadly speaking, the earliest samples of the real lady and real gentleman discoverable in English history — or in European history, for that matter — may be said

to have made their appearance. Suppose Sir Walter, instead of putting the conversations into the mouths of his characters, had allowed the characters to speak for themselves? We should have had talk from Rebecca and Ivanhoe and the soft lady Rowena which would embarrass a tramp in our day. However, to the unconsciously indelicate all things are delicate. King Arthur's people were not aware that they were indecent and I had presence of mind enough not to mention it.

In the novel *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding, the protagonist of the novel has a lot of sexual adventures.

Here, of course, we see how Realist and Romanticist writers treat language differently. Twain as a Realist writer has the knights of the Round Table talk coarsely, as he thinks that they would have done in real life, had they actually existed. Sir Walter Scott, the Romanticist author of *Ivanhoe*, has his characters Rebecca and Ivanhoe speak an elevated language.

We see an example of the indecent things they may have talked about on p. 34. The knights are concerned about the Yankee's enchanted clothing, so Merlin makes a matter-of-fact suggestion: Why not strip the Yankee? They do, and all the knights and ladies look at him and make comments.

On p. 34, we read:

In half a minute I was as naked as a pair of tongs! And dear, dear, to think of it: I was the only embarrassed person there. Everybody discussed me; and did it as unconcernedly as if I had been a cabbage. Queen Guenever was as naively interested as the rest, and said she had never seen anybody with legs just like mine before. It was the only compliment I got — if it was a compliment.

• Describe the social inequality seen in the novel so far. How do the peasants live as compared to the nobles?

We have seen a little of the social inequality of Camelot and 6th-century England so far. In chapter 1, we saw that the peasants lived poorly and that many people wore an iron collar — the emblem of a slave. We also saw that the peasants and the slaves bowed before the knight, but that the knight did not acknowledge them.

At Camelot, the knights lift their hats a little before speaking directly to the king, but otherwise the knights are all equal.

Social inequality will be an important theme in this novel, but it has not played a major role yet.

CHAPTER 5: AN INSPIRATION

and

CHAPTER 6: THE ECLIPSE

• The Connecticut Yankee has scoffed at superstition and lying. How does he use superstition and lying to save himself from his death sentence? How much of a showman is Hank Morgan?

The Yankee enjoys performance as much as Tom Sawyer.

In this novel, the Yankee is able to use superstition and lying — and a knowledge of astronomy — to save himself from being burned at the stake. He tells Clarence that he is a great magician and to take the message to King Arthur. King Arthur wants to let the Yankee go free, but Merlin insists that the Yankee is a fake because he did not name the calamity that he would cause if he were not released. The Yankee then tells Clarence that he will cause the sun to go out when he is supposed to be executed. Clarence bears the message and succeeds — on his own initiative — on moving the execution ahead by a day. The Yankee thinks that this is a fatal move on Clarence's part, but all works out well because Clarence was earlier mistaken about the date.

The Yankee is brought out to be executed, and the total eclipse of the sun starts. The Yankee points his arm at the sun, and the superstitious people think that the Yankee is causing the sun to go out. The Yankee is released, and he becomes the second most powerful man in the kingdom after King Arthur himself.

We will see that the Yankee continues to take advantage of the ignorance and superstition of the people. His “miracles” are done by natural and scientific means, but he lets on that they are caused by magic. The Yankee's excuse is that most of the people aren't ready to learn about science yet. He will, however, start teaching the young and intelligent ones about science in the man-factories (man-u-facture) that he will soon start.

By the way, in the Explanatory Notes, we learn that Mark Twain owned a set of the works of Washington Irving. In *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, Columbus used an eclipse to “prove” that he had supernatural powers and to make the Caribbean natives get supplies for him and his crew.

Of course, the people who believe that the Yankee is a magician who caused the eclipse are mistaken about the cause of the eclipse. The Yankee pointed at the sun, and an eclipse occurred. The superstitious characters are making the false cause fallacy — of course, the Yankee's pointing at the sun does not cause the eclipse.

• What does Hank Morgan demand as a reward for not blotting out the sun? Is this reward a good or a bad thing for Morgan? For the people of medieval England?

On p. 49, the Yankee says:

“I have reflected, sir king. For a lesson, I will let this darkness proceed, and spread night in the world; but whether I blot out the sun for good, or restore it, shall rest with you. These are the terms, to wit: You shall remain king over all your dominions, and receive all the glories and honors that belong to the kingship; but you shall appoint me your perpetual minister and executive, and give me for my services one per cent of such actual increase of revenue over and above its present amount as I may succeed in creating for the state. If I can't live on that, I sha'n't ask anybody to give me a lift. Is it satisfactory?”

This reward is a good thing all around. For one thing, the Yankee could probably have asked for much more and got it — on p. 48, King Arthur offers him half his kingdom.

For another, the Yankee doesn't get anything unless he actually brings improvement to the kingdom. If revenues stay flat, the Yankee gets nothing. What the Yankee intends to do is improve the general prosperity. That will make the tax revenues go up. The Yankee will get one per cent over and above its present amount, the kingdom (King Arthur and the government) will

get the other 99 percent. That should make everyone happy.

• **Hank Morgan does not ask for one percent of Camelot's tax revenues. What does he ask for?**

He asks for one percent of Camelot's tax revenues OVER AND ABOVE THE AMOUNT THE AMOUNT BEING COLLECTED NOW.

The Yankee intends to make the kingdom prosperous. People will make more money, they will pay more in taxes because they are making more, and yet they will be happy because they have more money left over after being taxed.

People complain about income taxes, but I would love to have to pay \$100,000 a year in income taxes. Why? In order for me to pay \$100,000 a year in income taxes, I would have to make something like \$300,000. This means that I would have \$200,000 left over, which would make me very happy indeed.

• **Write a short character analysis of Clarence as depicted in the novel so far.**

We know a few things about Clarence, who is an important character because he will become the Yankee's right-hand man. Clarence is young, and he is a scoffer — at least sometimes. Clarence scoffs at Sir Kay and at Merlin and at Sir Dinadan. On p. 31, the Yankee says that Clarence scoffs at everything, but Clarence does not scoff at the Yankee when the Yankee claims to be a magician.

Being a scoffer is actually a positive character trait, according to the Yankee. A scoffer is more likely to be a scientist and not a person who believes in superstition. In Clarence's case, education has led him to believe in superstition and magic, but later the Yankee will be able to educate that nonsense out of him.

Clarence does have other faults. For example, he does not know what day it is. He tells the Yankee on p. 16 that the date is June 19, 528. The next day, on p. 41, he tells the Yankee that the date is June 20. However, later that day, on pp. 48-49, when the eclipse has started, the Yankee asks a monk what day it is, and the monk tells him that that it is June 21. Clarence was wrong by a day about the date.

Of course, back then dates weren't as important as they are now. In our American society, data such as birthdates are very important because of retirement pensions and Social Security. However, in other societies such things aren't that important.

Note: In TV commercials for yogurt, absurd claims were made about the ability of yogurt to make one live a long time. Investigation showed that the people about whom the claims were made were mistaken about how old they were. They thought they were much older than they really were. They lived in a society without Social Security and so keeping track of birthdates was not all that important.

• **Write a short character analysis of the Connecticut Yankee as depicted in the novel so far. What does the Connecticut Yankee know?**

- 1) The Connecticut Yankee is an intelligent man who does not believe in superstition.
- 2) He is a problem-solver who comes up with a way to not be burned at the stake and to become

the second most powerful man in the kingdom after King Arthur himself.

3) He knows a lot about backsmithing, horse doctoring, and arms manufacturing.

4) He can fight when he needs to, as we find out when he fights Hercules before arriving in the 6th century and Camelot.

5) He is pragmatic. He knows that he can't fight an armed knight who is mounted, so the Yankee climbs a tree.

6) He knows about astronomy and has a good memory, as we find out when he knows the date and time of a total eclipse of the sun in 6th-century England.

7) The Yankee is a reader. He had read *Tom Jones* and *Roderick Random*.

8) The Yankee is a writer. The book we are reading is actually the Yankee's book. Mark Twain — as a character — wrote only the beginning and the end of the book.

CHAPTER 7: MERLIN'S TOWER

• Write a short character analysis of Merlin as depicted in the novel so far.

1) Merlin is a magician, but he is apparently a poor magician. Indeed, he is not successful at magic until the end of the book. Merlin is also an enemy of the Yankee. We see that when Merlin does his best to have the Yankee killed.

2) Merlin ordered earlier that the Yankee's "enchanted" clothing be stripped from him, and when the Yankee claimed to be a magician, he stopped the King from setting the Yankee free by asking why the Yankee had not named the calamity that he would cause if he were not set free.

3) On p. 49, after the eclipse has started, Merlin orders, "Apply the torch!" (Merlin wants the Yankee to burn at the stake.) Only the King's command ("I forbid it!") saves the Yankee. Merlin also "blinks" when the Yankee threatens that he will blast with thunder anyone who moves. Hearing that threat, Merlin stays still.

4) Merlin tries to work magic, but he cannot. The Yankee gives Merlin time to weave an enchantment to keep his tower from being blown up, but of course the enchantment fails, and the Yankee uses modern gunpowder and natural lightning to blow up the tower.

5) We have also learned earlier that Merlin tells the same boring story over and over, using the same words — and the 3rd person — each time he tells the story.

6) Merlin has been the second most important person in the kingdom after King Arthur, but the Yankee has replaced him. Now Merlin is the Yankee's enemy.

7) By the way, on p. 20 appears a picture of Merlin. The face of Merlin is actually that of Lord Tennyson, a Romanticist writer who published a book of poetry about Camelot titled *Idylls of the King*. As a Realist writer, Twain opposed the Romanticists.

• The Yankee enjoys performances. Why does he create the performance of blowing up Merlin's tower?

The Yankee has a number of reasons of creating the performance of blowing up Merlin's tower:

1) Merlin is his rival, and the Yankee wants to make himself clearly superior to Merlin. By blowing up Merlin's tower after Merlin has tried to protect it with magic enchantments, the Yankee clearly shows his superiority to Merlin.

2) The citizens of England want to see a miracle. The Yankee knows that they will continue to want to see miracles unless he can put a stop to it. On p. 56, we read:

By my authority as executive I threw Merlin into prison — the same cell I had occupied myself. Then I gave public notice by herald and trumpet that I should be busy with affairs of state for a fortnight, but about the end of that time I would take a moment's leisure and blow up Merlin's stone tower by fires from heaven; in the meantime, whoso listened to evil reports about me, let him beware. Furthermore, I would perform but this one miracle at this time, and no more; if it failed to satisfy and any murmured, I would turn the murmurers into horses, and make them useful. Quiet ensued.

By causing this one "miracle," the Yankee can quiet everyone's clamoring for more miracles.

3) This "miracle" solidifies the Yankee's power and position in England.

Note: the Connecticut Yankee resembles Tom Sawyer in that both love spectacles and performances.

CHAPTER 8: THE BOSS

• What does the Connecticut Yankee think about the British system of hereditary nobility?

On p. 65, we read:

Inherited ideas are a curious thing, and interesting to observe and examine. I had mine, the king and his people had theirs. In both cases they flowed in ruts worn deep by time and habit, and the man who should have proposed to divert them by reason and argument would have had a long contract on his hands. For instance, those people had inherited the idea that all men without title and a long pedigree, whether they had great natural gifts and acquirements or hadn't, were creatures of no more consideration than so many animals, bugs, insects; whereas I had inherited the idea that human daws who can consent to masquerade in the peacock-shams of inherited dignities and unearned titles, are of no good but to be laughed at.

Definition: A daw is a jackdaw — a Eurasian bird related to the crows.

The Yankee doesn't think much of hereditary nobility. To him, unearned titles are silly. What counts is a person's ability, not a person's title. The Yankee, in modern times, is more likely to want to visit Bell Laboratories than Buckingham Palace.

In this society, people look up to a dumb person with an inherited title.

In this society, people don't respect (much) a person with a lot of ability who lacks a title.

• Why doesn't the Connecticut Yankee accept a title of nobility?

The people of 6th-century England, however, believe strongly in inherited titles. They will pay more deference to a chucklehead bearing the title of knight than to a person of real ability who lacks an inherited title.

On pp. 67-68, we read:

But to return to my anomalous position in King Arthur's kingdom. Here I was, a giant among pigmies, a man among children, a master intelligence among intellectual moles: by all rational measurement the one and only actually great man in that whole British world; and yet there and then, just as in the remote England of my birth-time, the sheep-witted earl who could claim long descent from a king's leman, acquired at second-hand from the slums of London, was a better man than I was. Such a personage was fawned upon in Arthur's realm and reverently looked up to by everybody, even though his dispositions were as mean as his intelligence, and his morals as base as his lineage. There were times when HE could sit down in the king's presence, but I couldn't. I could have got a title easily enough, and that would have raised me a large step in everybody's eyes; even in the king's, the giver of it. But I didn't ask for it; and I declined it when it was offered. I couldn't have felt really and satisfactorily fine and proud and set-up over any title except one that should come from the nation itself, the only legitimate source [...]

• **What title does the Connecticut Yankee take for himself?**

The Yankee would **not** feel right with a title that came from inherited privilege, but he does accept a title that comes from the people. In modern terms, the title means "The Boss." On pp. 68-69, we read [emphasis added]:

I couldn't have felt really and satisfactorily fine and proud and set-up over any title except one that should come from the nation itself, the only legitimate source; and such an one I hoped to win; and in the course of years of honest and honorable endeavor, I did win it and did wear it with a high and clean pride. This title fell casually from the lips of a blacksmith, one day, in a village, was caught up as a happy thought and tossed from mouth to mouth with a laugh and an affirmative vote; in ten days it had swept the kingdom, and was become as familiar as the king's name. I was never known by any other designation afterward, whether in the nation's talk or in grave debate upon matters of state at the council-board of the sovereign. This title, translated into modern speech, would be **THE BOSS**. Elected by the nation. That suited me. **And it was a pretty high title. There were very few THE'S, and I was one of them. If you spoke of the duke, or the earl, or the bishop, how could anybody tell which one you meant? But if you spoke of The King or The Queen or The Boss, it was different.**

• **What is the Connecticut Yankee's opinion of the Roman Catholic Church?**

The Yankee is completely against the Roman Catholic Church. On pp. 66-67, we read:

[...] through the force of inherited ideas they were not able to conceive of anything being entitled to that except pedigree and lordship. There you see the hand of that awful power, the Roman Catholic Church. In two or three little centuries it had converted a nation of men to a nation of worms. Before the day of the Church's supremacy in the world, men were men, and held their heads up, and had a man's pride and spirit and independence; and what of greatness and position a person got, he got mainly by achievement, not by birth. But then the Church came to the front, with an axe to grind; and she was wise, subtle, and knew more than one way to skin a cat — or a nation; she invented "divine right of kings," [...]

One of the major things that Twain has against the Roman Catholic Church is that it invented (Twain says) the divine right of Kings.

However, later we will see that the Yankee respects the priests who do good works among the people.

• Why do you suppose Twain has the Yankee be so completely against the Roman Catholic Church?

There can be a number of reasons Twain has the Yankee be so completely against the Roman Catholic Church:

- 1) Prejudice. Twain may be anti-Catholic. In American history, there have been periods of anti-Catholicism.
- 2) Twain is suspicious of and dislikes organized religion and perhaps religion in general. He satirizes religion in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
- 3) The Roman Catholic Church is the only church at this time. The Reformation will not start until October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. That means that in the 6th century there are no Protestant Churches for Twain to make fun of. (Actually, the Yankee does start a few Protestant churches. He wants people to be able to choose which religion they wish to believe in. He also wants the power of the Church to be diluted. The Yankee does believe in freedom of religion.)
- 4) The Church does have some problems. Sometimes, the Church has engaged in power politics. At times, the Church has had its scandals (e.g., the selling of indulgences). The Yankee is opposed to the power politics engaged in by the Church.
- 5) Twain does make fun of Protestants in his other books, such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (a few chapters are devoted to making fun of Sunday School and Church) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (the feud between the church-going Grangerfords and Shepherdsons).

• If you feel like doing research, go to <<http://tinyurl.com/k8mowuw>> and investigate anti-Catholicism in America in the 19th century. Summarize the article by Stephen Railton. Be sure to investigate some of the examples of anti-Catholic rhetoric.

Stephen Railton makes these points:

- “‘Irreverent’ is one of the words his contemporaries used most frequently to describe MT’s work. He typically treats all religions skeptically, ironically or satirically. But Connecticut Yankee is surprisingly blunt in its many attacks on what Hank refers to as ‘that awful power, the Roman Catholic Church.’”
- “‘The particular Protestant tradition in which Samuel Clemens was raised had a strong anti-Catholic bias, though his own relationship with Catholicism was complex. *Innocents Abroad* displays a good deal of contempt for the ‘superstitions’ of Catholic cultures in the Azores and Italy, and explicitly sets the Catholic Church apart from ‘the only true religion, which is ours’ — i.e. Protestantism, which was the predominant form of

American Christianity throughout the 19th century.”

- “On the other hand as owner of Webster & Co, MT enthusiastically published *The Life of Pope Leo XIII* in 1887. His enthusiasm was admittedly more commercial than ecclesiastical — he apparently felt every Catholic household would feel obliged to buy a copy, and was very disappointed with the book’s weak sales.”

- “As in the ante bellum period, increased immigration from Catholic countries helped precipitate the anti-Catholic crusade. Between 1860 and 1890, the Catholic population of the United States tripled (from about 3,100,000 to about 8,900,000), and according to many estimates the Catholic Church was the fastest growing denomination in the country. At bottom the motive of the bigots may have been economic — the country’s weak economy, and especially the Panic of 1893, led to fears about losing jobs to this new ‘foreign’ element — but their rhetoric stressed instead the idea that Catholicism was both inherently unAmerican and, as one writer put it in 1889, ‘on the make.’ The idea that the priests were plotting against the republic pre-existed MT’s fantasy about Hank, and became stronger during the 1890s.”

Source: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/yankee/cycathhp.html>

Date Accessed: 17 March 2003

• If you feel like doing research, explain what the Reformation is and how Martin Luther started it by writing his 95 Theses.

Here are a few facts about the Reformation, Martin Luther, and the 95 Theses:

- Martin Luther was the priest at the City Church in Wittenberg as well as theology professor at Wittenberg University. As priest, he was responsible for trying to save people’s souls, but unfortunately people were not coming to him for confession; instead, they were buying Indulgences. (Definition: Indulgence — “the remission of temporal punishment still due for a sin that has been sacramentally absolved” — *The American Heritage College Dictionary*.)

- Instead of repenting their sins, people thought that they would be forgiven their sins if they bought Indulgences. This kind of “repentance” repulsed Martin Luther. Occasionally, the Catholic Church has been guilty of abuses and has needed reform, and this was one of those times.

- The Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, who sold Indulgences, supposedly said, “When the money clangs in the box, the souls spring up to heaven.” Martin Luther strongly disagreed.

- On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther wrote a letter to his superiors in the Church, and to a few friends. In the letter, he argued against the sale of Indulgences. He also included his famous 95 Theses. Apparently, he did not, as legend has it, nail the 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church.

Here is a definition of the Reformation:

Religious revolution that took place in Western Europe in the 16th cent. It arose from objections to doctrines and practices in the medieval church (see Roman Catholic Church) and ultimately led to the freedom of dissent (see Protestantism).

Source: *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition. 2001. <<http://tinyurl.com/kvg6kzp>>.

• **What is the Connecticut Yankee's opinion of the divine right of kings? (Also: What is the divine right of kings?)**

The divine right of kings states that God chooses some kings to be rulers and that these kings are accountable to God only and to no one else.

According to the divine theory of kings, kings should always be obeyed because the king has his power by the divine will of God Himself. No one has the right to rebel against the king — not the people, not a parliament, not a group of nobles.

Pretty clearly, the Yankee is against the idea of the divine right of kings. The Yankee would prefer a meritocracy to an aristocracy. In the divine right of kings, it is supposed that God placed the King on the throne and it is against God's will to depose or attempt to depose the King.

The Yankee, of course, is an American. He remembers that we fought a war to get rid of a bad King — the Revolutionary War. The Yankee prefers that a man of real merit lead a country, not someone who has inherited a so-called right to rule.

According to the Declaration of Independence, the people has the right to rebel, against a bad leader:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness — That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

In addition, according to the Declaration of Independence, governments derive their power from the people, not from God.

• **What is the Connecticut Yankee's opinion of the plight of the common man?**

The Yankee is what is known as a populist. He is favor of the common people. The Yankee believes in these ideas, as we will learn as we read the novel:

- 1) Free education.
- 2) Freedom of religion.
- 3) The equality of Mankind.
- 4) Freedom of speech.
- 5) Free trade.
- 6) No slavery.

On p. 65, we read (emphasis added):

The most of King Arthur's British nation were slaves, pure and simple, and bore that name, and wore the iron collar on their necks; and the rest were slaves in fact, but without the name; they imagined themselves men and freemen, and called themselves so. **The truth was, the nation as a body was in the world for one object, and one only: to grovel before king and Church and noble; to slave for them, sweat blood for them, starve that they might be fed, work that they might play, drink misery to the dregs that they might be happy, go naked that they might wear silks and jewels, pay taxes that they might be spared from paying them, be familiar all their lives with the degrading language and postures of adulation that they might walk in pride and think themselves the gods of this world.** And for all this, the thanks they got were cuffs and contempt; and so poor-spirited were they that they took even this sort of attention as an honor.

• What is a Populist? What is Populism? Can the Connecticut Yankee be regarded as a Populist?

According to *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition, 2002, Populism is

The belief that greater popular participation in government and business is necessary to protect individuals from exploitation by inflexible bureaucracy and financial conglomerates. "Power to the people" is a famous populist slogan.

Source: *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*. Edited by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil. Copyright © 2002 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

A Populist is someone who follows the philosophy of Populism. A Populist believes that the people struggle against a privileged elite, and a Populist is on the side of the people in that struggle.

The Connecticut Yankee is a Populist.

CHAPTER 9: THE TOURNAMENT

• How does a Realist such as Mark Twain view the tournaments that were supposed to have been held in King Arthur's times?

Twain points out what would have really happened at the jousting tournaments that supposedly were held in King Arthur's times. For one thing, a lot of injuries would have occurred, and the injuries would have been serious. After all, in jousting, one knight rides on horseback at full speed toward another knight and tries to knock that knight off his horse, as the other knight tries to do the same thing to him.

Knowing that serious injuries would have resulted and that arms and legs would have been broken — and worse — Twain writes humorously about amputations. On p. 74, we read:

The noise at night would have been annoying to me ordinarily, but I didn't mind it in the present circumstances, because it kept me from hearing the quacks detaching legs and arms from the day's cripples. They ruined an uncommon good old cross-cut saw for me, and broke the saw-buck, too, but I let it pass. And as for my axe — well, I made up my mind that the next time I lent an axe to a surgeon I would pick my century.

Let us keep in mind that at the time of Camelot — and of the Civil War — there was no anesthesia. To perform an amputation, the surgeon cut and sawed off an arm or a leg while some strong men held the screaming victim — uh, patient — down.

Tournaments can be a good way of preparing for war — assuming that you don't get all your knights killed. Compare the games of the Greek and Roman epics. In these epics, warriors would compete in such events as chariot races, spear-throwing contests, archery contests, and foot races. All of these games involve skills that would be useful on the battlefield. Of course, the ancient Greeks and Roman did not want anyone to be hurt during these games.

Satire is humorous criticism, and Twain is able to be funny even when writing about amputations.

How does the Connecticut Yankee come into conflict with Sir Sagramour le Desirous? (Note: Some editions use the spelling “Sir Sagramor.”)

The Connecticut Yankee comes into conflict with Sir Sagramour le Desirous through an accident, really. Twain grows angry at Sir Dinadan the Humorist, who tells him the anecdote that he most detests. On pp. 76-77, we read about that anecdote:

[...] the one particular anecdote which I had heard oftenest and had most hated and most loathed all my life, he had at least spared it me. It was one which I had heard attributed to every humorous person who had ever stood on American soil, from Columbus down to Artemus Ward. It was about a humorous lecturer who flooded an ignorant audience with the killingest jokes for an hour and never got a laugh; and then when he was leaving, some gray simpletons wrung him gratefully by the hand and said it had been the funniest thing they had ever heard, and “it was all they could do to keep from laughin' right out in meetin'.” That anecdote never saw the day that it was worth the telling; and yet I had sat under the telling of it hundreds and thousands and millions and billions of times, and cried and cursed all the way through.

Of course, this is an anecdote that Sir Dinadan would not have known, since the meeting referred to is a Quaker meeting (Quakers sit quietly during meetings unless they feel religiously inspired to speak), and there were no Quakers in Camelot.

However, the Yankee tells us that when Sir Dinadan told him that joke, he grew very annoyed, and later, when he saw Sir Dinadan being unhorsed by another knight, he said (p. 78):

“I hope to gracious he's killed!”

Unfortunately, Sir Sagramour le Desirous, who was unhorsed immediately after Sir Dinaden, overheard the Yankee, thought that the remark was made about him, and challenged the Yankee to fight (p. 78):

As soon as Sir Sagramour got well, he notified me that there was a little account to settle between us, and he named a day three or four years in the future; place of settlement, the lists where the offense had been given. I said I would be ready when he got back. You see, he was going for the Holy Grail. The boys all took a flier at the Holy Grail now and then. It was a several years' cruise.

• What is the Holy Grail?

The Holy Grail is a sacred item, a vessel of some kind. It may be a drinking goblet, the chalice of the Eucharist. Or it may be a serving dish: the serving dish on which rested the Pascal lamb. Often, the Knights of the Round Table look for the Holy Grail and have adventures.

CHAPTER 10: BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION

• Why is the Yankee against having one universal church? Why does he prefer having many Christian sects?

On p. 81, we read:

[...] I was afraid of a united Church; it makes a mighty power, the mightiest conceivable, and then when it by and by gets into selfish hands, as it is always bound to do, it means death to human liberty and paralysis to human thought.

The Yankee states his opinion clearly. One united Church “means death to human liberty and paralysis to human thought.” One thing that one united Church would do would be to formulate dogma that everyone must believe in order to belong to that Church, and if the Church is powerful, then it can force everyone to belong to the Church or suffer an Inquisition. On the other hand, if many Churches exist, then an individual can choose what to believe and which Church to belong to — or can choose to belong to no Church.

Voltaire’s *Candide* shows what can happen when the Church has too much power. Too much power results in the Inquisition and auto-da-fés. The Inquisition used to pass sentences on people they thought were heretics. Both the announcement in public of these sentences and the execution in public sentences are known as auto-da-fés.

I downloaded this information from <http://www.bartleby.com/81/1099.html> on June 18, 2004:

E. Cobham Brewer 1810–1897. *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. 1898.

Auto da Fe. [An act of faith.]

A day set apart by the Inquisition for the examination of “heretics.” Those not acquitted were burnt. The reason why inquisitors burnt their victims was, because they are forbidden to “shed blood”; an axiom of the Roman Catholic Church being, “*Eccle’sia non novit san’guinem*” (the church is untainted with blood).

• In the United States, we support the separation of church and state. What happens when no separation of church and state exists?

When no separation of church and state exists, then everyone has to believe in one official religion. This leads to religious intolerance.

For example, if the official religion says that you must worship a golden calf, you can be thrown into jail if you don’t worship the golden calf.

When no separation of church and state exists, another possible outcome is that the state says that everyone must be an atheist. In that case, atheism becomes the official religion of the state.

• Why does the Yankee want to separate religious instruction from secular education?

On p. 81, we read:

I had started a teacher-factory and a lot of Sunday-schools the first thing; as a result, I now had an admirable system of graded schools in full blast in those places, and also a complete variety of Protestant congregations all in a prosperous and growing condition. Everybody could be any kind of a Christian he wanted to; there was perfect freedom in that matter. But I confined public religious teaching to the churches and the Sunday-schools, permitting nothing of it in my other educational buildings. I could have given my own sect the preference and made everybody a Presbyterian without any trouble, but that would have been to affront a law of human nature: spiritual wants and instincts are as various in the human family as are physical appetites, complexions, and features, and a man is only at his best, morally, when he is equipped with the religious garment whose color and shape and size most nicely accommodate themselves to the spiritual complexion, angularities, and stature of the individual who wears it [...]

The Yankee believes in both freedom of religion and the separation of Church and State. He is in the position of being very powerful in Camelot, so if he wants to, he can make Presbyterianism the official religion of England, but he decides not to out of respect for freedom of religion. Also, he is afraid of a united Church, which he says “means death to human liberty and paralysis to human thought” (p. 81).

• **The Yankee says that “spiritual wants and instincts are as various in the human family as are physical appetites, complexions, and features, and a man is only at his best, morally, when he is equipped with the religious garment whose color and shape and size most nicely accommodate themselves to the spiritual complexion, angularities, and stature of the individual who wears it” If you want to, go to <http://tinyurl.com/fk7c> > and take the quiz to see which religions match up well with your beliefs.**

I took the quiz and scored highest with “reform Judaism.”

• **What is the Yankee’s opinion of despotism? Note: A despot is a leader with unlimited power.**

On pp. 81-82, we read:

Four years rolled by — and then! Well, you would never imagine it in the world. Unlimited power is the ideal thing when it is in safe hands. The despotism of heaven is the one absolutely perfect government. An earthly despotism would be the absolutely perfect earthly government, if the conditions were the same, namely, the despot the perfectest individual of the human race, and his lease of life perpetual. But as a perishable perfect man must die, and leave his despotism in the hands of an imperfect successor, an earthly despotism is not merely a bad form of government, it is the worst form that is possible.

The Yankee believes that a benevolent tyranny would be the best government possible — except that the power would eventually pass into the hands of a person who is not benevolent. A benevolent tyranny would be highly efficient. The tyrant would decide what was the right thing to be done, he would order it done, and because he has ordered it done, it would be done. (People said that one good thing about Mussolini was that he made the trains run on time, but I don’t know whether he did or not.)

The Yankee is right that the power would eventually fall into the hands of the wrong person. We

see that in European Kings. A particular king may be very benevolent and very competent, but that king's oldest son, who will inherit the throne, may be very evil and perhaps very incompetent. Some of the emperors of ancient Rome were benevolent; some were not.

One advantage — or disadvantage — of having a democracy is that power is shared. In the American system of government, we have three branches: the legislative (Congress), the judicial (the Supreme Court), and the executive (the President). Each has power, and each can use its power to restrain the power of the other branches — to an extent. This means that it can restrain someone who is evil, but it also can restrain someone who is benevolent.

One advantage of a democracy is that we have peaceful transfers of power. When one party takes over the Presidency from another party, for example, it is usually a peaceful transfer of power. When kingdoms are hereditary, however, sometimes a civil war can break out in a quarrel over who is to become king.

• **Which projects has the Yankee been secretly developing?**

Several.

1) On pp. 80-81, we read:

In various quiet nooks and corners I had the beginnings of all sorts of industries under way — nuclei of future vast factories, the iron and steel missionaries of my future civilization.

2) He has started a teacher-factory, or, as we would say, a College of Education.

3) He has started many Sunday schools of different varieties of Protestant sects.

4) He has put mining on a scientific basis.

5) He has started a military academy.

6) He is almost ready to start a newspaper.

7) He has a private telegraph service and a private telephone service. (These have ground wires.)

8) He has systematized taxation, collecting more taxes but distributing the taxation more evenly — a benefit to the people and the country. It also makes money for him because he receives one per cent of any increase in revenue over what was being collected before he became King Arthur's right-hand man.

9) The very first thing he did was to establish a patent office.

Why doesn't the Yankee reveal his seeds of civilization to everybody?

On p. 83, we read:

I stood with my hand on the cock, so to speak, ready to turn it on and flood the midnight world with light at any moment. But I was not going to do the thing in that sudden way. It was not my policy. The people could not have stood it; and, moreover, I should have had the Established Roman Catholic Church on my back in a minute.

The Yankee gives his reasons, and what he says does come true at the end of the novel, after he

has revealed his civilization to all.

Remember what happened to Galileo? He argued that the Earth was not at the center of the universe, and the Catholic Church forced him to recant his belief. Galileo was a victim of the Inquisition.

Sometimes people don't want science. Right now, lots of people are opposed to evolution.

• **Is the Yankee a dictator? Is his power unlimited?**

The Yankee has much power, but it is not unlimited. One limit to his power is the Catholic Church. The Yankee can't do things openly because he is afraid of the Church. In addition, of course, King Arthur is still King of England, and the Yankee is only second in the Kingdom.

Nevertheless, the Yankee does have much power, and he would tell us that his great knowledge of science and technology and modern ideas makes him the best man in the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 11: THE YANKEE IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURES

• **Write a character analysis of Sandy as she appears in this chapter.**

1) Sandy is the Demoiselle Alisande la Carteloise. She is a comely (attractive) young woman.

2) Sandy's tale is odd. We read on pp. 88-89:

Her mistress was a captive in a vast and gloomy castle, along with forty-four other young and beautiful girls, pretty much all of them princesses; they had been languishing in that cruel captivity for twenty-six years; the masters of the castle were three stupendous brothers, each with four arms and one eye — the eye in the center of the forehead, and as big as a fruit. Sort of fruit not mentioned; their usual slovenliness in statistics.

3) We also find out that Sandy has no sense of direction and does not know what a map is. After the Yankee asks for directions, Sandy says on p. 92,

“Ah, please you sir, it hath no direction from here; by reason that the road lieth not straight, but turneth evermore; wherefore the direction of its place abideth not, but is some time under the one sky and anon under another, whereso if ye be minded that it is in the east, and wend thitherward, ye shall observe that the way of the road doth yet again turn upon itself by the space of half a circle, and this marvel happening again and yet again and still again, it will grieve you that you had thought by vanities of the mind to thwart and bring to naught the will of Him that giveth not a castle a direction from a place except it pleaseth Him, and if it please Him not, will the rather that even all castles and all directions thereunto vanish out of the earth, leaving the places wherein they tarried desolate and vacant, so warning His creatures that where He will He will, and where He will not He — ”

4) We read that Sandy will ride with the Yankee in search of the castle, the three brothers, and the captive princesses.

5) Basically, Sandy comes off as being sort of an airhead.

In this section, Twain is satirizing some of the tales in Malory where a woman comes to Camelot and asks for help, then she and a Knight ride off in search of adventure.

The drawing of Sandy in the Mark Twain Library edition of the novel is based on a then-famous actress named Annie Russell.

CHAPTER 12: SLOW TORTURE

• **What are the disadvantages of armor? (By the way, if you feel like doing research, find out how Joan of Arc was captured by her enemies in 1430.)**

As a Realist writer, Twain wants to show what life in Arthurian England was really like. When we see a movie, we probably see a Romanticist version of Arthurian England, but real life is something different. Traveling as a knight in armor has many disadvantages:

1) Armor doesn't have pockets.

That means that the Yankee can't reach into a pocket and pull out a handkerchief when he wants to wipe the sweat from his head. Instead, he carries his handkerchief in his helmet. Unfortunately, he can't get the helmet off without help, so he is annoyed by the fact that his handkerchief is so near yet inaccessible when he needs it.

2) Armor gets hot.

As the sun beats down on the armor, it heats up. Soon the Yankee is bathed in sweat and very uncomfortable.

3) People wearing armor can't scratch where it itches.

Instead, their hands are outside of the armor, so a piece of metal separates their hand from the skin that itches.

4) Armor makes noises when its wearer is riding on a horse.

Clang, clang, clang! The noise becomes annoying after a while.

5) Armor malfunctions.

A fly gets into the Yankee's helmet and he can't raise the visor to let out the fly, so it buzzes around the helmet, lighting here and there in a most infuriating way.

6) Armor is incredibly heavy, so the Knight cannot mount or dismount a horse by himself.

He needs help. In fact, he needs help getting into and out of the armor.

7) The Yankee's arm gets tired carrying the spear, so he has to continually switch it from arm to arm.

To be fair to the knights of the Middle Ages, there is such a thing as traveling armor (chainmail), but the Yankee doesn't learn about that until it is too late. On p. 97, The Iron Dude depicted in the illustration is wearing chainmail. The chainmail is made of metal rings. Unfortunately, people who study warfare soon learned to make sword blades that would fit in the holes of the links of chainmail. Therefore, a person wearing chainmail could easily be killed.

Note: The enemy captured Joan of Arc because she fell off her horse and was unable to get back on it because of the heavy armor she was wearing. She was wearing the kind of armor that consists of heavy plates of inflexible metal. The Burgundians captured her, and they gave to the

English army, who gave her to the Inquisition. The Inquisition gave her a trial, found her guilty of some crimes that included heresy, and then gave her to the English, who in 1431 burned her at the stake. In 1920, she became Saint Joan.

• **The Yankee is unable to reach his handkerchief although it is near him (in his helmet). The handkerchief is tantalizing because it is near the Yankee, yet he can't reach it. What does "tantalizing" mean, and who was Tantalus?**

Tantalus is the ancient Greek Agamemnon's grandfather, and he was allowed to drink nectar and eat ambrosia, the gods' drink and food. However, he committed a crime. One myth states that he wanted to share the gods' nectar and ambrosia with other mortals. Another myth states that he killed and cooked his own son and served him to the gods to show that they were not omniscient. However, only one goddess (Demeter) took a bite of the food. She ate a bit of Tantalus' son's shoulder. The gods brought the son back to life (going against fate?), replacing the bit of shoulder with ivory, and punishing Tantalus forever. By the way, Tantalus' son was Pelops, who started the Olympic Games.

Because of his transgression, Tantalus is punished by standing in a stream of water forever while being forever hungry and thirsty. Above his head are branches with ripe fruit, but whenever he raises his hands to reach the fruit so that he can eat it, the wind blows the branch and its fruit out of his reach. And whenever he bends down to drink the water, the water recedes from him. So Tantalus is always hungry and thirsty, and he is always looking at fruit and water that he cannot eat or drink.

From the name Tantalus, we get our word "tantalizing," which is adjective meaning a strong desire for something that we can't have.

CHAPTER 13: FREEMEN!

• **Why is the name "freemen" ironic?**

The name "freemen" is ironic because these men are not free. They have to obey many rules. On pp. 109-110, we read:

By a sarcasm of law and phrase they were freemen. Seven-tenths of the free population of the country were of just their class and degree: small "independent" farmers, artisans, etc.; which is to say, they were the nation, the actual Nation; they were about all of it that was useful, or worth saving, or really respect-worthy, and to subtract them would have been to subtract the Nation and leave behind some dregs, some refuse, in the shape of a king, nobility and gentry, idle, unproductive, acquainted mainly with the arts of wasting and destroying, and of no sort of use or value in any rationally constructed world. And yet, by ingenious contrivance, this gilded minority, instead of being in the tail of the procession where it belonged, was marching head up and banners flying, at the other end of it; had elected itself to be the Nation, and these innumerable clams had permitted it so long that they had come at last to accept it as a truth; and not only that, but to believe it right and as it should be.

Some of the rules that these so-called "freemen" have to obey include (pp. 110-111) — numbers added:

1) They were freemen, but they could not leave the estates of their lord or their bishop

without his permission;

2) they could not prepare their own bread, but must have their corn ground and their bread baked at his mill and his bakery, and pay roundly for the same;

3) they could not sell a piece of their own property without paying him a handsome percentage of the proceeds, nor buy a piece of somebody else's without remembering him in cash for the privilege;

4) they had to harvest his grain for him gratis, and be ready to come at a moment's notice, leaving their own crop to destruction by the threatened storm;

5) they had to let him plant fruit trees in their fields, and then keep their indignation to themselves when his heedless fruit-gatherers trampled the grain around the trees;

6) they had to smother their anger when his hunting parties galloped through their fields laying waste the result of their patient toil;

7) they were not allowed to keep doves themselves, and when the swarms from my lord's dovecote settled on their crops they must not lose their temper and kill a bird, for awful would the penalty be;

8) when the harvest was at last gathered, then came the procession of robbers to levy their blackmail upon it: first the Church carted off its fat tenth, then the king's commissioner took his twentieth, then my lord's people made a mighty inroad upon the remainder; after which, the skinned freeman had liberty to bestow the remnant in his barn, in case it was worth the trouble;

9) there were taxes, and taxes, and taxes, and more taxes, and taxes again, and yet other taxes — upon this free and independent pauper, but none upon his lord the baron or the bishop, none upon the wasteful nobility or the all-devouring Church;

10) if the baron would sleep unvexed, the freeman must sit up all night after his day's work and whip the ponds to keep the frogs quiet;

11) if the freeman's daughter — but no, that last infamy of monarchical government is unprintable; and

12) finally, if the freeman, grown desperate with his tortures, found his life unendurable under such conditions, and sacrificed it and fled to death for mercy and refuge, the gentle Church condemned him to eternal fire, the gentle law buried him at midnight at the cross-roads with a stake through his back, and his master the baron or the bishop confiscated all his property and turned his widow and his orphans out of doors.

We will learn more about #11 later. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines *droit du seigneur* in this way:

The supposed right of a feudal lord to have sexual relations with a vassal's bride on her wedding night.

• **What are the two reigns of terror that the Yankee is aware of?**

On pp. 111-112, we read about the two Reigns of Terror:

There were two “Reigns of Terror,” if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the “horrors” of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the axe, compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heart-break? What is swift death by lightning compared with death by slow fire at the stake? A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we have all been so diligently taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror — that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves.

These are the two reigns of terror:

1) The first reign of terror came during the French Revolution when people were beheaded by the guillotine.

2) The other reign of terror came during the Middle Ages when feudal lords ruled over “freemen” and slaves and treated them poorly.

• **What does the Yankee mean when he says “This one’s a man” (112), and to whom is he referring?**

On p. 112, we read:

But presently one man looked up and asked me to state that proposition again; and state it slowly, so it could soak into his understanding. I did it; and after a little he had the idea, and he brought his fist down and said *he* didn’t believe a nation where every man had a vote would voluntarily get down in the mud and dirt in any such way; and that to steal from a nation its will and preference must be a crime and the first of all crimes. I said to myself:

“This one’s a man. If I were backed by enough of his sort, I would make a strike for the welfare of this country, and try to prove myself its loyalest citizen by making a wholesome change in its system of government.”

According to the Yankee, a man is someone who believes in equality, not aristocracy, someone who is not willing for 100 aristocratic families to be glorified at the expense of all other families.

Of course, the Yankee is against a monarchical and an aristocratic system, and he shows it here. Instead, the Yankee is squarely in favor of democracy. He opposes having people in high places because of their birth. Instead, people should achieve high places because of their merit.

• **What is the purpose of the Yankee’s Man Factory? What do you think of the name “Man Factory”?**

The purpose of the Man Factory (manufactory) is to produce men. Of course, the Yankee wishes to produce late 19th-century Americans who believe in democracy and education and technology and science.

Education is one of the major ways it accomplishes this. For example, the freeman who goes to the Man Factory will learn how to read and write.

The name “Man Factory” is not a good one. It implies that men can be produced on an assembly line like cars. It denies human autonomy, freedom, and dignity.

• **Compare and contrast the Yankee and Sandy. Who bears up better in adverse circumstances? Who is more prudish?**

Sandy bears up better in adverse circumstances, and the Yankee is the more prudish of the two.

Sandy bears up better in adverse circumstances. She awakes refreshed, but the Yankee thinks that since she has probably never had a bath, she does not miss it now. In addition, she manages well without breakfast, but the Yankee thinks that she probably prepared for the journey by eating enough to last three days.

We see that the Yankee is prudish because he will not let Sandy help him take off his armor, although he cannot take it off on his own. Of course, he is wearing a full suit of clothing under the armor, but still taking off his armor seems too much like taking off his clothing and so the Yankee will not let Sandy help him take off his armor. Instead, he sleeps in it, which makes for a restless night because of all the insects that get inside the armor and crawl around on his body.

• **How does Twain describe the countryside? What would industrialization do to the countryside?**

Occasionally, we see descriptions of the countryside that make it seem positively idyllic. On p. 106, we read:

Yes, it is strange how little a while at a time a person can be contented. Only a little while back, when I was riding and suffering, what a heaven this peace, this rest, this sweet serenity in this secluded shady nook by this purling stream would have seemed, where I could keep perfectly comfortable all the time by pouring a dipper of water into my armor now and then; yet already I was getting dissatisfied; partly because I could not light my pipe — for, although I had long ago started a match factory, I had forgotten to bring matches with me — and partly because we had nothing to eat.

Of course, industrialization (and pollution) would harm the countryside, and we will see that Twain satirizes the stink of soap-making later.

CHAPTER 14: “DEFEND THEE, LORD!”

• **Write a character analysis of Sandy as she appears in Chapters 13-14 (and Chapter 15).**

We find out a number of things about Sandy:

1) She is hardy.

The Yankee does not sleep well and is hungry that morning, but Sandy is fresh. The Yankee points out that Sandy has probably never had a bath, so of course she did not miss one. In addition, she had probably eaten enough for three days before leaving the castle, so she wouldn't be hungry, either.

The Native Americans used to eat a lot before setting out on an arduous journey. Actually, the U.S. Army has discovered that this is a good idea. A few extra pounds of fat gives soldiers gives something to live on during a difficult mission in which food can be hard to get.

2) She is a classist (a snob).

The Yankee eats with freemen, but Sandy refuses to. On p. 109, we read:

My lady put up her scornful lip and withdrew to one side; she said in their hearing that she would as soon think of eating with the other cattle — a remark which embarrassed these poor devils merely because it referred to them, and not because it insulted or offended them, for it didn't.

3) Sandy has never seen anyone smoke before.

When the Yankee lights his pipe, she falls over backwards from the horse. It takes her a while to get used to the pipe, and while she is getting used to the pipe, she doesn't tell any stories, which the Yankee regards as a big improvement.

4) Sandy understands her culture.

When the Yankee lights his pipe and the attacking knights wish to surrender to him, he is afraid that they are grouping for another attack. It is Sandy who tells the Yankee that the knights wish to yield to him. It is Sandy who approaches the knights and sends them to Camelot.

5) Sandy is a story-teller.

She tells long stories that the Yankee regards as not having much point and which he criticizes.

6) Sandy likes words.

She learns the phrase "be jabbers" from the Yankee, and on p. 133, she says:

"[...] came never knight but he found strange adventures, be jabbers. Of a truth it doth indeed, fair lord, albeit 'tis passing hard to say, though peradventure that will not tarry but better speed with usage."

CHAPTER 15: SANDY'S TALE

• According to the Yankee, how can Sandy tell her story better?

The Yankee makes two major suggestions. On pp. 130-131, the Yankee states his first criticism of Sandy's storytelling:

"The truth is, Alisande, these archaics are a little *too* simple; the vocabulary is too limited, and so, by consequence, descriptions suffer in the matter of variety; they run too much to level Saharas of fact, and not enough to picturesque detail; this throws about them a certain air of the monotonous; in fact the fights are all alike: a couple of people come together with great random — random is a good word, and so is exegesis, for that matter, and so is holocaust, and defalcation, and usufruct and a hundred others, but land! a body ought to discriminate — they come together with great random, and a spear is brast, and one party brake his shield and the other one goes down, horse and man, over his horse-tail and brake his neck, and then the next candidate comes randoming in, and brast his spear, and the other man brast his shield, and down he goes, horse and man, over his horse-tail, and brake his neck, and then there's another elected, and another and another and still another, till the material is all used up; and when you come to figure up results, you can't tell one fight from another, nor who whipped; and as a picture, of

living, raging, roaring battle, sho! why, it's pale and noiseless — just ghosts scuffling in a fog. Dear me, what would this barren vocabulary get out of the mightiest spectacle? — the burning of Rome in Nero's time, for instance? Why, it would merely say, 'Town burned down; no insurance; boy brast a window, fireman brake his neck!' Why, that ain't a picture!"

1) The Yankee's first piece of advice is to vary the descriptions of the fights a bit more — currently, they are too similar, and they use the same vocabulary and sound too much alike.

On p. 133, the Yankee states his second criticism of Sandy's storytelling:

"This is not good form, Alisande. Sir Marhaus the king's son of Ireland talks like all the rest; you ought to give him a brogue, or at least a characteristic expletive; by this means one would recognize him as soon as he spoke, without his ever being named. It is a common literary device with the great authors. You should make him say, 'In this country, be jabbers, came never knight since it was christened, but he found strange adventures, be jabbers.' You see how much better that sounds."

However, let me point out that the Yankee is unable to predict the course of a fight that Sandy describes, so the fights apparently are not as similar as the Yankee thinks.

2) The Yankee's second piece of advice is to vary the dialogue of the characters.

Twain was a master of dialect, as we see in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. He was also a masterful literary critic, so it is no surprise that he criticizes Sandy (and Sir Thomas Malory) for not varying the dialogue of the characters. All the knights sound alike even though one knight comes from Ireland and another from England. The Yankee points out that the two knights ought not to speak exactly alike.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain writes an Explanatory note at the beginning to explain his use of different dialects in the novel. The Explanatory note is serious, although humor is in it, too. In the Explanatory note, Twain points out that the dialogue in the novel has been painstakingly created. It contains a number of dialects:

- the Missouri negro dialect;
- the extremest form of the backwoods South-Western dialect;
- the ordinary "Pike County" dialect; and
- four modified varieties of this last.

Of course, if the novel were not serious, there would be no real good reason to take such pains with rendering the dialects. And of course, Twain engages in humor in the Explanatory note, too. He writes:

I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding.

• What do we learn about the Yankee's past life in this chapter?

We find out that he had a girlfriend back home in Connecticut in the late 19th century. She was a telephone operator who made \$3 a week, and he used to call her and say, "Hello, Central." She

would respond by saying, “Hello, Hank.” In addition, she was 15 years old, which is very young indeed. We find out later that he was engaged to her. Apparently, people got married earlier back then than they do today.

CHAPTER 16: MORGAN LE FAY

• **The knight bearing the advertising for soap is La Cote Mal Taile. If you feel like doing research, tell his story — and the story of Maledisant. (Of course, be sure to avoid plagiarism.)**

Here are a few notes about La Cote Mal Taile and the story of Maledisant:

- The name La Cote Mal Taile means The Ill-Fitting Coat. The knight who bears the name La Cote Mal Taile is the Knight of the Ill-Fitting Coat.
- Sir Brunor le Noir, aka Sir Brunor the Black, is the Knight of the Ill-Fitting Coat.
- Sir Brunor’s father was murdered (hacked to death while he was asleep), and he wore his father’s bloody coat, vowing not to take it off until he had avenged his father’s murder. It was Sir Kay who first called him “La Cote Mal Taile.” This happened when Sir Brunor offered his services as a knight to King Arthur.
- At first, Sir Brunor’s offer of service as a knight to King Arthur was rejected. However, after he left King Arthur’s Court, Sir Gawain spoke up for him, and a messenger was sent to ask him to return to King Arthur’s Court. However, Sir Brunor did not return to King Arthur’s Court immediately.
- Sir Kay disliked Sir Brunor, and he arranged for him to joust the king’s jester, whose name was Dagonet.
- Sir Brunor rescued Queen Guinever when a lion escaped from King Arthur’s menagerie. According to some versions of Sir Brunor’s legend, King Arthur knighted him after this rescue.
- The name “Maledisant” means “Ill-Speaking,” and the woman who bore that name is the Ill-Speaking Maiden. Together, Sir Brunor and Maledisant rode on a quest. Sir Brunor had many adventures. He fought well on foot although he was a good jouster. Sir Brian of the Isles imprisoned him in Pendragon Castle, but fortunately Sir Launcelot rescued him. Together, Sir Brunor and Sir Launcelot accomplished Sir Brunor’s quest.
- After accomplishing the quest, Sir Brunor and Sir Launcelot evicted Sir Brian of the Isles from Pendragon Castle. With the approval of Sir Launcelot, the castle became that of Sir Brunor. According to some versions of Sir Brunor’s legend, when Sir Brunor returned to Camelot, King Arthur knighted him. In addition, Sir Brunor married Malesdisant. They lived together in Pendragon Castle.

Here we see foreshadowing. Eventually, the Yankee will marry Sandy.

The 6th edition of *A Handbook to Literature* by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon defines “foreshadowing” in this way: “The presentation of material in a work in such a way that later events are prepared for” (201).

Here are a couple of other definitions:

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in literature.

Source: http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/foreshadowing.html

Definition: A literary device used to hint at events that will follow later in the story, sometimes generating feelings of anxiety or suspense. Anton Chekhov once said that “if there is a gun hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last.” That remark captures the essence of foreshadowing.

Source: <http://contemporarylit.about.com/library/bldef-foreshadowing>

The knight bearing the advertising for soap is La Cote Mal Taile, who set off on a mission with a damsel named Maledisant. If you feel like doing research, tell her story. (Of course, be sure to avoid plagiarism.)

Here is some information about the damsel named Maledisant:

- Sir Brunor and Maledisant set off on a quest after she arrived at King Arthur’s Court bearing a black shield.
- Like Sir Kay, the damsel abused Sir Brunor because of his ill-fitting coat, and she thus acquired the name Maledisant.
- At one point, Sir Brunor was imprisoned at Pendragon Castle, but he was rescued by Sir Launcelot. She began to speak better of Sir Brunor, and so she acquired a new name: Bienpensant, which means “good thinking” or “well thinking.”
- Their quest was successful, and the damsel acquired respect for Sir Brunor. They married, she spoke much better of him, and she acquired another new name: Beauvivant, or Living Well.
- ***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* is also a satire on the ideas present in Twain’s time as well as the ideas present in the Middle Ages. How does Twain satirize advertising? Does the satire apply to the present day? (Yes — think of the advertisements on the uniforms of racecar drivers.)**

The Yankee has knights riding around wearing advertising. In this chapter, he meets Sir Cote Male Taile, which is wearing sandwich boards fore and aft, saying “Persimmon’s Soap — All the Prime-Donne Use It.” The Yankee’s reason for doing this is to make knights look silly and so undermine their authority and to undermine the authority of the Established Church.

We see here a satire of modern advertising. One of the ways that the knights try to convince people to use their soap is to catch a hermit and give him a bath. Unfortunately, La Cote tried this, but the hermit died and was made a saint. No problem, says the Yankee, who suggests a new advertising slogan: “Patronized by the Elect” (p. 142). This, of course, is unethical advertising — the hermit did not want a bath.

Advertising, of course, is still with us today, and it is something that needs to be satirized. Some athletic costumes are covered with advertisements. For example, racecar drivers wear outfits that are covered with advertisements. A modern satire might show Superman or Spiderman wearing costumes covered literally with advertisements. Actually, the movie *Mystery Men* did exactly

that.

Roger Ebert wrote in his review of the movie *Mystery Men*:

The premise: Captain Amazing (Greg Kinnear) is the top-rated superhero in Champion City, a special-effects metropolis made of skyscrapers, air buses and dirigibles. He wears sponsor badges on his leather suit (Ray-O-Vac, Pennzoil) like Indy 500 drivers, but the sponsors are growing restless because his recent exploits are tired and dumb.

Source:

<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/19990806/REVIEWS/908060305/1023>

• **What kinds of bad, annoying, intrusive advertisements exist today?**

Certainly we have lots of bad, annoying, intrusive advertisements today.

On May 19, 2004, Jim Hightower wrote an article on a kind of bad, annoying, intrusive advertisements. Wizmark places ads in male urinals. These are ads that males actually pee on. The creator of Wizmark is Dr. Richard Deutsch, who calls his invention an “interactive urinal communicator.” One version of Wizmark detects motion, so when a gentleman steps up to the urinal, flashing lights directs the gentleman’s attention to the Wizmark ad. Another model includes sound so that the gentleman is forced to listen to jingles and slogans as he pees.

• **What does soap-making do to the environment?**

• It ruins it. This is a satire on modern times rather than on 6th-century Camelot. On p. 140, we read:

Whenever my missionaries overcame a knight errant on the road they washed him, and when he got well they swore him to go and get a bulletin-board and disseminate soap and civilization the rest of his days. As a consequence the workers in the field were increasing by degrees, and the reform was steadily spreading. My soap factory felt the strain early. At first I had only two hands; but before I had left home I was already employing fifteen, and running night and day; and the atmospheric result was getting so pronounced that the king went sort of fainting and gasping around and said he did not believe he could stand it much longer, and Sir Launcelot got so that he did hardly anything but walk up and down the roof and swear, although I told him it was worse up there than anywhere else, but he said he wanted plenty of air; and he was always complaining that a palace was no place for a soap factory anyway, and said if a man was to start one in his house he would be damned if he wouldn’t strangle him. There were ladies present, too, but much these people ever cared for that; they would swear before children, if the wind was their way when the factory was going.

• **Write a character analysis of Morgan Le Fay.**

1) She is evil through and through. Oddly, the Yankee’s name is Hank Morgan. Names are important in novels and in satires, and so there must be a reason why the Yankee shares a name with a thoroughly evil character. It may be that the Yankee is not as innocent as he seems. Certainly, in the final chapters, the Yankee brings a great amount of destruction to Camelot.

2) Morgan Le Fay is beautiful, and she speaks beautifully, but she is evil.

3) Morgan Le Fay is the head of her household. Her husband the king does not wear the pants in the family.

4) When a servant boy — a page — loses his balance and falls — lightly — against her knee, she kills him with a dagger. Apparently, this is a common occurrence in her household, as she keeps on talking gaily. The king lets out an involuntary “O-h” (p. 144), but a look from his wife cuts the cry of compassion short.

5) She makes sure that the remaining servants do a good job of cleaning up and of removing the body.

6) When the Yankee compliments King Arthur, forgetting that Morgan Le Fay hates the king her brother, she wants to have him and Sandy taken to the dungeon. Fortunately, Sandy lets her know who the Yankee is — the Boss. Immediately, Morgan Le Fay changes her manner, and she says that she was hoping to surprise the Yankee into consuming the guards with fires.

7) Morgan Le Fay is a despot.

CHAPTER 17: A ROYAL BANQUET

• How does Twain satirize the piety of the nobility by showing that it is hypocritical?

On p. 148, we read:

Madame, seeing me pacific and unresentful, no doubt judged that I was deceived by her excuse; for her fright dissolved away, and she was soon so importunate to have me give an exhibition and kill somebody, that the thing grew to be embarrassing. However, to my relief she was presently interrupted by the call to prayers. I will say this much for the nobility: that, tyrannical, murderous, rapacious, and morally rotten as they were, they were deeply and enthusiastically religious. Nothing could divert them from the regular and faithful performance of the pieties enjoined by the Church. More than once I had seen a noble who had gotten his enemy at a disadvantage, stop to pray before cutting his throat; more than once I had seen a noble, after ambushing and despatching his enemy, retire to the nearest wayside shrine and humbly give thanks, without even waiting to rob the body. There was to be nothing finer or sweeter in the life of even Benvenuto Cellini, that rough-hewn saint, ten centuries later. All the nobles of Britain, with their families, attended divine service morning and night daily, in their private chapels, and even the worst of them had family worship five or six times a day besides. The credit of this belonged entirely to the Church. Although I was no friend to that Catholic Church, I was obliged to admit this. And often, in spite of me, I found myself saying, “What would this country be without the Church?”

This is industrial-strength satire. Twain points out the bloodthirstiness of the nobles who both pray and kill — two activities that seem incompatible. If Jesus really is the Prince of Peace, he would be unlikely to condone the murders that the nobility rejoice in.

Jesus says this in the Book of Matthew, Chapter 25:

33: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34: Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37: Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38: When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39: Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40: And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41: Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44: Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45: Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

• **After reading this chapter, what do you think of medieval laws and medieval punishments?**

In this chapter, we read about a man who is being tortured on the rack for poaching. A deer was devastating his fields, so he killed the deer and removed it from his premises, hoping thereby to avoid drawing attention to himself. However, a masked, anonymous informer told on him, and so he is being tortured. If he confesses his crime, Morgan le Fay will be able to confiscate his property, thus leaving his family destitute and resulting in their starvation.

Morgan le Fay says that she has to torture him. If she does not torture him, and he dies unconfessed, he will go to Hell and so will she because she did not do what she could to make him confess. If she tortures him, and he dies without confessing, that is evidence that he is innocent, and so Morgan le Fay will not go to Hell because the man did not die with an unconfessed sin — because there is no sin to confess.

In the back our edition of the novel is a note that explains that laws against poaching were very severe. On p. 466, we read:

The law of escheat *propter delictum tenentis*, which required the forfeiture of a convicted

felon's property to his feudal lord or, later, the Church, was not abolished in England until the passage of the Felony Act in 1870. The attitude of the English toward poaching, and their harsh game laws reflecting the tradition of class privilege, were an object of Clemens's criticism over many years. In 1872 he [Mark Twain] saved a copy of *The Anti-Game Law Circular*, a lengthy tract urging the abolition of archaic and discriminatory hunting regulations; and in 1897 he could still complain, "Game laws remain Poaching the highest crime then — & now."

• **What problems do you see in torturing suspected criminals to make them confess?**

- 1) Some suspected criminals are not criminals. Law authorities can end up torturing an innocent person.
- 2) It is against the American Bill of Rights.
- 3) It can create terrorists.
- 4) Under torture, people will confess to anything. Indeed, they will even make up things to tell their torturers. Basically, they will tell the torturers what they want to hear. That may be why we have terrorism alerts followed by a lack of terrorism. If suspected terrorists are being tortured, they may be making up imaginary plots so they can tell their torturers what the torturers want to know. This was published in my Wise Up! column in *The Athens News* on Nov. 26, 2001:

Have you heard what some members of our federal government are up to now? They are currently debating whether government agents should be allowed to torture suspects when it's needed in the interests of our national security. I have to admit that torture is a wonderful way to get confessions. The only problem is that people confess to crimes they haven't committed to stop the torture. Take me, for instance. Threaten me with torture, and I will be very happy to confess that I am married to Jennifer Aniston, that I wrote *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and that I assassinated Abraham Lincoln. Want to know of plots against the government? Hey, threaten me with torture, and I will be happy to make up whatever you want to hear. Under torture, I am very willing to confess that the Backstreet Boys are currently plotting to overthrow the United States government. People who are pro-torture need to experience torture first to know what they are talking about.

• **If you feel like doing research, answer this question: Does the U.S. government — or, if you prefer, people who work for the U.S. government — ever torture people? (Hint: Google "Abu Ghraib" or "Abu Ghraib prison abuse Slide Show.")**

A quick search will reveal that yes, the United States government under President George W. Bush tortured people — and delivered people to other governments under which those people were tortured. This happened even though President Bush claims to be a Christian.

Bumper Sticker: Who would Jesus torture?

Google "Abu Ghraib" and then click Images. Prepare to be intensely disgusted.

CHAPTER 18: IN THE QUEEN'S DUNGEONS

• **What does the Yankee think about priests who actually work among the poor?**

The Yankee orders the man who had killed the deer to be released.

The Yankee has a lot of respect for those priests who actually work among the poor:

Well, I arranged all that; and I had the man sent to his home. I had a great desire to rack the executioner; not because he was a good, painstaking and paingiving official, — for surely it was not to his discredit that he performed his functions well — but to pay him back for wantonly cuffing and otherwise distressing that young woman. The priests told me about this, and were generously hot to have him punished. Something of this disagreeable sort was turning up every now and then. I mean, episodes that showed that not all priests were frauds and self-seekers, but that many, even the great majority, of these that were down on the ground among the common people, were sincere and right-hearted, and devoted to the alleviation of human troubles and sufferings. Well, it was a thing which could not be helped, so I seldom fretted about it, and never many minutes at a time; it has never been my way to bother much about things which you can't cure. But I did not like it, for it was just the sort of thing to keep people reconciled to an Established Church. We must have a religion — it goes without saying — but my idea is, to have it cut up into forty free sects, so that they will police each other, as had been the case in the United States in my time. Concentration of power in a political machine is bad; and an Established Church is only a political machine; it was invented for that; it is nursed, cradled, preserved for that; it is an enemy to human liberty, and does no good which it could not better do in a split-up and scattered condition. That wasn't law; it wasn't gospel: it was only an opinion — my opinion, and I was only a man, one man: so it wasn't worth any more than the pope's — or any less, for that matter. (160-161)

• **After reading this chapter, what do you think of medieval crimes and punishments?**

Once again, Twain has a number of sources to use as he writes a chapter. In this case, he uses some literary as well as historical sources. On pp. 466-467, we read:

In the list of authorities he drew up for an appendix, Clemens mentioned Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Taine's *Ancient Regime*, and Madame du Barry's *Memoirs* as books that would validate his descriptions of conditions in Morgan le Fay's dungeons. In addition, Dickens's account of Dr. Manette's imprisonment in *A Tale of Two Cities* helped shape Mark Twain's picture, as did Saint-Simon's discussion of *letters de cachet* and Alexandre Dumas's *Count of Monte Cristo*.

We read of many horrible things in this chapter:

1) Morgan le Fay says that she has not committed a crime in killing the page. She adds that she is going to pay for him. Actually, Morgan is absolutely right: She has not committed a crime in killing the page. The page is a slave, a piece of property, and if Morgan wishes to kill him, she can. In fact, she is being remarkably generous in paying for the page — and she expects praise for her action. On p. 466, we read:

Mark Twain learned from John Richard Green's chapter on England in the fifth and sixth centuries that "his master could slay [a slave] if he would; it was but a chattel the less."

2) We find that a man and a woman are in prison because Sir Breuse Sance Pite (Sir Bruce Without Pity — no relation) wanted to exercise his right of *droit du seigneur* and sleep with a bride on her wedding night. She resisted, her husband came to her rescue, and because Sir Bruce's own dungeons were full, he asked Morgan le Fay to put the man and woman in her

dungeon. Morgan happily agreed.

3) One man has been imprisoned for free speech. On pp. 166-167, we read:

The newest prisoner's crime was a mere remark which he had made. He said he believed that men were about all alike, and one man as good as another, barring clothes. He said he believed that if you were to strip the nation naked and send a stranger through the crowd, he couldn't tell the king from a quack doctor, nor a duke from a hotel clerk. Apparently here was a man whose brains had not been reduced to an ineffectual mush by idiotic training. I set him loose and sent him to the Factory.

Clothing is an important class indicator. When people are stripped naked, it is difficult to tell their class.

This is a common theme of Twain's — we use clothing to determine social class. We see that in Twain's novel *The Prince and the Pauper*, where a prince and a pauper exchange clothing. The pauper is then regarded as a prince, and the prince is then regarded as a pauper.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the king looks ornery while he is dressed in his rags. But when he buys and puts on a suit, he looks like a respectable reverend, although he is still a greedy, immoral con man:

We had all bought store clothes where we stopped last; and now the king put his'n on, and he told me to put mine on. I done it, of course. The king's duds was all black, and he did look real swell and starchy. I never knowed how clothes could change a body before. Why, before, he looked like the orneriest old rip that ever was; but now, when he'd take off his new white beaver and make a bow and do a smile, he looked that grand and good and pious that you'd say he had walked right out of the ark, and maybe was old Leviticus himself. (204)

4) A man is in prison for having called Morgan le Fay's hair red. On p. 169, we read:

Morgan le Fay hated him with her whole heart, and she never would have softened toward him. And yet his crime was committed more in thoughtlessness than deliberate depravity. He had said she had red hair. Well, she had; but that was no way to speak of it. When redheaded people are above a certain social grade their hair is auburn.

For this hated prisoner, Morgan le Fay devised a special torment. He had a wife and five children, and she had five funerals take place at his house, which he could see from his prison cell. This made him try to guess which of his loved ones was still left alive. Actually, all of his loved ones were still left alive. All of the five funerals were fake.

5) Some people have been in the dungeons so long that others have forgotten what crime they committed — indeed, the prisoners themselves have forgotten.

If you feel like doing research, explain what the *droit du seigneur* is and the role it plays in this chapter. (Note: *Italicize foreign words.*)

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines *droit du seigneur* in this way:

The supposed right of a feudal lord to have sexual relations with a vassal's bride on her

wedding night.

In this chapter, we find that a man and a woman are in prison because Sir Breuse Sance Pie (Sir Bruce Without Pity) wanted to exercise his right of *droit du seigneur* and sleep with a bride on her wedding night. She resisted, her husband came to her rescue, and because Sir Bruce's own dungeons were full, he asked Morgan le Fay to put the man and woman in her dungeon. Morgan happily agreed.

Note that this can be seen as a criticism of the 19th century. Sometimes, a black slave woman would give birth to the child of her white owner.

• When we say that all men are created equal, what do we mean? Obviously, we are not equal in wealth, strength, intelligence, or beauty. So in what are all men (and women) equal?

Here is the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

“All men are created equal” means that all men (and women) have equal rights. All men and women and all black men and women have the equal right to vote, the equal right to worship the God of their choice or to not worship a God at all, the equal right to express their opinions, and so on. The rights acknowledged by the Bill of Rights are what all of us are equal in.

We are all equal in the sense that we all have the same rights as human beings regardless of our race, sex, religion, intelligence, strength, etc.

In addition, we have an equal right to have our interests considered.

• In America, do we all have the same opportunity to succeed? (For example, does a person with mental retardation have the same chance to succeed as you?)

Obviously, no.

Also, aren't there advantages in being born the son of a Kennedy or a Bush?

Coming from a middle-class family greatly increases the chance that you yourself will be middle-class.

• If you feel like doing research, summarize the Bill of Rights (the first 10 Amendments to the American Constitution). You can find the Bill of Rights at this WWW site: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html.

Here is the Bill of Rights:

The Ten Original Amendments: The Bill of Rights.

Passed by Congress September 25, 1789. Ratified December 15, 1791.

AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT II

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

AMENDMENT VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

AMENDMENT VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

CHAPTER 19: KNIGHT-ERRANTRY AS A TRADE

• If you are willing to do some research, write about Sir Thomas Malory and *Le Morte d' Arthur*. Who and what are they?

Here is some information about Sir Thomas Malory and *Le Morte d' Arthur*:

- Sir Thomas Malory, who died in 1471, is the English author of *Le Morte d' Arthur*.
- Scholars believe that he was Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revell, Warwickshire.
- Apparently, Sir Thomas Malory, who was knighted in 1442, committed crimes and spent time in prison, where he wrote *Le Morte d' Arthur*.
- Sir Thomas Malory actually titled his book *The Book of King Arthur and His Noble Knights of the Round Table*. It is not like a novel, but is instead a collection of romances.
- The title *Le Morte d' Arthur* actually comes from William Caxton, the first English printer, who printed the book in 1485. The title *The Death of Arthur* is actually somewhat misleading.
- According to *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, 2001, “*The Morte d'Arthur* is noted for its excellent dramatic narrative and the beauty of its rhythmic and simple language. It is the standard source for later versions of the legend.”
- This information comes from the introduction to the edition of the work in *The Harvard Classics*:

Malory's book is a compilation from French and English sources. These are chosen without much discrimination, and put together without great skill in arrangement. But the author's wholehearted enthusiasm for chivalrous ideals and the noble simplicity and fine rhythm of his prose have combined to give his work a unique place in English literature. In it the age of chivalry is summed up and closed. It is not without reason that the date of its publication by Caxton, 1485, should be conventionally accepted as the end of the Middle Ages in England. Romance had passed under the printing press, and a new age had begun.

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CHAPTER 20: THE OGRE'S CASTLE

• **Why does Twain make the Ogre's Castle what it turns out to be, and why does he make the noble ladies what they turn out to be?**

The ogres' castle turns out to be a pigsty and the royal princesses turn out to be pigs.

Obviously, Twain is saying that royal persons are pigs.

On p. 179 appears a portrait of "the troublesomest old sow of the lot." The portrait of the pig is based on a portrait of Queen Victoria of England. Obviously, this novel was not popular with British readers.

• **What is Twain's opinion of royalty?**

Twain has a very low opinion of royalty. Here, they are pigs.

Cf. Huck Finn's opinions of the duke and the king in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Huck actually has a very low opinion of royalty. He has already figured that the duke and the king aren't real royalty, but only humbugs, although Jim thinks that they are real royalty. Jim does wonder why the king smells so bad (p. 200).

Huck makes a couple of funny comments. Jim says:

"Now de duke, he's a tolerble likely man in some ways."

"Yes, a duke's different. But not very different. This one's a middling hard lot, — for a duke. When he's drunk, there ain't no near-sighted man could tell him from a king." (*Huckleberry Finn* 200)

And Huck says, "What was the use to tell Jim these warn't real kings and dukes? It wouldn't a done no good; and, besides, it was just as I said; you couldn't tell them from the real kind" (*Huckleberry Finn* 201).

CHAPTER 21: THE PILGRIMS

• **If you are willing to do some research, write about Geoffrey Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales*. Who and what are they?**

Of course, the religious pilgrims we read about are similar to the pilgrims described in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Here are a few facts about Geoffrey Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales*:

- Geoffrey Chaucer lived from circa 1340 to 1400. (*Circa* means around.) He is a very important English author who wrote *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer is buried in Westminster Abbey.
- *The Canterbury Tales* is an unfinished masterpiece. In it, a group of pilgrims travel to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. As they travel, they decide to tell stories to each other.
- The stories are of course interesting, but so are the portraits of the pilgrims. *The Canterbury Tales* gives a portrait of life in 14th-century England.

Of course, the pilgrims described here are based to some extent on Chaucer's pilgrims. On p.

195, we read:

This company of pilgrims resembled Chaucer's in this: that it had in it a sample of about all the upper occupations and professions the country could show, and a corresponding variety of costume. There were young men and old men, young women and old women, lively folk and grave folk. They rode upon mules and horses, and there was not a side-saddle in the party; for this specialty was to remain unknown in England for nine hundred years yet.

• **Is the Yankee well read?**

The Yankee knows about books:

- In chapter 21, he mentions Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.
- In chapter 4, he mentions *Tom Jones* and *Roderick Random*.
- In chapter 7, he mentions Robinson Crusoe.
- In chapter 39, he refers to Hamlet's ghost.
- In chapter 18, he mentions Casanova.

• **In talking about the Valley of Holiness, Sandy says, "From every land came monks to join; they came even as the fishes come, in shoals; and the monastery added building to building, and yet others to these, and so spread wide its arms and took them in. And nuns came, also; and more again, and yet more; and built over against the monastery on the yon side of the vale, and added building to building, until mighty was that nunnery. And these were friendly unto those, and they joined their loving labors together, and together they built a fair great foundling asylum midway of the valley between" (197). From where do you suppose the foundlings came? (A foundling is an abandoned child of unknown parentage.)**

The monks and the nuns were "friendly," and they produced the foundlings.

• **Describe the chain gang of slaves. Be aware that Twain is describing conditions in the American South before the Civil War.**

Once again, what we read — the beating of a woman slave, the separation of a slave wife from her slave husband — is based on real life. However, these things happened in 19th-century America. On p. 468, we read:

As he noted in the manuscript and in his notebook, Mark Twain constructed his description of the slave band from a runaway slave narrative, Charles Ball's *Fifty Years in Chains*. He took the forceful separation of husband and wife from Ball's description of his own childhood separation from his mother, and the condition in which the slaves marched and the silence of the slave master from Ball's trek from Maryland to South Carolina. During that journey, a buyer and seller haggle over who will pay the blacksmith to strike a sold slave's chains. And on his new plantation Ball watches his overseer whip a young woman while she lies prostrate on the ground. "This plan of making the person who is to be whipped lie down upon the ground," Ball comments, "is much practiced in the South It has one advantage over tying people up by the hands, as it prevents all

accidents from sprains in the thumbs or wrists.”

Of course, we also see the separation of parents and children in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The duke and the king separate a mother from her children when they attempt to con the Wilks daughters. We should note that the selling of the slaves upsets the Wilks daughters and the townspeople. On pp. 234-235 of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, we read:

So the next day after the funeral, along about noontime, the girls' joy got the first jolt: a couple of nigger traders come along, and the king sold them the niggers reasonable, for three-day drafts as they called it, and away they went — the two sons up the river to Memphis, and their mother down the river to Orleans. I thought them poor girls and them niggers would break their hearts for grief; they cried around each other, and took on so it most made me down sick to see it. The girls said they hadn't ever dreamed of seeing the family separated or sold away from the town. I can't ever get it out of my memory, the sight of them poor miserable girls and niggers hanging around each other's necks and crying; and I reckon I couldn't a stood it all but would a had to bust out and tell on our gang if I hadn't knowed the sale warn't no account and the niggers would be back home in a week or two.

The thing made a big stir in the town, too, and a good many come out flatfooted and said it was scandalous to separate the mother and the children that way. It injured the frauds some, but the old fool he bulled right along, spite of all the duke could say or do, and I tell you the duke was powerful uneasy.

Huck knows that Jim loves his children. Here he learns that other black folk love their children — and that the children love their mother.

CHAPTER 22: THE HOLY FOUNTAIN

• **For those of you who have studied German, why does the Yankee call Sandy “the mother of the German language”?**

On p. 212, we read this sentence said by Sandy:

I would I might please thee, sir, and it is to me dole and sorrow that I fail, albeit sith I am but a simple damsel and taught of none, being from the cradle unbaptized in those deep waters of learning that do anoint with a sovereignty him that partaketh of that most noble sacrament, investing him with reverend state to the mental eye of the humble mortal who, by bar and lack of that great consecration seeth in his own unlearned estate but a symbol of that other sort of lack and loss which men do publish to the pitying eye with sackcloth trappings whereon the ashes of grief do lie bepowdered and bestrewn, and so, when such shall in the darkness of his mind encounter these golden phrases of high mystery, these shut-up-shops, and draw-the-game, and bank-the-fires, it is but by the grace of God that he burst not for envy of the mind that can beget, and tongue that can deliver so great and mellow-sounding miracles of speech, and if there do ensue confusion in that humbler mind, and failure to divine the meanings of these wonders, then if so be this miscomprehension is not vain but sooth and true, wit ye well it is the very substance of worshipful dear homage and may not lightly be misprized, nor had been, an ye had noted this complexion of mood and mind and understood that that I would I could not, and that I could not I might not, nor yet nor might nor could, nor might-not nor could-not, might

be by advantage turned to the desired would, and so I pray you mercy of my fault, and that ye will of your kindness and your charity forgive it, good my master and most dear lord.

The sentence is 307 words long. The Yankee is making fun of the German language, which he says has extremely long sentences. On pp. 312-313, the Yankee writes,

I was gradually coming to have a mysterious and shuddery reverence for this girl; nowadays whenever she pulled out from the station and got her train fairly started on one of those horizonless transcontinental sentences of hers, it was borne in upon me that I was standing in the awful presence of the Mother of the German Language. I was so impressed with this, that sometimes when she began to empty one of these sentences on me I unconsciously took the very attitude of reverence, and stood uncovered; and if words had been water, I had been drowned, sure. She had exactly the German way; whatever was in her mind to be delivered, whether a mere remark, or a sermon, or a cyclopedia, or the history of a war, she would get it into a single sentence or die. Whenever the literary German dives into a sentence, that is the last you are going to see of him till he emerges on the other side of his Atlantic with his verb in his mouth.

Here are a couple of Twain anecdotes about German:

Learning German

When Mark Twain decided to take his family to Germany, his family started to study German. He even instructed Rosa, his German maid, to speak only German to his children. His daughter, Susy, tried to learn the language, but she said to her mother, "I wish Rosa was made in English."

Zwei Glas

While traveling abroad, Mark Twain heard of an American student who had struggled to learn German for three whole months, but who had learned to say only "zwei glas," which means "two glasses" (of beer). Still, the student reflected, he had learned those words very thoroughly.

• **According to legend, why did the well fail previously? Is that explanation a good one?**

The well failed because a bath was built. Taking a bath is a sin because, apparently, it embraces the pleasures of the world — pleasures that ought to be ignored. Because of the sin, the well failed.

This is a bad explanation. I don't think God works that way. For one thing, I don't think that taking a bath is a sin.

Some people think that homosexuality is a sin and that God sent AIDS to punish AIDS. However, this seems unlikely because of AIDS babies and people who have acquired AIDS through transfusions.

On p. 210, we read:

It was true — as to recent times at least — for there was witness to it, and better witness than a monk; only about twenty or thirty feet of the chain showed wear and use, the rest

of it was unworn and rusty. What had happened when the well gave out that other time? Without doubt some practical person had come along and mended the leak, and then had come up and told the abbot he had discovered by divination that if the sinful bath were destroyed the well would flow again. The leak had befallen again now, and these children would have prayed, and processioned, and tolled their bells for heavenly succor till they all dried up and blew away, and no innocent of them all would ever have thought to drop a fish-line into the well or go down in it and find out what was really the matter. Old habit of mind is one of the toughest things to get away from in the world. It transmits itself like physical form and feature; and for a man, in those days, to have had an idea that his ancestors hadn't had, would have brought him under suspicion of being illegitimate.

• **What is really wrong with the Holy Fountain?**

On p. 209, we read:

I had an idea that the well had sprung a leak; that some of the wall stones near the bottom had fallen and exposed fissures that allowed the water to escape. I measured the chain — 98 feet. Then I called in couple of monks, locked the door, took a candle, and made them lower me in the bucket. When the chain was all paid out, the candle confirmed my suspicion; a considerable section of the wall was gone, exposing a good big fissure.

The trouble with the well is due to purely natural causes, not to God's intervention. This novel, except for its beginning and its ending, is not concerned with real magic.

Little magic happens in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

• **What is the Yankee's opinion of the ascetics in the Valley of Holiness? What kind of actions do they perform?**

On p. 213, we read:

We drifted from hermit to hermit all the afternoon. It was a most strange menagerie. The chief emulation among them seemed to be, to see which could manage to be the uncleanest and most prosperous with vermin. Their manner and attitudes were the last expression of complacent self-righteousness.

Among the hermits we read about are these:

- 1) "It was one anchorite's pride to lie naked in the mud and let the insects bite him and blister him unmolested;"
- 2) "it was another's to lean against a rock, all day long, conspicuous to the admiration of the throng of pilgrims and pray;"
- 3) "it was another's to go naked and crawl around on all fours;"
- 4) "it was another's to drag about with him, year in and year out, eighty pounds of iron;"
- 5) "it was another's to never lie down when he slept, but to stand among the thorn-bushes and snore when there were pilgrims around to look;"
- 6) "a woman, who had the white hair of age, and no other apparel, was black from crown to heel with forty-seven years of holy abstinence from water. Groups of gazing pilgrims

stood around all and every of these strange objects, lost in reverent wonder, and envious of the fleckless sanctity which these pious austerities had won for them from an exacting heaven.”

A final hermit is this one:

7) A man standing on a pillar 60 feet high. All day, as a means of praying, the hermit bows to the ground. The Yankee doesn't like this waste of energy, so he harnesses a sewing machine to the hermit's body and uses the hermit's energy to run a sewing machine. This is very successful financially.

These hermits are based on real life. Mark Twain got his information from William Edward Hartpole Lecky's *The History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*. The Yankee also refers to Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints or Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints* as a source of information for readers who wish to know more about the hermits.

Here is a little information about Alban Butler and his *Lives of the Saints*:

- Alban Butler (1710–73) was an English Roman Catholic priest who compiled biographies of Roman Catholic saints.
- *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Principal Saints* consisted of 4 volumes and was published between 1756-1759. Later, the work was expanded to 12 volumes and was published between 1926-1938. A completely revised edition, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, was edited by Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Donald Attwater and published in 4 volumes in 1956.

On pp. 468-469, we read:

As Mark Twain says in his footnote, he drew his picture of the hermits from *European Morals*. Lecky's description of the "aesthetic epidemic" also includes the story of the holy fountain, which Mark Twain places in the Valley of Holiness. The "historian's frank details" concern chiefly what Lecky calls the "loathsome excesses" of the fifth-century ascetic St. Simeon Stylites, who "bound a rope around him so that it became imbedded in his flesh, which putrefied around it," and from whose body worms dropped. Mark Twain even took the figure of 1,244 revolutions from Lecky, though Lecky supplies no time frame. Hank's reference to the "Lives of the Saints" is to Alban Butler's *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints*, an eighteenth-century authority cited by Lecky.

• A *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* is also a satire on the ideas present in Twain's time as well as the ideas present in the Middle Ages. How does Twain satirize modern Americans' obsession for making money in how the Yankee treats the man who stands on a 60-foot-high pillar and prays?

Americans even try to turn prayer into money-making ventures. The Yankee makes money by using the hermit's prayer to power a sewing machine.

The Yankee cheats Sir Bors de Ganis and a few of Sir Bors' friends. The Yankee notices that the hermit is standing on one leg and something is wrong with the hermit's other leg. Therefore, the

Yankee has Sir Bors de Ganis and a few of Sir Bors' friends invest in the business even though the Yankee knows that the hermit is very likely to soon die.

Greed for money can lead one to badly treat the sacred (if this is sacred). For example, some Taco Bell TV commercials used to show monks eating hot Taco Bell food.

Greed for money can also make one unethical. The Yankee uses unethical advertising when he advertising the clothing made by the sewing machine powered by the hermit. Wearing the clothing is NOT a "perfect protection against sin" (p. 214).

On pp. 213-214, we read:

His stand was a pillar sixty feet high, with a broad platform on the top of it. He was now doing what he had been doing every day for twenty years up there — bowing his body ceaselessly and rapidly almost to his feet. It was his way of praying. I timed him with a stop watch, and he made 1,244 revolutions in 24 minutes and 46 seconds. It seemed a pity to have all this power going to waste. It was one of the most useful motions in mechanics, the pedal movement; so I made a note in my memorandum book, purposing some day to apply a system of elastic cords to him and run a sewing machine with it. I afterward carried out that scheme, and got five years' good service out of him; in which time he turned out upward of eighteen thousand first-rate tow-linen shirts, which was ten a day. I worked him Sundays and all; he was going, Sundays, the same as week days, and it was no use to waste the power. These shirts cost me nothing but just the mere trifle for the materials — I furnished those myself, it would not have been right to make him do that — and they sold like smoke to pilgrims at a dollar and a half apiece, which was the price of fifty cows or a blooded race horse in Arthurdom. They were regarded as a perfect protection against sin, and advertised as such by my knights everywhere, with the paint-pot and stencil-plate; insomuch that there was not a cliff or a boulder or a dead wall in England but you could read on it at a mile distance:

"Buy the only genuine St. Stylite; patronized by the Nobility. Patent applied for."

There was more money in the business than one knew what to do with. As it extended, I brought out a line of goods suitable for kings, and a nobby thing for duchesses and that sort, with ruffles down the forehatch and the running-gear clewed up with a feather-stitch to leeward and then hauled aft with a back-stay and triced up with a half-turn in the standing rigging forward of the weather-gaskets. Yes, it was a daisy.

But about that time I noticed that the motive power had taken to standing on one leg, and I found that there was something the matter with the other one; so I stocked the business and unloaded, taking Sir Bors de Ganis into camp financially along with certain of his friends; for the works stopped within a year, and the good saint got him to his rest. But he had earned it. I can say that for him.

CHAPTER 23: THE RESTORATION OF THE FOUNTAIN

• What is Merlin's excuse for not restoring the fountain? How good of an excuse is it? Does Merlin believe the excuse?

On p. 217, we read:

“If any labor of mortal might break the spell that binds these waters, this which I have but just essayed had done it. It has failed; whereby I do now know that that which I had feared is a truth established; the sign of this failure is, that the most potent spirit known to the magicians of the East, and whose name none may utter and live, has laid his spell upon this well. The mortal does not breathe, nor ever will, who can penetrate the secret of that spell, and without that secret none can break it. The water will flow no more forever, good Father. I have done what man could. Suffer me to go.”

His excuse involves magic — a spirit has cast a powerful spirit on the well. The spirit has a name that no man can pronounce and continue to live. In other words, if you say the spirit’s name, you die.

This, of course, is nonsense; however, it is nonsense that Merlin believes. We know that because when the Yankee says that he can probably break the spell, Merlin is gladdened because he thinks that the Yankee will have to pronounce the spirit’s name and will therefore die.

Two passages show us that Merlin believes his own nonsense:

1) On p. 218, we read:

“Wait,” said Merlin, with an evil smile. “Ye wit that he that would break this spell must know that spirit’s name?”

“Yes, I know his name.”

“And wit you also that to know it skills not of itself, but ye must likewise pronounce it? Ha-ha! Knew ye that?”

“Yes, I knew that, too.”

“You had that knowledge! Art a fool? Are ye minded to utter that name and die?”

“Utter it? Why certainly. I would utter it if it was Welsh.”

“Ye are even a dead man, then; and I go to tell Arthur.”

Of course, Merlin decides instead to stay and enjoy the Yankee’s death. Of course, the Yankee does not die.

2) On p, 224, we read:

I sent Merlin home on a shutter. He had caved in and gone down like a landslide when I pronounced that fearful name, and had never come to since. He never had heard that name before, — neither had I — but to him it was the right one. Any jumble would have been the right one. He admitted, afterward, that that spirit’s own mother could not have pronounced that name better than I did. He never could understand how I survived it, and I didn’t tell him. It is only young magicians that give away a secret like that. Merlin spent three months working enchantments to try to find out the deep trick of how to pronounce that name and outlive it. But he didn’t arrive.

• Where did Twain get the Yankee’s magical incantations? (Look at the notes in the back of the Mark Twain Library edition of the novel.)

On p. 218, the Yankee says that he would utter the spirit's name if it was Welsh. This is an example of Welsh I downloaded from <http://www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk/> on March 26, 2003:

Croeso i safle gwe newydd Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ychwanegu mwy o gynnwys dros y misoedd nesaf.

Welcome to the Welsh Language Board's new website. We will be adding to the content over the next few months.

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In this chapter, the Yankee makes five incantations (or four incantations and one name). They are:

“Constantinopolitanischerdudelsackspfeifenmachersgesellschaft!” (p. 221)

This means “The Bagpipe Manufacturers Company of Constantinople.”

“Nihilistendynamittheaterkaestchenssprengungsattentaetsversuchungen!” (p. 221)

This means “Outrageous attempts by Nihilists to blow up the strong box of a theater with dynamite.”

“Transvaaltruppentropentransporttrampelthiertreibertrauungsthraenentragoedie!” (p. 221)

This means “The lamentable tragedy of a marriage of a dromedary drover in the tropical transport service of the army of the Transvaal.”

“Mekkamuselmanne Massenmenchenmoerdermohrenmuttermarmormentenmacher!” (p. 222)

This means “A manufacturer of marble monuments commemorating the Moorish mother of the assassins who perpetrated the general massacre of Mohammedans at Mecca.”

“Lo, I command the fell spirit that possesses the holy fountain to now disgorge into the skies all the infernal fires that still remain in him, and straightway dissolve his spell and flee hence to the pit, there to lie bound a thousand years. By his own dread name I command it — BGWJJILLIGKKK!” (pp. 222-223)

This name is composed of nonsense sounds.

• **The Yankee uses science to perform “miracles,” and he allows the mass of people to remain superstitious. Why does he do this? What can he say in his defense?**

We can speculate about a number of reasons why the Yankee allows the mass of people to remain superstitious:

1) The Yankee loves performance. Here, he has a good one. Lots of people watch as he makes magical incantations and pronounces a name that is supposed to make him die. He

uses different-colored rockets (fireworks, I believe) to light the air with a glow as he pronounces magical words. He certainly puts on a good performance.

2) The Yankee uses magic to consolidate his power. If he showed the people that there was a natural explanation for his miracles, he might lose respect and power.

3) The Yankee could argue that the people are so superstitious that most of them aren't ready for science — the only ones ready are the people, mostly young, in his Man Factory. This could be a bogus argument. The Yankee argues elsewhere that all peoples are capable of self-government.

4) It is safer for the Yankee to use magic than it is for him to use science. Remember what happened to Galileo. The Yankee could argue that he is afraid of the Established Church. In doing so, he could point to the example of Galileo.

• **If you feel like doing research, write about the Catholic Church's treatment of Galileo after he published his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in 1632.**

Here are some anecdotes about Galileo:

- As the first modern scientist, Galileo believed in testing theories through experiments to find out whether they are true or false. He believed in doing this even when the theories had been accepted for hundreds of years, as were the theories of the great ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. To test Aristotle's theory that a heavy object would fall to the ground faster than a light object of the same shape, Galileo rolled balls down an inclined slope. He discovered that the balls went down the inclined slope at the same rate of speed, whether the balls were heavy or light. To further test the theory, according to legend, Galileo dropped balls of varying weights from the Leaning Tower of Pisa. He dropped two balls — one heavy and one light — at the same time. According to Aristotle, the heavier ball would hit the ground first. It didn't. Both balls hit the ground at the same time. (Source: Paul Hightower, *Galileo: Astronomer and Physicist*, pp. 28ff.)

- As a scientist, Galileo supported the astronomical theory of Copernicus, which stated that the planets orbit the Sun, and opposed the astronomical theory of Ptolemy, which stated that the Sun and the planets orbit the Earth. Unfortunately, this belief opposed the official teaching of the Catholic Church, which was powerful in Galileo's native Italy. Galileo was put on trial by the Inquisition, found guilty, and placed on house arrest until he died in 1642. Not until 1992, after a nine-year study of the trial by Church officials, did Pope John Paul II officially state that the Catholic Church had been wrong and that Galileo had been right. (Source: Paul Hightower, *Galileo: Astronomer and Physicist*, pp. 84ff, 100-101.)

CHAPTER 24: A RIVAL MAGICIAN

• **Previously we read that the well failed because a bath was built. What happens when the Yankee builds a bath and monks take baths?**

Lots of monks get clean.

• **What problem did telephones have in the Yankee's day (late 19th-century)?**

One problem with telephones in the Yankee's (and Twain's) day is some sounds weren't clear

and so could be confused with other sounds. On p. 230, we read:

“Ah, ye will remember we move by night, and avoid speech with all. We learn naught but that we get by the telephone from Camelot.”

“Why *they* know all about this thing. Haven’t they told you anything about the great miracle of the restoration of a holy fountain?”

“Oh, *that*? Indeed yes. But the name of this valley doth woundily differ from the name of that one; indeed to differ wider were not pos — ”

“What was that name, then?”

“The Valley of Hellishness.”

“*That* explains it. Confound a telephone, anyway. It is the very demon for conveying similarities of sound that are miracles of divergence from similarity of sense. But no matter, you know the name of the place now. Call up Camelot.”

Of course, we have the same problem today with some cellular telephones, as TV commercials let us know.

Of course, here we have a criticism of the 19th century, as well as of the 21st century.

• **Science uses verification to test hypotheses. What is verification, and how it is used in this chapter?**

One way to test a hypothesis is to use verification. For example, you can make a prediction and see if the prediction comes true.

We see the use of prediction and of verification in this chapter. The rival magician says that King Arthur will be making a long journey, but not to the Valley of Holiness. The Yankee — with knowledge obtained through the telephone — says that King Arthur is journeying to the Valley of Holiness and will arrive mid-afternoon or later on the third day. Of course, when King Arthur arrives on schedule at the Valley of Holiness, everyone knows that the Yankee is a better magician than the rival magician.

We also see the Yankee test the claim of the rival magician to be able to tell what anyone is doing by saying (p. 233),

“Then tell me what I am doing with my right hand.”

Of course, the rival magician can’t tell the Yankee that because the Yankee has his hand behind his back, but he gets out of his dilemma by saying that he can say what any noble or royal person is doing at any time, but his gift does not include being to tell what any common person is doing at any particular time.

Science would say that unless we can verify something, we ought not to accept as a meaningful scientific theory.

Here is an anecdote about comedian Groucho Marx mocking a kind of magician:

• Groucho Marx was dragged to see a medium by his wife. He was reluctant to go because he didn’t believe the medium could communicate with the dead, but he perked

up when he heard that the medium would answer any question asked of her. Groucho's question was, "What's the capital of North Dakota?" The medium didn't know the answer, and two of her muscular male confederates threw Groucho out of the séance. (Source: Groucho Marx, *Confessions of a Mangy Lover*, pp. 111-112.)

• **In this chapter, the Yankee exposes a fake magician. What other fakes do you know of, and how were/can they be exposed?**

Faith Healers

Some people are clever. A faith healer might suddenly say, "Praise the lord! God just cured someone of cancer in Chicago." Someone probably was cured of cancer in Chicago — but through the action of a surgeon removing the cancer. (I believe in God, but I believe that God works through doctors.)

Water Witching

James Randi (the magician Randi the Great) believes in testing hypotheses. To find out whether people were correctly able to witch for water, he dug up a field, laid down pipes through which water could flow, then had a few water witchers try to determine whether they could tell where the water was flowing. Each thought they could, but none really could.

Feng Shui

Is Feng Shui a science? No. Penn and Teller let three Feng Shui home consultants look at a room and arrange its furniture according to Feng Shui. The "experts" each arranged the furniture in the room differently. If Feng Shui were a science, they would have arranged it the same way.

Harry Houdini

Harry Houdini used to expose mediums. He would go to a séance and ask about his Uncle Max. The medium would tell all about Uncle Max. After the séance, Houdini would say, "I don't have a Uncle Max. You're a fake!"

Beggars

Currently, some people are begging who actually don't need to beg. For example, a man in a suit carried a handwritten sign saying that he lost his wallet and needs a certain amount of money to get home. A journalist donated money to him, then discovered that the man pulls this trick at many places in the city. The journalist once saw him on the subway, counting a huge wad of cash — his profits for the day (which he probably did not pay income taxes on).

CHAPTER 25: A COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION

• **If you feel like doing research, explain what the *droit du seigneur* is and the role it plays in this chapter. (Note: Italicize foreign words.)**

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines *droit du seigneur* in this way:

The supposed right of a feudal lord to have sexual relations with a vassal's bride on her wedding night.

In this chapter, a woman with lots of wealth married a man with no wealth. However, the Church claims the woman's property because the woman did not give the bishop the chance to exercise the right of *droit du seigneur* — the right to have sex with the bride on her wedding night. The woman's defense was that the Church itself forbid the bishop to exercise that right — bishops must be celibate. King Arthur rules in favor of the Church. The bishop could have gotten a special dispensation for one night to exercise the right of *droit du seigneur*.

King Arthur rules that the woman has forfeited all her property to the Church. Both she and her husband are now penniless.

This incident is based on real life, according to a note at the back of the Mark Twain Library edition of the book:

As a note in the manuscript indicated, Mark Twain found a similar story in Taine's *Ancient Régime*, where an agent of the church claimed a young woman's "paternal inheritance on the pretence that she had passed her wedding night in her husband's house" (Book 1, chapter 3).

On pp. 239-241, we read:

One very curious case came before the king. A young girl, an orphan, who had a considerable estate, married a fine young fellow who had nothing. The girl's property was within a seignory held by the Church. The bishop of the diocese, an arrogant scion of the great nobility, claimed the girl's estate on the ground that she had married privately, and thus had cheated the Church out of one of its rights as lord of the seignory — the one heretofore referred to as *le droit du seigneur*. The penalty of refusal or avoidance was confiscation. The girl's defense was, that the lordship of the seignory was vested in the bishop, and the particular right here involved was not transferable, but must be exercised by the lord himself or stand vacated; and that an older law, of the Church itself, strictly barred the bishop from exercising it. It was a very odd case, indeed. [...]

The girl's case seemed strong to me; the bishop's case was just as strong. I did not see how the king was going to get out of this hole. But he got out. I append his decision:

"Truly I find small difficulty here, the matter being even a child's affair for simpleness. An the young bride had conveyed notice, as in duty bound, to her feudal lord and proper master and protector the bishop, she had suffered no loss, for the said bishop could have got a dispensation making him, for temporary conveniency, eligible to the exercise of his said right, and thus would she have kept all she had. Whereas, failing in her first duty, she hath by that failure failed in all; for whoso, clinging to a rope, severeth it above his hands, must fall; it being no defense to claim that the rest of the rope is sound, neither any deliverance from his peril, as he shall find. Pardy, the woman's case is rotten at the source. It is the decree of the court that she forfeit to the said lord bishop all her goods, even to the last farthing that she doth possess, and be thereto mulcted in the costs. Next!"

Here was a tragic end to a beautiful honeymoon not yet three months old. Poor young creatures! They had lived these three months lapped to the lips in worldly comforts. These clothes and trinkets they were wearing were as fine and dainty as the shrewdest stretch of the sumptuary laws allowed to people of their degree; and in these pretty clothes, she crying on his shoulder, and he trying to comfort her with hopeful words set to the music of despair, they went from the judgment seat out into the world homeless,

bedless, breadless; why, the very beggars by the roadsides were not so poor as they.

• **What interesting thing involving the Mansion House do we learn in this chapter?**

On p. 240, we read:

It reminded me of something I had read in my youth about the ingenious way in which the aldermen of London raised the money that built the Mansion House. A person who had not taken the Sacrament according to the Anglican rite could not stand as a candidate for sheriff of London. Thus Dissenters were ineligible; they could not run if asked, they could not serve if elected. The aldermen, who without any question were Yankees in disguise, hit upon this neat device: they passed a by-law imposing a fine of £400 upon any one who should refuse to be a candidate for sheriff, and a fine of £600 upon any person who, after being elected sheriff, refused to serve. Then they went to work and elected a lot of Dissenters, one after another, and kept it up until they had collected £15,000 in fines; and there stands the stately Mansion House to this day, to keep the blushing citizen in mind of a long past and lamented day when a band of Yankees slipped into London and played games of the sort that has given their race a unique and shady reputation among all truly good and holy peoples that be in the earth.

This has happened in history.

Note that the passage has a negative view of Yankees. They are unethical problem-solvers.

• **What is the Yankee's opinion of "self-government"?**

Who should rule a nation — some self-appointed experts or the people? According to the Yankee, the poor of a nation have always been the most able of a nation — more able than the members of the upper classes. Therefore, according to the Yankee, all nations are capable of self-government.

Currently, there is a debate going on about whether Iraq can become a democracy. Some people think that it can't without a whole lot of education first.

We can ask if there is a contradiction in the Yankee's thoughts. Elsewhere, he seems to think that education is necessary to make the people ready for self-government.

The Yankee is speaking, but the Yankee need not be speaking for Mark Twain. In this novel, Twain is criticizing the American belief in progress. Very definitely, progress does not have to happen. The end of Twain's novel shows that.

Simply having the right to vote is not enough to ensure progress or to ensure that a democracy will continue to exist. After the Constitutional Convention had created the United States Constitution, a woman asked Benjamin Franklin, "Well, Doctor, what have we got: a republic or a monarchy?" Mr. Franklin replied, "A republic — if you can keep it." (Source: Paul M. Zall, *The Wit and Wisdom of the Founding Fathers*, p. 64.)

The Yankee believes that every people is capable of self-government, that every country is capable of being a democracy.

The Yankee believes in the people. He believes that the mass of people do the actual work of the nation. Certainly, the working class does much work, but a class of people exists below the

working class. They do little or no work.

On p. 242, we read:

There is a phrase which has grown so common in the world's mouth that it has come to seem to have sense and meaning — the sense and meaning implied when it is used; that is the phrase which refers to this or that or the other nation as possibly being “capable of self-government”; and the implied sense of it is, that there has been a nation somewhere, some time or other which wasn't capable of it — wasn't as able to govern itself as some self-appointed specialists were or would be to govern it. The master minds of all nations, in all ages, have sprung in affluent multitude from the mass of the nation, and from the mass of the nation only — not from its privileged classes; and so, no matter what the nation's intellectual grade was; whether high or low, the bulk of its ability was in the long ranks of its nameless and its poor, and so it never saw the day that it had not the material in abundance whereby to govern itself. Which is to assert an always self-proven fact: that even the best governed and most free and most enlightened monarchy is still behind the best condition attainable by its people; and that the same is true of kindred governments of lower grades, all the way down to the lowest.

• Should military officers be chosen on the basis of their merit or on the basis of their birth? How are they chosen in the novel? What change does the Yankee make to this system? (By the way, what is West Point?)

West Point is the location of the United States Military Academy; it is north of New York City.

The United States Military Academy trains men and women to be officers in the United States Army.

People can argue about whether military officers should be chosen on their basis of their merit or on the basis of their birth. In the United States, we tend to believe in a meritocracy, but some people question whether this is really true. If your last name is Kennedy or Bush and your parents are important politicians, you have an advantage over other people.

Think for a moment. Do we really want Paris Hilton and Donald Trump in charge of the military? “General Paris Hilton” sounds a little silly to me.

The Yankee changes the system of choosing military officers by having two different regiments. One would consist of members of nobility; the other would consist of a meritocracy — people chosen on merit alone. On pp. 248-249, we read:

I had a private audience with the king, and made a proposition. I said it was quite right to officer that regiment with nobilities, and he couldn't have done a wiser thing. It would also be a good idea to add five hundred officers to it; in fact, add as many officers as there were nobles and relatives of nobles in the country, even if there should finally be five times as many officers as privates in it; and thus make it the crack regiment, the envied regiment, the King's Own regiment, and entitled to fight on its own hook and in its own way, and go whither it would and come when it pleased, in time of war, and be utterly swell and independent. This would make that regiment the heart's desire of all the nobility, and they would all be satisfied and happy. Then we would make up the rest of the standing army out of commonplace materials, and officer it with nobodies, as was

proper — nobodies selected on a basis of mere efficiency — and we would make this regiment toe the line, allow it no aristocratic freedom from restraint, and force it to do all the work and persistent hammering, to the end that whenever the King's Own was tired and wanted to go off for a change and rummage around amongst ogres and have a good time, it could go without uneasiness, knowing that matters were in safe hands behind it, and business going to be continued at the old stand, same as usual. The king was charmed with the idea.

CHAPTER 26: THE FIRST NEWSPAPER

• How is the King's-Evil "cured"? (By the way, what is the disease called scrofula or King's-Evil?)

On p. 471, we read that the king's-evil is:

A name applied to scrofula, a tubercular swelling of the lymphatic glands or of bones and joints. From biblical and early Roman times the disease was popularly supposed to be curable by royal touch. The first English monarch to touch for the evil was Edward the Confessor, in the eleventh century, the last was Queen Anne in the eighteenth. Henry VII elaborated the ceremony and initiated the custom of giving each sufferer a gold coin to be worn as a talisman. Mark Twain took much of his description of the ceremony from Lecky, who quoted Macauley's *History of England* in his discussion.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines talisman in this way:

1. An object marked with magic signs and believed to confer on its bearer supernatural powers or protection.
2. Something that apparently has magic power.

In William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, we see that Edward the Confessor is a religious King who helps his people by curing the King's Evil.

On p. 76, we read:

Enter a Doctor

MALCOLM

Well; more anon. — Comes the king forth, I pray you?

Doctor

Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls

That stay his cure: their malady convinces

The great assay of art; but at his touch —

Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand —

They presently amend.

MALCOLM

I thank you, doctor.

Exit Doctor

MACDUFF

What's the disease he means?

MALCOLM

'Tis call'd the evil:

A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

• **Does faith healing work, according to the Yankee?**

Yes. The Yankee has absolutely no doubt that faith healing works.

On p. 256, we read:

Marinel took the patients as they came. He examined the candidate; if he couldn't qualify he was warned off; if he could he was passed along to the king. A priest pronounced the words, "They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Then the king stroked the ulcers, while the reading continued; finally, the patient graduated and got his nickel — the king hanging it around his neck himself — and was dismissed. Would you think that that would cure? It certainly did. Any mummerly will cure if the patient's faith is strong in it. Up by Astolat there was a chapel where the Virgin had once appeared to a girl who used to herd geese around there — the girl said so herself — and they built the chapel upon that spot and hung a picture in it representing the occurrence — a picture which you would think it dangerous for a sick person to approach; whereas, on the contrary, thousands of the lame and the sick came and prayed before it every year and went away whole and sound; and even the well could look upon it and live. Of course,

when I was told these things I did not believe them; but when I went there and saw them I had to succumb. I saw the cures effected myself; and they were real cures and not questionable. I saw cripples whom I had seen around Camelot for years on crutches, arrive and pray before that picture, and put down their crutches and walk off without a limp.

No doubt some of the people simply wanted to receive the coin that the king gave to those whom he touched, so fraud was involved and practiced by some of the “sick.” On the other hand, the coin would lift the spirits of the sick, and food might cure what ailed them.

• **What is your opinion of the writing, proofreading, and pagesetting of the *Camelot Weekly Hosannah and Literary Volcano*?**

This is another dig at the 19th century. However, it is not a dig at the 21st century. Our newspapers are much better than this — at least in the proofreading and pagesetting department. People can argue whether 21st-century newspaper writing is better than 19th-century newspaper writing, although I think that it is.

Pretty clearly, the writing, proofreading, and pagesetting of the *Camelot Weekly Hosannah and Literary Volcano* is awful. Twain gets in a satiric dig at Arkansas journalism by writing:

It was good Arkansas journalism, but this was not Arkansas (p. 258).

[...] Little crudities of a mechanical sort were observable here and there, but there were not enough of them to amount to anything, and it was good enough Arkansas proof-reading, anyhow, and better than was needed in Arthur’s day and realm. (p. 260)

By the way, the newspaper costs two cents. In “Chapter 33: Sixth Century Political Economy,” we learn that the wage of a “mechanic” — “carpenter, dauber, mason, painter, blacksmith, wheelwright” is “On the average, fifty milrays; half a cent a day” (p. 323). Therefore, a skilled laborer would have to work four days to buy a newspaper — and even then he would be probably illiterate and unable to read it. Satirists don’t have to be consistent.

• **What is reversibility?**

One way to find out if something is morally right is to ask if you want something done to you. You may be thinking that you would like other people to be forced to do something, but would you want to be forced to do that thing?

In reversibility, you reverse the situation so that something applies to you instead of to someone else.

Reversibility means that what you want to do to another person, that person can also do to you. You may be willing to make a lying promise to obtain other people’s money, but are you willing to allow other people to make lying promises to you in order to obtain your money? Of course not.

• **Why does the Yankee want to travel incognito through the countryside? Why does King Arthur want to join him?**

The Yankee wants to travel through the countryside incognito because he wants to learn about the life of the lower classes, and if he travels as the Boss they will treat him differently than they

would if they thought that he were one of them.

King Arthur is fond of adventures, and so he insists on traveling incognito with the Yankee.

King Arthur should not go with the Yankee because, of course, he should be running the kingdom. However, this is an excellent way of learning the effect of the laws on the common people. If you want to know the effect of the laws on the common people, then be one of the common people for a while. This, of course, is an example of reversibility. You may be favor of a law that does not affect you personally, but what if it did affect you personally? Would you still be in favor of it? This is something that Abraham Lincoln understood:

“Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.” — Abraham Lincoln. (Source: Bob Dole, *Great Presidential Wit*, p. 41.)

In Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper*, the prince exchanges identifies with the pauper. As a supposed pauper, the prince experiences the harsh laws of his kingdom. When he becomes king, he changes many of the laws and makes them more merciful.

On p. 252, we read:

When I told the king I was going out disguised as a petty freeman to scour the country and familiarize myself with the humbler life of the people, he was all afire with the novelty of the thing in a minute, and was bound to take a chance in the adventure himself — nothing should stop him — he would drop everything and go along — it was the prettiest idea he had run across for many a day.

Earlier, in “Chapter 24: A Rival Magician,” we read (pp. 228-229):

My idea was to disguise myself as a freeman of peasant degree and wander through the country a week or two on foot. This would give me a chance to eat and lodge with the lowliest and poorest class of free citizens on equal terms. There was no other way to inform myself perfectly of their everyday life and the operation of the laws upon it. If I went among them as a gentleman, there would be restraints and conventionalities which would shut me out from their private joys and troubles, and I should get no further than the outside shell.

CHAPTER 27: THE YANKEE AND KING TRAVEL INCOGNITO

• Foreshadowing takes place in this chapter with its use of a bomb (scientific weapons will be important late in the novel). If you are willing to do some research, define “foreshadowing” and give some examples from books.

The 6th edition of *A Handbook to Literature* by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon defines “foreshadowing” in this way: “The presentation of material in a work in such a way that later events are prepared for” (201).

Here are a couple of other definitions:

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in literature.

Source: http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/foreshadowing.html

Definition: A literary device used to hint at events that will follow later in the story,

sometimes generating feelings of anxiety or suspense. Anton Chekhov once said that “if there is a gun hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last.” That remark captures the essence of foreshadowing.

Source: <http://contemporarylit.about.com/library/bldef-foreshadowing>

In Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Pap buys a jug of whiskey. Pap thinks the jug has enough whiskey for “two drunks and one delirium tremens” (34). Sure enough, Pap will have a case of delirium tremens later.

Here, of course, we have foreshadowing of the war that takes place at the end of the novel.

By the way, this incident with the bomb is foreshadowed earlier, in Chapter 22 (p. 209):

I almost regretted that my theory about the well's trouble was correct, because I had another one that had a showy point or two about it for a miracle. I remembered that in America, many centuries later, when an oil well ceased to flow, they used to blast it out with a dynamite torpedo. If I should find this well dry and no explanation of it, I could astonish these people most nobly by having a person of no especial value drop a dynamite bomb into it. It was my idea to appoint Merlin. However, it was plain that there was no occasion for the bomb. One cannot have everything the way he would like it. A man has no business to be depressed by a disappointment, anyway; he ought to make up his mind to get even. That is what I did. I said to myself, I am in no hurry, I can wait; that bomb will come good yet. And it did, too.

Note: We learn something about the Yankee’s travels in this — and other — chapters:

- In chapter 27, the Yankee mentions a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi.
- In chapter 3, he mentions etiquette in Arkansas.
- In chapter 10, he mentions journalism in Alabama.
- In chapter 26, he mentions journalism in Arkansas.

CHAPTER 28: DRILLING THE KING

• Do clothes and a good haircut make the man?

They are very important. The king no longer looks like himself after the Yankee gives him a haircut and clothing of the lower classes.

This is an important theme in the writing of Mark Twain: Clothing is an important class indicator. When people are stripped naked, it is difficult to tell their class.

For example, in *The Prince and the Pauper*, the two boys are judged by their clothing. When the boys exchange clothing, the prince is treated as if he is a pauper, and the pauper is treated as if he is a prince.

Another example: In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the king looks ornery while he is dressed in his rags. But when he buys and puts on a suit, he looks like a respectable reverend, although he is still a greedy, immoral con man:

We had all bought store clothes where we stopped last; and now the king put his’n on,

and he told me to put mine on. I done it, of course. The king's duds was all black, and he did look real swell and starchy. I never knowed how clothes could change a body before. Why, before, he looked like the orneriest old rip that ever was; but now, when he'd take off his new white beaver and make a bow and do a smile, he looked that grand and good and pious that you'd say he had walked right out of the ark, and maybe was old Leviticus himself. (p. 204)

In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, ch. 27, pp. 264-265, we read:

About bedtime I took the king to my private quarters to cut his hair and help him get the hang of the lowly raiment he was to wear. The high classes wore their hair banded across the forehead but hanging to the shoulders the rest of the way around, whereas the lowest ranks of commoners were banded fore and aft both; the slaves were bangless, and allowed their hair free growth. So I inverted a bowl over his head and cut away all the locks that hung below it. I also trimmed his whiskers and mustache until they were only about a half-inch long; and tried to do it inartistically, and succeeded. It was a villainous disfigurement. When he got his lubberly sandals on, and his long robe of coarse brown linen cloth, which hung straight from his neck to his ankle-bones, he was no longer the comeliest man in his kingdom, but one of the unhandsomest and most commonplace and unattractive. We were dressed and barbered alike, and could pass for small farmers, or farm bailiffs, or shepherds, or carters; yes, or for village artisans, if we chose, our costume being in effect universal among the poor, because of its strength and cheapness. I don't mean that it was really cheap to a very poor person, but I do mean that it was the cheapest material there was for male attire — manufactured material, you understand.

• **Why can't King Arthur behave as a freeman does?**

Basically, he hasn't been brought up that way. His spirit has not been broken. On p. 274-275, the Yankee says to the king,

“Sire, as between clothes and countenance, you are all right, there is no discrepancy; but as between your clothes and your bearing, you are all wrong, there is a most noticeable discrepancy. Your soldierly stride, your lordly port — these will not do. You stand too straight, your looks are too high, too confident. The cares of a kingdom do not stoop the shoulders, they do not droop the chin, they do not depress the high level of the eye-glance, they do not put doubt and fear in the heart and hang out the signs of them in slouching body and unsure step. It is the sordid cares of the lowly born that do these things. You must learn the trick; you must imitate the trademarks of poverty, misery, oppression, insult, and the other several and common inhumanities that sap the manliness out of a man and make him a loyal and proper and approved subject and a satisfaction to his masters, or the very infants will know you for better than your disguise, and we shall go to pieces at the first hut we stop at. Pray try to walk like this.”

King Arthur's shoulders are not bowed by debt, taxes, and work. He has not been broken.

• **Which kind of work pays best, according to the Yankee? Is that true even today? Can you give some examples?**

On p. 279, we read (emphasis added):

There are wise people who talk ever so knowingly and complacently about “the working classes,” and satisfy themselves that a day’s hard intellectual work is very much harder than a day’s hard manual toil, and is righteously entitled to much bigger pay. Why, they really think that, you know, because they know all about the one, but haven’t tried the other. But I know all about both; and so far as I am concerned, there isn’t money enough in the universe to hire me to swing a pickaxe thirty days, but I will do the hardest kind of intellectual work for just as near nothing as you can cipher it down — and I will be satisfied, too. **Intellectual “work” is misnamed; it is a pleasure, a dissipation, and is its own highest reward. The poorest paid architect, engineer, general, author, sculptor, painter, lecturer, advocate, legislator, actor, preacher, singer is constructively in heaven when he is at work; and as for the musician with the fiddle-bow in his hand who sits in the midst of a great orchestra with the ebbing and flowing tides of divine sound washing over him — why, certainly, he is at work, if you wish to call it that, but lord, it’s a sarcasm just the same. The law of work does seem utterly unfair — but there it is, and nothing can change it: the higher the pay in enjoyment the worker gets out of it, the higher shall be his pay in cash, also.** And it’s also the very law of those transparent swindles, transmissible nobility and kingship.

The Yankee’s opinion of intellectual work is that it is a pleasure. His opinion of working by swinging a pickaxe is that it is hard work indeed.

Chances are, the Yankee is correct. The highest-paid workers in the United States are entertainers (and CEOs). Tom Cruise makes millions. However, there is a pyramid in the arts and entertainment. The people at the top of the pyramid make millions, while the people at the bottom make little or nothing. Thus, most actors are impoverished.

Of course, writing can be hard work. Twain had days where writing *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was a pleasure, and he had days where writing the novel was like pulling his own teeth without the benefit of Novocaine.

This is a favorite theme of Mark Twain’s, and he addresses it in Chapter 2 (“The Glorious Whitewasher”) of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*:

On p. 16 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Twain writes, “... Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do, and ... Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.” He also writes, “... in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to obtain.”

We see that that is true. One of the illustrations in the book shows a mountain climber. Mountain climbing is hard work, but because climbing to the top of a mountain such as Mount Everest is difficult, people wish to do it, even if they should lose their lives in the process. In addition, working on a dude ranch can be hard: riding horses, mending fences, etc. However, people pay lots of money to do such things. One example that Twain gives is wealthy people in England paying lots of money to “drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line” (p. 16). Because this costs them lots of money, it is Play, but if they were offered money to do it, it would turn into Work, and they would decline to do it.

A man chopping wood for Winter is Working. A man chopping wood in a lumberjack contest is Playing.

In this chapter, we see that Tom is able to turn Work into Play. Aunt Polly wants to punish Tom, so she has him whitewash a fence. Tom at first regards that as Work, but then he realizes the important truths described about, and he ends up making the other boys do his work by charging them to do it. As he tells Ben Rogers, “Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” (p. 14). That little question makes whitewashing a fence valuable, and Ben pays an apple for the privilege of whitewashing the fence. Other boys then also pay for the privilege of whitewashing the fence.

Elsewhere, Twain writes that the best and best-paid jobs are those that people would do for free: Writing, acting, etc.

By the way, in *Roughing It*, Mark Twain wrote about working as a common laborer in a quartz mill, where he refined silver ore into silver bricks. After a week of backbreaking labor, he went to his employer and said that although he had come to love the work, he felt that he could not continue working without a raise. The employer countered by saying that he was paying Mr. Twain \$10 a week, which he felt was a fair sum, and just how much of a raise did Mr. Twain want? Mark Twain replied that \$400,000 a month, and board, was all he could reasonably ask, considering the hard times. Of course, Mr. Twain was then ordered off the premises of the quartz mill.

CHAPTER 29: THE SMALLPOX HUT

• **What is smallpox? What does the term “waffle-iron face” (ch. 30, p. 295) mean? (Note: When referring to words as words, use quotation marks. For example, the term “waffle-face.”)**

Smallpox is a highly contagious disease that is capable of killing. People who survive have facial scars — something that the Yankee refers to as the “waffle-iron face” (ch. 30, p. 295). Smallpox has been eradicated nowadays, although there are fears that terrorists could spread the disease. (We have some vaccines, but in the event of a widespread epidemic many people would die.)

Smallpox is a disease that has been epidemic. It used to kill up to 40 percent of the people who contracted it.

The scientist Edward Jenner developed a vaccine for smallpox after observing that milkmaids who contracted cowpox developed immunity to smallpox.

In 1980, the World Health Organization declared that smallpox had been eradicated; today, only a few samples of the virus exist so that they can be scientifically studied.

Here are a few anecdotes about Edward Jenner and smallpox:

- Edward Jenner, the man who discovered a vaccine for smallpox, believed in experiments. Once a couple of friends were wondering which was the hottest part of a candle: the flame itself, or the area just above the flame? Mr. Jenner put his finger directly in the flame and held it there for a moment, then he moved his finger to the area just above the flame — and he removed his finger very quickly. He then said, “Gentlemen, the question is answered.” (Source: Ana María Rodríguez, *Edward Jenner: Conqueror of Smallpox*, pp. 40-42.)
- In the midst of a smallpox epidemic, the Rav of Karutchá, R’ Avraham Aharonson, was

urged to get a vaccination, but he refused to until his maid was vaccinated first. When the doctors pointed out that every minute without the vaccine was dangerous, the good Rabbi replied, “That’s exactly why I want the maid vaccinated first. Her life takes precedence over mine, because she is younger than I.” (Source: Shmuel Himelstein, *A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit*, pp. 135-136.)

- The last person to have a naturally occurring case of smallpox was Ali Maow Maalim, in 1977. He was a health worker in Marka, Somalia, his hometown, but he did not want to get a smallpox vaccination. He says, “I did not want to have an injection, so I rolled up my shirt, held a cotton ball over my upper arm, and strolled past the immunization team as though I’d already had the shot.” Soon afterward, he got smallpox. Mr. Maalim survived the smallpox, he continued to work in the health field, and he immunizes children against polio. He is able to use his personal experience with smallpox to do the good deed of convincing children to be immunized against polio. He says, “Because I had the sad experience of defying the vaccine and suffering as a result, I now work as a polio vaccine agent with W.H.O.” W.H.O. is the World Health Organization. He also says, “Somalia was the last country to have smallpox. I don’t want it to be the last with polio.” (Source: Ana María Rodríguez, *Edward Jenner: Conqueror of Smallpox*, pp. 99, 106-109.)

Science and medicine can definitely do good work. We don’t worry about smallpox nowadays.

- **Write a character analysis of King Arthur as he appears in this chapter.**

The king acts nobly in this chapter: The Yankee wants him to run away because there is smallpox in the hut, but the king refuses. On pp. 283-284, King Arthur says,

“Ye mean well, and ye speak not unwisely. But it were shame that a king should know fear, and shame that belted knight should withhold his hand where be such as need succor. Peace, I will not go. It is you who must go. The Church’s ban is not upon me, but it forbiddeth you to be here, and she will deal with you with a heavy hand an word come to her of your trespass.”

In this chapter, the king helps the dying woman. He goes upstairs, climbing a ladder, and brings down the woman’s oldest daughter, who is dying. In doing so, the king is risking his life because he has not had smallpox and so he is not immune to this highly contagious, often fatal disease.

Also, the King looks out for the Yankee. He doesn’t want the Yankee to get into trouble with the Church.

The Yankee has a lot of respect for King Arthur now. On pp. 285-286, we read:

Here was heroism at its last and loftiest possibility, its utmost summit; this was challenging death in the open field unarmed, with all the odds against the challenger, no reward set upon the contest, and no admiring world in silks and cloth of gold to gaze and applaud; and yet the king’s bearing was as serenely brave as it had always been in those cheaper contests where knight meets knight in equal fight and clothed in protecting steel. He was great now; sublimely great. The rude statues of his ancestors in his palace should have an addition — I would see to that; and it would not be a mailed king killing a giant or a dragon, like the rest, it would be a king in commoner’s garb bearing death in his

arms that a peasant mother might look her last upon her child and be comforted.

King Arthur risks his life to help this family.

• What bad things happen to the family in the hut in this chapter? What causes their misery?

Several bad things happen to the family in this chapter:

1) The lord of the manor planted fruit trees on the best part of their land — the part they grew their best crops on. The family was not allowed to crop the trees down. (The lord of the manor owns the land; the family are tenant farmers.)

2) Three of the trees were chopped down, and the family's three sons reported the crime to the lord of the manor, who arrested them and threw them into the dungeon.

3) When the crops were ready to be harvested — both the family's and the lord's — the family, now consisting of father, mother, and daughter, went to harvest the lord's crop. However, the lord would not allow the mother and two daughters to be counted as doing the work of the three sons, so he fined them daily.

4) Meanwhile, the family's own crop suffered because they had to work on the lord's crop. Therefore, the priest and the lord fined the family because the crop was not going to be as big as it should. The fines meant that the family's crop went to the priest and to the lord, and there was nothing left for the family.

5) The mother uttered blasphemies against the Church and the ways of the Church, and the Church cursed them, meaning that none could visit them.

Note: The “curse of Rome” is excommunication.

6) The family caught smallpox.

7) In the end, every member of the family in the hut dies.

• The “curse of Rome” falls upon the heads of the people in the smallpox hut. The “curse of Rome” is excommunication. What is excommunication?

Here is a definition of excommunication:

Excommunication is religious censure intended to deprive one of membership of a religious community.

Source: <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Excommunication>

Date Downloaded: 2 June 2004

The word “excommunication” means “out of communion.” A person who has been excommunicated cannot receive the Eucharist — that is, participate in Communion.

• If you feel like doing research, how is the situation of the family in the smallpox hut similar to the situation of tenant farmers following the Civil War? (Do not plagiarize.)

Here is some information about the situation of tenant farmers following the Civil War:

Cotton Farming System

The Civil War was not fought because of slavery. Slavery became an issue during the war. However, slavery did not survive the Civil War, legally anyway. But the plantation system of the south still existed. The farmers of the south no longer had access to the free labor they did prior to the south. However, they still managed to use the blacks to their advantage. The plantation system survived the war. What was slavery now became tenant farming. In those times tenant farmers were those who “paid rent to farm a portion of the plantation or sharecroppers who didn’t pay rent but turned over the lion’s share of the cotton they grew to the plantation owners, or field hands who worked for pennies a day.” The lifestyle and living conditions of some of these tenant farmers was sickening. Tenant farmers were black and white alike, but in central Alabama they were mostly black.

Source:

http://www.learn-to-question.com/vclass/seevak/groups/2001/sites/dees/background/tenant_farming.php

Date Downloaded: 27 March 2003

• In what way does Chapter 13 titled “Freemen!” foreshadow this chapter?

The family in the smallpox hut must obey the rules that the freemen must obey (which are described in Chapter 13).

Some of the rules that these so-called “freemen” have to obey include (pp. 110-111) — numbers added:

- 1) They were freemen, but they could not leave the estates of their lord or their bishop without his permission;
- 2) they could not prepare their own bread, but must have their corn ground and their bread baked at his mill and his bakery, and pay roundly for the same;
- 3) they could not sell a piece of their own property without paying him a handsome percentage of the proceeds, nor buy a piece of somebody else’s without remembering him in cash for the privilege;
- 4) they had to harvest his grain for him gratis, and be ready to come at a moment’s notice, leaving their own crop to destruction by the threatened storm;
- 5) they had to let him plant fruit trees in their fields, and then keep their indignation to themselves when his heedless fruit-gatherers trampled the grain around the trees;
- 6) they had to smother their anger when his hunting parties galloped through their fields laying waste the result of their patient toil;
- 7) they were not allowed to keep doves themselves, and when the swarms from my lord’s dovecote settled on their crops they must not lose their temper and kill a bird, for awful would the penalty be;
- 8) when the harvest was at last gathered, then came the procession of robbers to levy their blackmail upon it: first the Church carted off its fat tenth, then the king’s commissioner

took his twentieth, then my lord's people made a mighty inroad upon the remainder; after which, the skinned freeman had liberty to bestow the remnant in his barn, in case it was worth the trouble;

9) there were taxes, and taxes, and taxes, and more taxes, and taxes again, and yet other taxes — upon this free and independent pauper, but none upon his lord the baron or the bishop, none upon the wasteful nobility or the all-devouring Church;

10) if the baron would sleep unvexed, the freeman must sit up all night after his day's work and whip the ponds to keep the frogs quiet;

11) if the freeman's daughter — but no, that last infamy of monarchical government is unprintable; and

12) finally, if the freeman, grown desperate with his tortures, found his life unendurable under such conditions, and sacrificed it and fled to death for mercy and refuge, the gentle Church condemned him to eternal fire, the gentle law buried him at midnight at the cross-roads with a stake through his back, and his master the baron or the bishop confiscated all his property and turned his widow and his orphans out of doors.

CHAPTER 30: THE TRAGEDY OF THE MANOR HOUSE

• What is the difference between a lynching and a legal execution?

A criminal can be legally executed if he is found guilty in a court of law and if the proper authorities are in charge of the execution.

A lynching occurs when vigilantes execute a person, often without a proper trial having been held.

• Who murdered the lord of the manor?

The three sons of the family who died in the smallpox hut broke out of prison and murdered the lord of the manor, and then they set the manor on fire. Later, we discover that these three men are relatives — cousins — of Marco the coal burner and his wife (pp. 298-299).

• How many prisoners died that night?

On p. 296, we read:

His report was revolting enough. Eighteen persons hanged or butchered, and two yeomen and thirteen prisoners lost in the fire.

“And how many prisoners were there altogether in the vaults?”

“Thirteen.”

“Then every one of them was lost?”

“Yes, all.”

“But the people arrived in time to save the family; how is it they could save none of the prisoners?”

The man looked puzzled, and said:

“Would one unlock the vaults at such a time? Marry, some would have escaped.”

“Then you mean that nobody did unlock them?”

“None went near them, either to lock or unlock. It standeth to reason that the bolts were fast; wherefore it was only needful to establish a watch, so that if any broke the bonds he might not escape, but be taken. None were taken.”

• The terror of the mob in this chapter is like the terror of lynch mobs in the 19th and 20th centuries in the United States. If you are willing to do some research, describe one or more lynchings that have taken place in the United States. (Very disturbing photographs of lynchings can be found at <http://withoutsanctuary.org>.)

On p. 296, we read:

His report was revolting enough. Eighteen persons hanged or butchered, and two yeomen and thirteen prisoners lost in the fire.

Photographs of lynchings can be found at this WWW site:

<http://withoutsanctuary.org>

Here is part of an online summary of “The Press and Lynchings of African Americans,” *Journal of Black Studies*, January, 2000, pp. 315-330, by Richard M. Perloff.

In July, 1930, newspapermen poked around Emelle, Alabama, trying to ferret out details of the lynching of a Black man, as well as several other slayings. A few White residents who had been on hand when the men were killed refused to talk about the events to reporters from *The Tuscaloosa News*. “What the hell are you newspaper men doing here?” asked a White man who had been part of the vigilante group. “We’re just killing a few negroes that we’ve waited too damn long about leaving for the buzzards. That’s not news” (Raper, 1933, p. 67). [...]

Newspapers in every region of the country provided graphic coverage of lynchings, especially those that occurred in their area. “When discussing a lynching in their particular area,” notes Wright (1990) in a study of racial violence in Kentucky, “local newspapers gave all of the grisly details and, significantly, would often point out that the lynching was not the first one that had happened in their area” (p. 5). Major newspapers or metropolitan dailies sometimes described lynchings that occurred outside their geographical area. For example, the February 2, 1893 issue of *The New York Times*, under the headline “ANOTHER NEGRO BURNED,” described the grisly details of the lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas. Readers learned that Smith was placed on a 10 foot-high scaffold and was tortured for 50 minutes by red-hot irons thrust against his body, after which he was set on fire and transformed from a human being to charred human remains.

Source: <http://academic.csuohio.edu/perloffr/lynching/>

Date Downloaded: 27 March 2003

Many civil rights activists were also murdered during the 20th century.

• **The song “Strange Fruit” by Billie Holiday is about lynchings. Think of a man hanging from a tree and you will know what the “strange fruit” is. If you feel like doing research, Google “Strange Fruit Lyrics,” then write about the meaning of the lyrics. (Don’t plagiarize.)**

Here are the lyrics to “Strange Fruit”:

STRANGE FRUIT LYRICS

By Lewis Allen

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.
Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.
Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Here are a few anecdotes about Billie Holiday:

• In 1948 — back in the Jim Crow days — Gene Norman hired an assistant to promote a concert by the great African-American jazz singer Billie Holiday. The assistant received a telephone call by the entertainment editor of a newspaper, who asked, “What color is Billie Holiday? I can’t tell for sure from this mat you sent me, and you know, we don’t run pictures of colored people.” The assistant was stunned, and she let Mr. Norman handle the call. Mr. Norman told the entertainment editor, “The last time I saw Miss Holiday, sir, she was a lovely shade of soft purple with the most exquisite orange polka dots I’ve ever seen,” then he hung up the telephone. (Source: Leonard Feather and Jack Tracy, *Laughter from the Hip: The Lighter Side of Jazz*, p. 99.)

• Billie Holiday’s song “Strange Fruit” was an anti-lynching song — the “strange fruit” of the title was a reference to corpses of lynched African-Americans hanging from trees. Some people, including her mother, worried that the song would stir up trouble for her, but Billie said, “Listen, I’m proud to be singing an anti-lynching song. Someday there’ll be a better world for our people.” Her mother said, “Perhaps, but you won’t be alive to

see it.” Billie replied, “Maybe not, but when it happens I’m going to be dancing in my grave.” (Source: Kate Mostel and Madeline Gilford, *170 Years of Show Business*, p. 95.)

- **Why did the coal burner take part in the terror of the mob?**

The coal burner took part in lynching his neighbors because if he had not done so, he might have been among the people lynched. He and the others had to pretend to be sad that the cruel lord of the manor was dead although they were very happy that he was dead.

On p. 299, Marco says to the disguised Yankee,

“Even though you be a spy, and your words a trap for my undoing, yet are they such refreshment that to hear them again and others like to them, I would go to the gallows happy, as having had one good feast at least in a starved life. And I will say my say now, and ye may report it if ye be so minded. I helped to hang my neighbors for that it were peril to my own life to show lack of zeal in the master’s cause; the others helped for none other reason. All rejoice today that he is dead, but all do go about seemingly sorrowing, and shedding the hypocrite’s tear, for in that lies safety. I have said the words, I have said the words! the only ones that have ever tasted good in my mouth, and the reward of that taste is sufficient. Lead on, an ye will, be it even to the scaffold, for I am ready.”

CHAPTER 31: MARCO

- **At the beginning of chapter 31, how do the various castes react to each other? How does the coal burner react to a shaven monk, to a gentleman, and to a slave?**

See the relevant illustrations in the chapter. On p. 302, we read (emphasis added):

We strolled along in a sufficiently indolent fashion now, and talked. We must dispose of about the amount of time it ought to take to go to the little hamlet of Abblasoure and put justice on the track of those murderers and get back home again. And meantime I had an auxiliary interest which had never paled yet, never lost its novelty for me since I had been in Arthur’s kingdom: the behavior — born of nice and exact subdivisions of caste — of chance passers-by toward each other. Toward the shaven monk who trudged along with his cowl tilted back and the sweat washing down his fat jowls, the coal-burner was deeply reverent; to the gentleman he was abject; with the small farmer and the free mechanic he was cordial and gossipy; and when a slave passed by with a countenance respectfully lowered, this chap’s nose was in the air — he couldn’t even see him. **Well, there are times when one would like to hang the whole human race and finish the farce.**

Here is an anecdote that illustrates the farce:

Baron Rothschild was a tremendously wealthy man. In the days before toilets, people used chamber pots. One day, a servant carried Baron Rothschild’s chamber pot away from his office in his bank. A customer of the bank saw the Rothschild chamber pot and took off his hat to show his respect. (Source: Ron Chernow, *The Death of the Banker*, p. 11.)

- **Near the beginning of this chapter, we see an example of children being influenced by the actions of the adults around them. What happens?**

The king and the Yankee come across a group of children who are “scared and shrieking” (p.

302). The children are aware of the events of the previous night — when innocent people were hunted down and hanged — and so they have been playing at hanging, too. They have strung up one of their little playmates, and he is kicking and trying to save himself. On p. 303, we read:

It was some more human nature; the admiring little folk imitating their elders; they were playing mob, and had achieved a success which promised to be a good deal more serious than they had bargained for.

This incident shows the importance of training in one's life. One can be trained the right way, or one can be trained the wrong way. Training — education — is important.

• **What stratagem does the Yankee use to buy new clothing for Marco and his wife? Who does he say King Arthur is?**

The Yankee engages in some good problem-solving here. He wishes to buy Marco and his wife some clothing, but he needs to find a way to do it without causing them embarrassment. Therefore, he says that the king (in disguise as a farmer) has been very pleased with his entertainment and with the Marcos' hospitality, and so the king wants the Yankee to buy the Marcos a new suit of clothing each and not let the Marcos know that the king paid for the clothing.

It's interesting to note that both Marco and his wife have one suit of clothing apiece. Camelot has much poverty. In addition, we remember that Tom Sawyer has only two suits of clothing: one to wear on Sundays; the other to wear all the other days of the week.

My own mother was very poor when she grew up in the South. She had only one suit of clothing: a dress. One day a week, her mother did laundry, and my mother stood behind a door until the dress has been washed and dried. One day, her boyfriend came over to visit while she was standing behind the door.

The Yankee tells Marco that the king is a well-to-do farmer.

By the way, famous comedian Fanny Brice made lots of money. She wished to give very expensive clothing to a friend named Ann Pennington who had retired from show business and did not make lots of money, but she did not want her friend to feel bad about accepting very expensive gifts. Therefore, Fanny would buy Ann expensive clothing, but she would rip out the labels of the designer clothing and sew in their place the labels of less expensive brands.

CHAPTER 32: DOWLEY'S HUMILIATION

• **Write a character analysis of Dowley.**

Dowley considers himself a self-made man, and therefore he is boastful and proud. He started out as almost a slave. He was an orphan, and he worked hard for his master — working 16 to 18 hours a day and being fed only enough black bread to keep him alive. However, he grew lucky. The local blacksmith offered to take him on as an apprentice for nine years. During that time, he had no new clothing, but the blacksmith gave him new clothing when Dowley graduated from the apprenticeship.

Dowley is boastful. He brags, or has others brag for him (p. 315):

• “Two times in every month there is fresh meat upon my table.”

- “... and eight times salt meat.”
- “On my table appeareth white bread every Sunday in the year.”
- “Ye have five stools, and of the sweetest workmanship at that, albeit your family is but three.”
- “And six wooden goblets, and six platters of wood and two of pewter to eat and drink from withal.”

However, Dowley says that he is not proud (p. 316):

“Now ye know what manner of man I am, brother Jones,” said the smith, with a fine and friendly condescension, “and doubtless ye would look to find me a man jealous of his due of respect and but sparing of outgo to strangers till their rating and quality be assured, but trouble yourself not, as concerning that; wit ye well ye shall find me a man that regardeth not these matters but is willing to receive any he as his fellow and equal that carrieth a right heart in his body, be his worldly estate howsoever modest. And in token of it, here is my hand; and I say with my own mouth we are equals — equals” — and he smiled around on the company with the satisfaction of a god who is doing the handsome and gracious thing and is quite well aware of it.

• **How is Dowley humiliated?**

Dowley has been acting stuck up, although he thinks that he is being humble. For example, he has been boasting about his fresh meat on his table twice a month. He actually is humbled when Marco and his wife bring out their new possessions and this feast.

On pp. 316-317, we read:

The dame brought out the table now, and set it under the tree. It caused a visible stir of surprise, it being brand new and a sumptuous article of deal. But the surprise rose higher still when the dame, with a body oozing easy indifference at every pore, but eyes that gave it all away by absolutely flaming with vanity, slowly unfolded an actual simon-pure tablecloth and spread it. That was a notch above even the blacksmith’s domestic grandeurs, and it hit him hard; you could see it. But Marco was in Paradise; you could see that, too. Then the dame brought two fine new stools — whew! that was a sensation; it was visible in the eyes of every guest. Then she brought two more — as calmly as she could. Sensation again — with awed murmurs. Again she brought two — walking on air, she was so proud. The guests were petrified, and the mason muttered:

“There is that about earthly pomps which doth ever move to reverence.”

As the dame turned away, Marco couldn’t help slapping on the climax while the thing was hot; so he said with what was meant for a languid composure but was a poor imitation of it:

“These suffice; leave the rest.”

So there were more yet! It was a fine effect. I couldn’t have played the hand better myself.

From this out, the madam piled up the surprises with a rush that fired the general astonishment up to a hundred and fifty in the shade, and at the same time paralyzed expression of it down to gasped “Oh’s” and “Ah’s,” and mute upliftings of hands and eyes. She fetched crockery — new, and plenty of it; new wooden goblets and other table furniture; and beer, fish, chicken, a goose, eggs, roast beef, roast mutton, a ham, a small roast pig, and a wealth of genuine white wheaten bread. Take it by and large, that spread laid everything far and away in the shade that ever that crowd had seen before. And while they sat there just simply stupefied with wonder and awe, I sort of waved my hand as if by accident, and the storekeeper’s son emerged from space and said he had come to collect.

Dowley’s humiliation is complete when the Yankee pays nearly \$4 for the meal — a huge sum at the time.

On p. 319, we read:

Ah, well, it was immense; yes, it was a daisy. I don’t know that I ever put a situation together better, or got happier spectacular effects out of the materials available. The blacksmith — well, he was simply mashed. Land! I wouldn’t have felt what that man was feeling, for anything in the world. Here he had been blowing and bragging about his grand meat-feast twice a year, and his fresh meat twice a month, and his salt meat twice a week, and his white bread every Sunday the year round — all for a family of three; the entire cost for the year not above 69.2.6 (sixty-nine cents, two mills and six milrays), and all of a sudden here comes along a man who slashes out nearly four dollars on a single blow-out; and not only that, but acts as if it made him tired to handle such small sums. Yes, Dowley was a good deal wilted, and shrunk-up and collapsed; he had the aspect of a bladder-balloon that’s been stepped on by a cow.

• **Write a character analysis of Marco and his wife.**

1) Marco and his wife are poor.

They have but one suit of clothing each — clothing which has been much mended.

2) Marco and his wife have the human failing of pride.

When the Yankee buys them a dinner with which to entertain their friends — and a lot of nice things besides — they are not above putting on airs.

3) Marco and his wife are conformists.

Marco took part in the slaying of innocent neighbors in the terrorism that followed the murder of the lord of the manor and the burning of the manor. They show deference to Dowley, the blacksmith, because he has some money and material possessions. They also show deference to the Yankee and the King because they have money.

4) Marco and his wife are downtrodden.

They are oppressed by the lord of the manor and help to avenge his death although they are happy that he is dead.

5) Marco and his wife are generous.

They help the Yankee and the king, although they are not wealthy enough to offer much.

Note: Marco's wife is named Phyllis.

CHAPTER 33: SIXTH CENTURY POLITICAL ECONOMY

• **What is the best way to determine whether one's salary is high or low: the amount of money you make, or the amount of goods and services you can buy with the money?**

The best way is by the amount of goods and services you can buy with the money.

The difference is between nominal value and relative value.

The cost of living is important. It is cheaper to live in rural Ohio than to live in New York City. You will make more money in New York City, but it will cost you more to live.

However, the Yankee never succeeds in making Dowley see that the best way to determine whether one's salary is high or low is by the amount of goods and services you can buy with the money. Dowley simply looks at the total amount of money. Dowley believes that if one person makes \$50 a day and another person doing the same job makes \$100 a day, then obviously the second person is making more than the first person.

Of course, that's true — as far as it goes. However, the Yankee would say that it doesn't go far enough. For example, if the person making \$50 a day lives in a country with free trade and the person making \$100 a day lives in a country with protectionism, the first person (who makes \$50 a day) may have a higher salary than the second person (who makes \$100 a day).

For example, in the free-trade society, a coat may cost \$25, whereas in the protectionist society, a coat may cost \$100. The person making \$50 a day in the free-trade society can buy a coat for half of a day's salary, whereas the person making \$100 a day in the protectionist society has to work a full day in order to buy the same coat. Therefore, the person making \$50 a day in the free-trade society is making twice as much as the person making \$100 a day in the protectionist society.

The Yankee makes a good point here. The amount of money isn't as important as what you can buy with it. During times of hyper-inflation, it may take a wheelbarrow full of money to buy a loaf of bread.

• **Is the Yankee in favor of free trade or protectionism? Why?**

The Yankee is in favor of free trade because it lowers prices. (Think of the inexpensive stuff from China that you can buy at Walmart.)

Here are definitions of "protectionism" and "free trade":

protectionism

The government's placing of duties or quotas on imports to protect domestic industries from global competition.

Source: <http://www.investorwords.com/cgi-bin/getword.cgi?3913>

Date Downloaded: 27 March 2003

free trade

International business not restrained by government interference or regulation, such as duties.

Source: <http://www.investorwords.com/cgi-bin/getword.cgi?2090>

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• Is the Yankee in favor of labor unions?

Yes. He is in favor of a union of workers but not in favor of a union of business owners. Who should set wages? If the business owners do it, the wages will be lower. If the workers do it, the wages will be higher. The Yankee thinks that workers should help set their own salary. (They can do that through strikes.)

On p. 330, we read (the Yankee speaks first):

“[...] Brother Dowley, who is it that determines, every spring, what the particular wage of each kind of mechanic, laborer, and servant shall be for that year?”

“Sometimes the courts, sometimes the town council; but most of all, the magistrate. Ye may say, in general terms, it is the magistrate that fixes the wages.”

“Doesn’t ask any of those poor devils to *help* him fix their wages for them, does he?”

“Hm! That *were* an idea! The master that’s to pay him the money is the one that’s rightly concerned in that matter, ye will notice.”

“Yes — but I thought the other man might have some little trifle at stake in it, too; and even his wife and children, poor creatures. The masters are these: nobles, rich men, the prosperous generally. These few, who do no work, determine what pay the vast hive shall have who do work. You see? They’re a ‘combine’ — a trade union, to coin a new phrase — who band themselves together to force their lowly brother to take what they choose to give. Thirteen hundred years hence — so says the unwritten law — the ‘combine’ will be the other way, and then how these fine people’s posterity will fume and fret and grit their teeth over the insolent tyranny of trade unions! Yes, indeed! the magistrate will tranquilly arrange the wages from now clear away down into the nineteenth century; and then all of a sudden the wage-earner will consider that a couple of thousand years or so is enough of this one-sided sort of thing; and he will rise up and take a hand in fixing his wages himself. Ah, he will have a long and bitter account of wrong and humiliation to settle.”

Strikes are a useful weapon for unions to employ to get better wages for members.

• What is a pillory, and what happens to people in a pillory?

A stock is a wooden board in which one or more semicircles have been cut out on one side. A set of stocks is two stocks that have been put together so that the semicircles form circles. The circles are the places where a person’s head or hands or feet can be placed so that the person is restrained. A simple kind of stocks is hinged on one side and has a lock on the other side. A pillory is a set of stocks that has been fixed to a post. All of us have probably seen a pillory in which a person stands with his head and hands fixed in the stocks.

On pp. 331-332, we read (the Yankee speaks first and Dowley answers):

“What usually happens when a poor fellow is put in the pillory for some little offense that didn’t amount to anything in the world? The mob try to have some fun with him, don’t they?”

“Yes.”

“They begin by clodding him; and they laugh themselves to pieces to see him try to dodge one clod and get hit with another?”

“Yes.”

“Then they throw dead cats at him, don’t they?”

“Yes.”

“Well, then, suppose he has a few personal enemies in that mob and here and there a man or a woman with a secret grudge against him — and suppose especially that he is unpopular in the community, for his pride, or his prosperity, or one thing or another — stones and bricks take the place of clods and cats presently, don’t they?”

“There is no doubt of it.”

“As a rule he is crippled for life, isn’t he? — jaws broken, teeth smashed out? — or legs mutilated, gangrened, presently cut off? — or an eye knocked out, maybe both eyes?”

“It is true, God knoweth it.”

“And if he is unpopular he can depend on dying, right there in the stocks, can’t he?”

“He surely can! One may not deny it.”

In the explanatory notes on p. 473, we read:

Mark Twain learned from Lecky that “The punishment of the pillory, which was very common, seemed especially adapted to encourage the brutality of the populace, and there are several instances of culprits who perished from the usage they underwent.” In chapter 28 of *The Prince and the Pauper*, the mob shows its respect for the pilloried Miles Hendon by not abusing him.

By the way, at one time, homosexuals in Europe could be punished by being pilloried — put in an apparatus that held tightly the homosexual’s head and hands so he or she could not move. Enterprising capitalists sometimes sold such items as small dead animals and rotten fruits and vegetables so they could be thrown at whoever was imprisoned in the pillory. (Source: Marilyn Tower Oliver, *Gay and Lesbian Rights: A Struggle*, pp. 16-17.)

CHAPTER 34: THE YANKEE AND KING SOLD AS SLAVES

• **What mistakes do the Yankee and the king make in chapters 32-34 that result in the Marcos and the Marcos’ guests distrusting them?**

They make three major mistakes:

1) In Chapter 32: “Dowley’s Humiliation,” the Yankee makes the mistake of flashing around his money. To humiliate Dowley, who has been boasting about his good fortune, the Yankee settles his bill, which comes to almost \$4. In addition, he tells the person collecting the money to keep the change — nine cents. This causes a commotion, since a skilled workman such as a “mechanic ... carpenter, dauber, mason, painter, blacksmith, wheelwright, and the like” get 50 milrays or a half-cent a day for their work.

Note: A milray is a small amount of money. One hundred milrays equal one cent; therefore, a milray is 1/100 of a cent.

2) In Chapter 33: “Sixth Century Political Economy,” the Yankee makes the mistake of letting the others know that he knows that the penalty for overpaying a worker (as Dowley has done — he has paid 115 milrays a day when the law allows him to pay only 100 milrays a day) is to be fined and pilloried. In addition, the penalty for not informing on an employer who has overpaid his workers is to be fined and pilloried. This makes Marco, Dowley, and the others uneasy because they know that if the Yankee informs on them, they will be fined and pilloried — and some people who are pilloried stop living.

3) In Chapter 34: “The Yankee And King Sold As Slaves,” the king, who is pretending to be a farmer, makes a mistake by talking about agriculture and therefore showing his ignorance about it. Earlier, in Chapter 31: “Marco,” the Yankee had tried to prepare Marco for the king’s ignorance of agriculture by saying (p. 309):

“[...] Why, sometimes when he forgets himself and gets to blowing off, you’d think he was one of the swells of the earth; and you might listen to him a hundred years and never take him for a farmer — especially if he talked agriculture. He thinks he’s a Sheol of a farmer; thinks he’s old Grayback from Wayback; but between you and me privately he don’t know as much about farming as he does about running a kingdom — still, whatever he talks about, you want to drop your underjaw and listen, the same as if you had never heard such incredible wisdom in all your life before, and were afraid you might die before you got enough of it. That will please Jones.”

Of course, this is foreshadowing. By the way, the king really does show his ignorance about farming. On p. 337, we read:

the onion is but an unwholesome berry when stricken early from the tree

On p. 338, we read:

plums and other like cereals do be always dug in the unripe state

Unfortunately, despite the Yankee’s attempt earlier to persuade Marco to ignore the king’s ignorance, Marco and the others are convinced that the king is mad and that the Yankee would inform on them, so they start fighting the king and the Yankee.

• **What is a miller-gun?**

On pp. 336-337, we read:

I never saw such an awkward people, with machinery; you see, they were totally unused to it. The miller-gun was a little double-barreled tube of toughened glass, with a neat little trick of a spring to it, which upon pressure would let a shot escape. But the shot wouldn’t

hurt anybody, it would only drop into your hand. In the gun were two sizes — wee mustard-seed shot, and another sort that were several times larger. They were money. The mustard-seed shot represented milrays, the larger ones mills. So the gun was a purse; and very handy, too; you could pay out money in the dark with it, with accuracy; and you could carry it in your mouth; or in your vest pocket, if you had one. I made them of several sizes — one size so large that it would carry the equivalent of a dollar. Using shot for money was a good thing for the government; the metal cost nothing, and the money couldn't be counterfeited, for I was the only person in the kingdom who knew how to manage a shot tower. "Paying the shot" soon came to be a common phrase. Yes, and I knew it would still be passing men's lips, away down in the nineteenth century, yet none would suspect how and when it originated.

• Who was Horatius?

When the Yankee and the King are in the tree, the Yankee acts like Horatius. That is, he defends the bridging bough (branch) leading from one tree to another tree — the tree that the Yankee and the King are on. Meanwhile, the King defends against fellows climbing the tree trunk.

Here is some information about Horatius:

- Horatius Cocles (Horatius the One-Eyed) was a famous Roman soldier.
- Lars Porsenna, an Etruscan king, attacked Rome in the 6th century BCE.
- The Romans, who had recently overthrown their monarch (in 509 BCE) gathered behind the walls of the city.
- A vulnerable spot was the Sublician bridge, which was made of wood, over the Tiber River.
- Horatius was guarding this bridge when the Etruscans appeared. His soldiers wanted to retreat behind the walls of Rome, but he convinced them to stay and destroy the bridge so that the Etruscans could not use it.
- Horatius guarded the bridge as his soldiers destroyed it. Two soldiers joined him, but when the bridge was almost destroyed, Horatius told them to cross the bridge to safety. This meant that Horatius alone faced the Etruscan army.
- The Etruscans had held back, impressed by the bravery of Horatius, but now they attacked Horatius just as the bridge fell. Horatius jumped into the river while wearing armor. One version of the story says that he drowned. Another version of the story says that he made it to Rome, where he was rewarded with land. Either way, the Romans regarded him as a hero and told his story to their children.

Livy tells his story in his *History of Rome*, Volume 1, Book 2, Paragraph 10:

[2.10] On the appearance of the enemy the country people fled into the City as best they could. The weak places in the defences were occupied by military posts; elsewhere the walls and the Tiber were deemed sufficient protection. The enemy would have forced their way over the Sublician bridge had it not been for one man, Horatius Cocles. The good fortune of Rome provided him as her bulwark on that memorable day. He happened to be on guard at the bridge when he saw the Janiculum taken by a sudden assault and the

enemy rushing down from it to the river, whilst his own men, a panic-struck mob, were deserting their posts and throwing away their arms. He reproached them one after another for their cowardice, tried to stop them, appealed to them in heaven's name to stand, declared that it was in vain for them to seek safety in flight whilst leaving the bridge open behind them, there would very soon be more of the enemy on the Palatine and the Capitol than there were on the Janiculum. So he shouted to them to break down the bridge by sword or fire, or by whatever means they could, he would meet the enemies' attack so far as one man could keep them at bay. He advanced to the head of the bridge. Amongst the fugitives, whose backs alone were visible to the enemy, he was conspicuous as he fronted them armed for fight at close quarters. The enemy were astounded at his preternatural courage. Two men were kept by a sense of shame from deserting him — Sp. Lartius and T. Herminius — both of them men of high birth and renowned courage. With them he sustained the first tempestuous shock and wild confused onset, for a brief interval. Then, whilst only a small portion of the bridge remained and those who were cutting it down called upon them to retire, he insisted upon these, too, retreating. Looking round with eyes dark with menace upon the Etruscan chiefs, he challenged them to single combat, and reproached them all with being the slaves of tyrant kings, and whilst unmindful of their own liberty coming to attack that of others. For some time they hesitated, each looking round upon the others to begin. At length shame roused them to action, and raising a shout they hurled their javelins from all sides on their solitary foe. He caught them on his outstretched shield, and with unshaken resolution kept his place on the bridge with firmly planted foot. They were just attempting to dislodge him by a charge when the crash of the broken bridge and the shout which the Romans raised at seeing the work completed stayed the attack by filling them with sudden panic. Then Cocles said, "Tiberinus, holy father, I pray thee to receive into thy propitious stream these arms and this thy warrior." So, fully armed, he leaped into the Tiber, and though many missiles fell over him he swam across in safety to his friends: an act of daring more famous than credible with posterity. The State showed its gratitude for such courage; his statue was set up in the Comitium, and as much land given to him as he could drive the plough round in one day. Besides this public honour, the citizens individually showed their feeling; for, in spite of the great scarcity, each, in proportion to his means, sacrificed what he could from his own store as a gift to Cocles.

Source: <http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/txt/ah/Livy/Livy02.html>

Date Downloaded: 21 January 2009

Translator: Rev. Canon Roberts

Editor: Ernest Rhys

Publisher: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1905

• **How do the King Arthur and the Boss become slaves?**

The Lord Grip orders them to be sold as slaves. Because they can't prove that they are free, they are sold.

• **Why is it ironic that an orator speaks about "glorious British liberties" (p. 345) in this chapter?**

Once again, Twain is satirizing his own 19th century.

It is ironic that because an orator is speaking about “glorious British liberties” when the Yankee and the King are handcuffed together and are to be sold as slaves.

In the explanatory notes, on p. 473, we read about “glorious British liberties”:

Charles Ball, from whose autobiography Mark Twain took most of his description of the slave band, was sold on the Fourth of July, following an afternoon of songs sung “in honor of liberty” and speeches celebrating the “acknowledged principle of our free government, that all men were created free and equal” (chapter 5).

• When the Yankee and the King are accused of being slaves, why isn’t evidence brought forth that they are slaves? What kinds of evidence are the Yankee and the King supposed to bring forth? Is it fair to be thought guilty of something until you can prove that you are not guilty?

On pp. 345-346, we read:

Slaves! The word had a new sound — and how unspeakably awful! The king lifted his manacles and brought them down with a deadly force; but my lord was out of the way when they arrived. A dozen of the rascal’s servants sprang forward, and in a moment we were helpless, with our hands bound behind us. We so loudly and so earnestly proclaimed ourselves freemen, that we got the interested attention of that liberty-mouthing orator and his patriotic crowd, and they gathered about us and assumed a very determined attitude. The orator said:

“If, indeed, ye are freemen, ye have nought to fear — the God-given liberties of Britain are about ye for your shield and shelter! (Applause.) Ye shall soon see. Bring forth your proofs.”

“What proofs?”

“Proof that ye are freemen.”

Ah — I remembered! I came to myself; I said nothing. But the king stormed out:

“Thou’rt insane, man. It were better, and more in reason, that this thief and scoundrel here prove that we are not freemen.”

You see, he knew his own laws just as other people so often know the laws; by words, not by effects. They take a meaning, and get to be very vivid, when you come to apply them to yourself.

All hands shook their heads and looked disappointed; some turned away, no longer interested. The orator said — and this time in the tones of business, not of sentiment:

“An ye do not know your country’s laws, it were time ye learned them. Ye are strangers to us; ye will not deny that. Ye may be freemen, we do not deny that; but also ye may be slaves. The law is clear: it doth not require the claimant to prove ye are slaves, it requireth you to prove ye are not.”

Note: *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines

“villein” in this way:

One of a class of feudal serfs who held the legal status of freemen in their dealings with all people except their lord.

In the explanatory notes, on p. 473, we read:

In the list of sources he kept in his notebook for an appendix to *A Connecticut Yankee*, Mark Twain wrote “‘*Prove that ye be free*’. Rich II and Ch. Ball.” In his chapter on the peasant revolt during Richard II’s reign, Green observes, “The strife between labor and capital was going on as fiercely as ever in country and in town. The landlords were claiming new services, or forcing men who looked on themselves as free to prove they were no villeins by law.” [...] Ball tells us of being kidnapped and returned to slavery after he had freed himself. When he takes his case to an attorney, he is told that he must have witnesses to prove his freedom. “I rejoined, that it seemed hard that I must be compelled to prove myself a freeman: and that it would appear more consonant to reason that my master should prove me to be a slave. He, however, assured me that this was not the law of Georgia, where every man of color was presumed to be a slave until he could prove that he was free.”

Once again, Twain is satirizing his own 19th century. On p. 346, we read (emphasis added):

There is no use in stringing out the details. The earl put us up and sold us at auction. **This same infernal law had existed in our own South in my own time, more than thirteen hundred years later, and under it hundreds of freemen who could not prove that they were freemen had been sold into lifelong slavery without the circumstance making any particular impression upon me; but the minute law and the auction block came into my personal experience, a thing which had been merely improper before became suddenly hellish.** Well, that’s the way we are made.

CHAPTER 35: A PITIFUL INCIDENT

• **One injustice that takes place in chapter 35 is the burning of a woman accused of being a witch. Which laws could be passed to prevent such injustices in the future?**

A woman who is accused of being a witch is burned at the stake. By the way, this burning warms the slaves and keeps them alive on a cold night.

For an example of witch burning, we need go no further than the Salem witch trials in our own country. However, many witches were burned throughout Europe. In the explanatory notes on p. 473, we read:

In the manuscript and twice in his notebook, Mark Twain identified Lecky’s *Eighteenth Century* as his source for the witch burning. Lecky refers to “hundreds of wretched women [having] been burnt,” but there are marked dissimilarities between Hank’s tale and the case Lecky uses to exemplify witch hunting: the execution of Jane Corphar, a Scottish woman who was tortured into confessing herself a witch, then lynched by a mob.

To prevent these kinds of evils from happening, we can:

1) Not rely on spectral and intangible evidence in trials.

- 2) Educate people about science.
- 3) Have punishments that fit the crime.

The 8th Amendment protects modern Americans from punishments such as burning at the stake:

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

• Another injustice that takes place in chapter 35 is the execution of a woman who has stolen a piece of cloth to sell. Which laws could be passed to prevent such injustices in the future?

A starving woman who stole a piece of linen worth half a cent is hung. Fortunately, a priest takes care of her infant for her.

Twain also used a historical source for the story of the hanging for a minor crime. In the explanatory notes on p. 474, we read:

Mark Twain borrowed the story of the woman who was driven to steal a bit of cloth when her husband was impressed, and who was taken to be hanged with a child at her breast, from Lecky's *Eighteenth Century*. He adapted the story of the plaintiff who dies of remorse after hearing the penalty from *The Eighteenth Century* as well. On the same page he found a description of the procession from Newgate prison to the gallows at Tyburn, and drew on it to characterize the crowd that accompanies the condemned woman. He noted his source in the list he kept for his planned appendix.

The woman's husband was impressed (drafted) into military service, so he could not provide for her and their infant.

Here is a definition of "impressment":

the name given in English to the exercise of the authority of the state to "press" or compel the service of the subject for the defence of the realm.

Source: <http://68.1911encyclopedia.org/I/IM/IMPRESSMENT.htm>

Date Downloaded: 29 March 2003

To avoid these kinds of evils from happening, we can:

- 1) Improve impressment of soldiers and sailors — or abolish it.
- 2) Have welfare.
- 3) Have punishments that fit the crime.

• Obviously, this novel is very hard on the Roman Catholic Church as an institution and as the sole and very powerful religion in England. But individual priests who work with the people are often very kind. Write a character analysis of the priest who is present at the hanging of the woman with the infant.

On p. 357, we read:

“Oh, my child, my darling, it will die! It has no home, it has no father, no friend, no mother —”

“It has them all!” said that good priest. “All these will I be to it till I die.”

You should have seen her face then! Gratitude? Lord, what do you want with words to express that? Words are only painted fire; a look is the fire itself. She gave that look, and carried it away to the treasury of heaven, where all things that are divine belong.

Mark Twain respects priests who do good deeds and work with the common people. His kind of religion centers not on organized churches or on dogma, but on the doing of good. Note the non-satiric reference to Heaven in this passage.

• Based on what you have read so far, what kind of religion is the Yankee in favor of? Is he in favor of freedom of religion?

The Yankee is Protestant — Presbyterian. He is not opposed to religion, but he is opposed to having one established religion. He is in favor of freedom of religion, and he does establish several competing Protestant sects. The Yankee is opposed to the Church’s playing power politics, but he is in favor of priests who do good deeds and work with the common people. The Yankee favors social justice in preference to dogma.

• King Arthur decides to abolish slavery in his kingdom. Why?

On pp. 352-353, we read:

We had a rough time for a month, tramping to and fro in the earth, and suffering. And what Englishman was the most interested in the slavery question by that time? His grace the king! Yes; from being the most indifferent, he was become the most interested. He was become the bitterest hater of the institution I had ever heard talk. And so I ventured to ask once more a question which I had asked years before and had gotten such a sharp answer that I had not thought it prudent to meddle in the matter further. Would he abolish slavery?

His answer was as sharp as before, but it was music this time; I shouldn’t ever wish to hear pleasanter, though the profanity was not good, being awkwardly put together, and with the crash-word almost in the middle instead of at the end, where, of course, it ought to have been.

The king is very willing to abolish slavery now because he has had a taste of it. Previously, he was in favor of slavery, but now he hates it with his whole being.

Satirist Michael Moore suggests that if rich Republicans need something that they will get it, so he hopes that they will need the same things we need. Therefore, he hopes that bad things will befall rich Republicans. For example, many liberals want abortion to be legal. One way for abortion to become legal if lots of daughters of rich Republicans become pregnant and need an abortion.

This, of course, is an example of reversibility. If you want to know whether an action is moral one strategy to tell is to reverse it. What you are thinking of doing to others, is it something that

you would want done to you? King Arthur was willing for other people to be slaves, but he is unwilling to be a slave himself. Once he experiences being a slave, he is against anyone being made a slave.

Abraham Lincoln was aware of reversibility:

- “Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.” — Abraham Lincoln. (Source: Bob Dole, *Great Presidential Wit*, p. 41.)

Mark Twain knows, of course, about writing well. He criticizes the king’s answer by saying that the crash-word (the important word — or words) should be at the end, rather than in almost the middle. This is true of one-liners:

- I miss your absence.
- I remember when yoga was called Twister.
- Early mornings are great for spending time with the family. Then they spoil it by waking up.
- Wine improves with age. I improve with wine.

Source: <https://twitter.com/funnyoneliners>

Date Accessed: 27 August 2013

CHAPTER 36: AN ENCOUNTER IN THE DARK

- **The first edition had a portrait of the slave driver between Chapters 35-36. The man in the portrait is Jay Gould, a famous financier. Why do you suppose that the book’s illustrator, Dan Beard, chose Jay Gould to serve as the model for the slave driver?**

Apparently, Jay Gould was pretty ruthless and very willing to bankrupt other people without mercy.

In the Explanatory Note on p. 474, we read:

The financier Jay Gould served as the model for the slave driver. In one of the copies of the book he annotated, Beard commented, “I wanted a face which showed a high order of intelligence, but was absolutely heartless, cold brutally and cruel. I found such a face among my photographs of prominent people and used it.”

Here is some information about Jay Gould:

In fact Jay Gould is one of the great dirtballs of all time. [...] bottom line, Jay Gould was scum. To give you an idea, following are various descriptions of him [...:]

“The worst man on earth since the beginning of the Christian era. He is treacherous, false, cowardly, and a despicable worm incapable of generous nature.” [Fellow speculator James R. Keene — courtesy of Edward Chancellor]

“One of the most sinister figures that ever flitted batlike across the vision of the American people.” [Joseph Pulitzer — Chancellor]

“A freebooter who, if he could not appropriate millions, would filch thousands; a pitiless human carnivore, glutting on the blood of his numberless victims; a gambler destitute of the usual gambler’s code of fairness in abiding by the rules; an incarnate fiend of a Machiavelli in his calculations, his schemes and ambushes, his plots and counterplots.” [Gustavus Myers: “A History of Great American Fortunes.”]

And perhaps the most famous, from speculator Daniel Drew, “His touch is death.”

Source: <http://www.buyandhold.com/bh/en/education/history/2001/homestake3.html>

Date Downloaded: 26 May 2004

• **A man is boiled alive in this chapter. Why? What reasons can be advanced to make such a punishment illegal?**

On pp. 360-361, we read:

But the thing which clean broke my heart was something which happened in front of our old barrack in a square, while we were enduring the spectacle of a man being boiled to death in oil for counterfeiting pennies. It was the sight of a newsboy — and I couldn’t get at him!

Twain spends little time on the subject, but such things did happen. In the explanatory notes on p. 474, we read:

In *The Prince and the Pauper* Tom Canty is told of the German law that provided this hideous punishment for counterfeiting; to prove that such things actually happened, Mark Twain annotated the passage with a quotation from the introduction to Trumbull’s *True-Blue Laws*. He planned similarly to ascribe this incident to Trumbull’s book in an appendix to *A Connecticut Yankee*, and noted his source in the manuscript as well.

Some reasons to use to argue against such punishments are:

- 1) Such punishments are cruel and unusual.
- 2) Such punishments do not fit the crime. The punishment is out of all proportion to the crime. The punishment is much harsher than the crime deserves.

Fortunately, we have the Bill of Rights to protect us:

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

• **Can the episode of the man being boiled alive be regarded as a satire of our present day?**

Unfortunately, the answer is yes, although of course Mark Yankee would not know that people would still be boiled to death in our time.

This article appeared in *The New York Times* on May 1, 2005 (only an excerpt appears here):

U.S. Recruits a Rough Ally to Be a Jailer

By DON VAN NATTA Jr.

Published: May 1, 2005

Seven months before Sept. 11, 2001, the State Department issued a human rights report on Uzbekistan. It was a litany of horrors.

The police repeatedly tortured prisoners, State Department officials wrote, noting that the most common techniques were “beating, often with blunt weapons, and asphyxiation with a gas mask.” Separately, international human rights groups had reported that torture in Uzbek jails included boiling of body parts, using electroshock on genitals and plucking off fingernails and toenails with pliers. Two prisoners were boiled to death, the groups reported. The February 2001 State Department report stated bluntly, “Uzbekistan is an authoritarian state with limited civil rights.”

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/01/international/01renditions.html>

Here is another article to look at:

The CIA’s Kidnapping Ring

U.S. ally Uzbekistan teaches interrogators how to boil suspected terrorists to death

By Nat Hentoff

Tuesday, April 12th 2005

Source: <http://www.villagevoice.com/2005-04-12/news/the-cia-s-kidnapping-ring/>

• **What is the Yankee’s plan for freeing himself and the King? Why does it fail?**

On p. 361, the Yankee says:

[...] It was just what I needed, in order to carry out my project of escape. My idea was to get loose some night, along with the king, then gag and bind our master, change clothes with him, batter him into the aspect of a stranger, hitch him to the slave-chain, assume possession of the property, march to Camelot, and —

But you get my idea; you see what a stunning dramatic surprise I would wind up with at the palace.

Unfortunately, the plan fails. The Yankee does use a bit of wire stolen from a slave-buyer to pick the lock on his chains and get free, but unfortunately, he does not have time enough to get the king free before the slave master comes. The slave master comes, then leaves, the king tells the Yankee to get the slave master, the Yankee follows the slave master and jumps him, but it turns out that the person the Yankee jumps is not the slave master — the Yankee jumped the wrong man! Therefore, the Yankee is arrested.

CHAPTER 37: AN AWFUL PREDICAMENT

• **Why does the Judge let the Yankee go at the beginning of the chapter? How does this society value rich people?**

The Judge lets the Yankee go because the Yankee claims to be the property of the Earl Grip. In

addition, the Yankee claims that the Earl Grip was ill and that he was going for a doctor. Furthermore, he says that a common person prevented him from going to a doctor.

On p. 367, we read what happened to the common person whom the Yankee jumped in the previous chapter:

The common person interrupted and said it was a lie; and was going to explain how I rushed upon him and attacked him without a word —

“Silence, sirrah!” from the court. “Take him hence and give him a few stripes whereby to teach him how to treat the servant of a nobleman after a different fashion another time. Go!”

In this really remarkable society, the slave of an Earl is treated with more respect than a common person, who is presumably free.

The court also does this (p. 367):

Then the court begged my pardon, and hoped I would not fail to tell his lordship it was in no wise the court’s fault that this high-handed thing had happened. I said I would make it all right, and so took my leave.

• **Why does the Yankee risk going about in the streets in order to buy fine clothes?**

The Yankee wants a disguise. He is currently dressed in rags, and he wishes to buy fine clothing so that people will treat him with respect because they think that he is a lord. He can’t buy all his new clothing at one place because that would draw attention and suspicion to himself, so instead he intends to go from shop to shop buying a new, better article of clothing at each shop until he is well dressed and no one will recognize him. In addition, he wishes to meet some people he formerly knew and for that he needs to be well dressed. Once again, we see that this society values wealthy people very highly indeed. (Apparently, the Yankee has money. It may be a weakness of the novel that the slave master did not find the money and take it from him.)

On pp. 368-369, we read that the disguise is working:

At the first second-hand clothing shop I came to, up a back street, I got a rough rig suitable for a common seaman who might be going on a cold voyage, and bound up my face with a liberal bandage, saying I had a toothache. This concealed my worst bruises. It was a transformation. I no longer resembled my former self.

On pp. 370-371, we read:

Now, then, in order to increase the strings to my bow, I thought I would look up some of those people whom I had formerly recognized, and make myself known. That would help us out of our scrape, without the knights. But I must proceed cautiously, for it was a risky business. I must get into sumptuous raiment, and it wouldn’t do to run and jump into it. No, I must work up to it by degrees, buying suit after suit of clothes, in shops wide apart, and getting a little finer article with each change, until I should finally reach silk and velvet, and be ready for my project. So I started.

Unfortunately, on the street the Yankee coughs, and a slave recognizes the cough and turns the Yankee in. The Yankee is captured and sentenced to death.

Once again, we see that people are judged by the clothing they wear.

• **Do you see any weaknesses in this section of the novel?**

Here may be a weakness in the novel: The Yankee has recognized various people (including Sandy, who was riding a mule and searching for him). Why didn't the Yankee ask these people for help?

However, the Yankee may be able to explain this. He does have a plan, and asking other people for help would have gone against his plan. For one thing, he probably wants King Arthur to experience enough slavery that he will be happy to abolish it.

On p. 361, the Yankee says:

My idea was to get loose some night, along with the king, then gag and bind our master, change clothes with him, batter him into the aspect of a stranger, hitch him to the slave-chain, assume possession of the property, march to Camelot, and —

But you get my idea; you see what a stunning dramatic surprise I would wind up with at the palace.

However, even if we can find a reason for the Yankee not to ask to ask people he recognizes for help, what about the king? King Arthur must have recognized people, too. Why didn't he ask for help?

CHAPTER 38: LAUNCELOT AND THE KNIGHTS TO THE RESCUE

(Note: Some editions use the spelling "Lancelot.")

• **How are the Yankee and King Arthur rescued? Is there anything odd about their rescue?**

The Yankee and Clarence end up rescuing King Arthur with the help of 500 knights. While free (in ch. 37), the Yankee communicates with Clarence by telegraph, telling him to send 500 mounted knights right away.

Unfortunately, the Yankee is captured, and he is afraid that the mounted knights won't arrive in time to rescue him and King Arthur (because the execution time has been moved forward due to the Yankee's capture). Fortunately, the knights, riding bicycles, arrive just in time.

Something is odd about their rescue. Are bicycles really faster than horses?

Also, are the roads good enough that bicycles would make good time?

We should note that Mark Twain makes an attempt to make this scenario of rescue by knights riding bicycles plausible:

The instrument began to talk to the youth and I hurried away. I fell to ciphering. In half an hour it would be nine o'clock. Knights and horses in heavy armor couldn't travel very fast. These would make the best time they could, and now that the ground was in good condition, and no snow or mud, they would probably make a seven-mile gait; they would have to change horses a couple of times; they would arrive about six, or a little after; it would still be plenty light enough; they would see the white cloth which I should tie around my right arm, and I would take command. We would surround that prison and

have the king out in no time. It would be showy and picturesque enough, all things considered, though I would have preferred noonday, on account of the more theatrical aspect the thing would have. (p. 370)

However, I doubt very much that knights (especially in plate armor) would be able to travel by bicycles faster than they would be able to travel by horseback.

• When they were slaves, why didn't King Arthur ask the Yankee to free them by hurling thunderbolts at the slave master and anyone who opposes them?

This may be a weakness in the novel because of course King Arthur would ask the Yankee to destroy the slave master and anyone who would try to keep them enslaved. After all, the king has seen the Yankee destroy knights with bombs. However, the king never does ask the Yankee to do this.

However, we can argue against this for the following reasons:

- 1) The Yankee has said previously that such "miracles" as bombs work only under the right atmospheric conditions.
- 2) In addition, the Yankee could say that he wanted the King to endure slavery for a while until he understood how bad it was.
- 3) Finally, Merlin is seldom able to work magic, so the King may think that although magic is real, it works very rarely.

CHAPTER 39: THE YANKEE'S FIGHT WITH THE KNIGHTS

• Write a character analysis of the Yankee in this chapter. What do you think of his plan to destroy knight-errantry?

On p. 384, we read:

So the world thought there was a vast matter at stake here, and the world was right, but it was not the one they had in their minds. No, a far vaster one was upon the cast of this die: the life of knight-errantry. I was a champion, it was true, but not the champion of the frivolous black arts, I was the champion of hard unsentimental common-sense and reason. I was entering the lists to either destroy knight-errantry or be its victim.

The Yankee displays a number of traits in this chapter:

- 1) The Yankee displays great shrewdness here. He carries a rope into the tournament intending to conquer Knights by lassoing them. In fact, he does just that.
- 2) The Yankee comes prepared. Merlin steals the Yankee's rope, and then later says that it is a magic weapon which can be used only eight times before it vanishes. However, the Yankee has come armed with revolvers. The Yankee also had a swift horse that is swift and nimble and can outmaneuver Sir Sagramour's horse.
- 3) The Yankee has no problem killing people. When Sir Sagramour charges the Yankee, thinking he is unarmed, the Yankee pulls out a revolver and shoots him dead.
- 4) The Yankee is very good at bluffing. He challenges all knights everywhere, and he has

to shoot nine of them (not counting Sir Sagramour) to make his bluff work.

• **What is a knight-errant? What is chivalry?**

According to *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, 2000, a knight-errant is

1. A knight, often portrayed in medieval romances, who wanders in search of adventures to prove his chivalry.
2. One given to adventurous or quixotic conduct.

The word “errant” means wandering.

Here is a brief definition of chivalry:

System of ethical ideals that arose from feudalism and had its highest development in the 12th and 13th cent. [...]

The chief chivalric virtues were piety, honor, valor, courtesy, chastity, and loyalty. The knight’s loyalty was due to the spiritual master, God; to the temporal master, the suzerain; and to the mistress of the heart, his sworn love. Love, in the chivalrous sense, was largely platonic; as a rule, only a virgin or another man’s wife could be the chosen object of chivalrous love. With the cult of the Virgin Mary, the relegation of noblewomen to a pedestal reached its highest expression.

Source: *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition.

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CHAPTER 40: THREE YEARS LATER

• **What foreshadowing do we see when the Yankee says, “[...] name the day, and I would take fifty assistants and stand up *against the massed chivalry of the whole earth and destroy it*” (397)?**

The Yankee does exactly that at the end of the novel.

Actually, there are 52 plus one more: Clarence.

• **The Yankee wishes to overthrow the Catholic Church and establish Protestant sects now, and then establish a republic after Arthur’s death. What is your opinion of these goals? (By the way, what does “republic” mean?)**

On pp. 398-399, we read:

I was very happy. Things were working steadily toward a secretly longed-for point. You see, I had two schemes in my head which were the vastest of all my projects. The one was to overthrow the Catholic Church and set up the Protestant faith on its ruins — not as an Established Church, but a go-as-you-please one; and the other project was to get a decree issued by and by, commanding that upon Arthur’s death unlimited suffrage should be introduced, and given to men and women alike — at any rate to all men, wise or

unwise, and to all mothers who at middle age should be found to know nearly as much as their sons at twenty-one. Arthur was good for thirty years yet, he being about my own age — that is to say, forty — and I believed that in that time I could easily have the active part of the population of that day ready and eager for an event which should be the first of its kind in the history of the world — a rounded and complete governmental revolution without bloodshed. The result to be a republic. Well, I may as well confess, though I do feel ashamed when I think of it: I was beginning to have a base hankering to be its first president myself. Yes, there was more or less human nature in me; I found that out.

Let's take the two goals one at a time:

1) Overthrow the Catholic Church and establish Protestant sects.

If the Yankee means to totally suppress the Catholic Church, he would be wrong, because that would take away people's freedom of religion. If some people want to belong to the Catholic Church, they should be able to. But if he means simply to stop having an Established Church in England, that would increase freedom of religion. Instead of having to belong to the Established Church, people could choose which church to belong to.

2) Establish a republic after Arthur's death.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines "republic" as

1a. A political order whose head of state is not a monarch and in modern times is usually a president. b. A nation that has such a political order. 2a. A political order in which the supreme power lies in a body of citizens who are entitled to vote for officers and representatives responsible to them. b. A nation that has such a political order. 3. often Republic A specific republican government of a nation: the Fourth Republic of France. 4. An autonomous or partially autonomous political and territorial unit belonging to a sovereign federation. 5. A group of people working as equals in the same sphere or field: the republic of letters.

Source: <http://www.bartleby.com/61/70/R0167000.html>

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I think that most of us would be in favor of the Yankee's creating a republic in 6th-century England.

• **How old is the Yankee?**

He is 40 years old.

He had a 15-year-old girlfriend when he arrived in Camelot, but he has been in Camelot for a number of years.

• **Is it possible to move quickly from a monarchy to a democracy?**

Possibly not. However, the Yankee does say that every country is capable of self-government.

Joe Bob Briggs wrote this in the year 2003:

[...] there's the matter of these people being accustomed to rule by monarch. As many historians have pointed out, you can't move from a kinship society to a monarchy to a democracy without going through a long period of educating a middle class that ends up running the country alongside the monarch. If you try to jump one of the stages of history, terror results. The most famous example is Russia, but we have numerous others, especially from recent decades in Africa.

Until you reach that stage, people love the kingship. That doesn't mean they love their king. It means they love HAVING a king. It's fruitless to tell them that they're short-sighted adolescents who don't understand freedom. They have to internalize freedom, and the way you do that is by a more and more limited monarchy working alongside an educated prosperous class of businessmen and tradesmen. It takes a few generations.

Source: <http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20030328-091121-5293r>

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Perhaps there are no shortcuts.

• **Is the Yankee a good ruler? Is the Yankee a dictator?**

To some extent, he is both. On p. 397, we read:

Consider the three years sped. Now look around on England. A happy and prosperous country, and strangely altered. Schools everywhere, and several colleges; a number of pretty good newspapers. Even authorship was taking a start; Sir Dinadan the Humorist was first in the field, with a volume of gray-headed jokes which I had been familiar with during thirteen centuries. If he had left out that old rancid one about the lecturer I wouldn't have said anything; but I couldn't stand that one. I suppressed the book and hanged the author.

This passage concerns a running joke of Twain's — that the Yankee can't stand a certain anecdote that Sir Dinadan keeps telling. In this passage, the Yankee violates free speech by suppressing Sir Dinadan's jokebook and hanging the author. (Of course, we remember that the Yankee allowed Morgan le Fay to hang a composer and some musicians earlier in the novel.)

Of course, this is meant to be humorous, and it is. The Yankee is a good ruler, overall. On pp. 397-398, we read:

Slavery was dead and gone; all men were equal before the law; taxation had been equalized. The telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the typewriter, the sewing-machine, and all the thousand willing and handy servants of steam and electricity were working their way into favor. We had a steamboat or two on the Thames, we had steam warships, and the beginnings of a steam commercial marine; I was getting ready to send out an expedition to discover America.

The Yankee, however, does have awesome power. On pp. 396-397, we read:

I renewed my challenge, engraved it on brass, posted it up where any priest could read it to them, and also kept it standing in the advertising columns of the paper. I not only renewed it, but added to its proportions. I said, name the day, and I would take fifty assistants and stand up against the massed chivalry of the whole earth and destroy it. I

was not bluffing this time. I meant what I said; I could do what I promised. There wasn't any way to misunderstand the language of that challenge. Even the dullest of the chivalry perceived that this was a plain case of "put up, or shut up." They were wise and did the latter. In all the next three years they gave me no trouble worth mentioning.

This threat can be regarded as totalitarian.

In fact, later the Yankee does what he says he will do (p. 397):

I said, name the day, and I would take fifty assistants and stand up against the massed chivalry of the whole earth and destroy it.

• Can the Yankee be regarded as spreading such things as democracy, freedom, and equality? Can the Yankee be regarded as spreading such things as economic, military and political domination?

The answer to both questions may be yes. The Yankee does believe in democracy, freedom, and equality, but he wields awesome power in this culture.

He certainly has political domination, being the number one — or perhaps two — man in the kingdom.

He certainly has military domination — no one can stand up to him.

He certainly has economic domination — he insists on free trade, and he has the power to make everyone follow his lead.

Possibly, this is a satire of the 19th century.

We should remember that Twain was anti-imperialistic.

• Can the Yankee be regarded as an Imperialist? What is Imperialism?

Maybe the Yankee is an Imperialist.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines "imperialism" as

1. The policy of extending a nation's authority by territorial acquisition or by the establishment of economic and political hegemony over other nations.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines "hegemony" as

The predominant influence, as of a state, region, or group, over another or others.

• If you are willing to do some research, write about the Holy Grail and why the Knights of the Round Table wished to find it.

Here is a brief definition of the Holy Grail:

The name of a legendary sacred vessel, variously identified with the chalice of the Eucharist or the dish of the Pascal lamb, and the theme of a famous medieval cycle of romance. In the romances the conception of the Grail varies considerably; its nature is

often but vaguely indicated, and, in the case of Chrestien's Perceval poem, it is left wholly unexplained.

Source: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06719a.htm>

Date Downloaded: 31 March 2003

By the way, the Pascal Lamb is the lamb sacrificed at the first Passover.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, defines "grail" as

1. Grail A cup or plate that, according to medieval legend, was used by Jesus at the Last Supper and that later became the object of many chivalrous quests. Also called Holy Grail.
2. often Grail The object of a prolonged endeavor.

Whoever finds the Grail will win great renown. This is why the Knights of the Round Table are seeking it.

• **What is the Siege Perilous, both in legend and in this novel?**

According to *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, 2000, the "Siege Perilous: is

In Arthurian legend, a seat at King Arthur's Round Table kept for the knight destined to find the Holy Grail and fatal for any other occupant.

Source: <http://www.bartleby.com/61/46/S0394600.html>

Date Downloaded: June 2, 2003

On pp. 400-401, we read:

Sir Launcelot, in his richest armor, came striding along the great hall now on his way to the stock-board; he was president of the stock-board, and occupied the Siege Perilous, which he had bought of Sir Galahad; for the stock-board consisted of the Knights of the Round Table, and they used the Round Table for business purposes now. Seats at it were worth — well, you would never believe the figure, so it is no use to state it. Sir Launcelot was a bear, and he had put up a corner in one of the new lines, and was just getting ready to squeeze the shorts to-day; but what of that? He was the same old Launcelot, and when he glanced in as he was passing the door and found out that his pet was sick, that was enough for him; bulls and bears might fight it out their own way for all him, he would come right in here and stand by little Hello-Central for all he was worth. And that was what he did. He shied his helmet into the corner, and in half a minute he had a new wick in the alcohol lamp and was firing up on the croup-kettle. By this time Sandy had built a blanket canopy over the crib, and everything was ready.

We see here a satire of modern times. In our culture, we are very concerned with money — even at the expense of the sacred. Sir Galahad is the knight who found the Holy Grail and so is the sole knight who can sit in the Siege Perilous. In Twain's satire, however, Sir Galahad sells the Siege Perilous to Sir Launcelot.

Note: We are accustomed to think of “siege” as a military term, but an obsolete meaning of the word is “seat.”

CHAPTER 41: THE INTERDICT

• **The Yankee marries Sandy “for no other particular reasons, except that by the customs of chivalry she was my property until some knight should win her from me in the field. She had hunted Britain over for me; had found me at the hanging-bout outside of London, and had straightway resumed her old place at my side in the placidest way and as of right. I was a New Englander, and in my opinion this sort of partnership would compromise her, sooner or later. She couldn’t see how, but I cut argument short and we had a wedding” (406-407). What does the Yankee mean by the word “compromise”? (Hint: What does it mean to be caught in a compromising position?)**

The Yankee marries Sandy to preserve her reputation, although that is not really a factor in this situation in the 6th century.

The compromise referred is a compromise of morality.

On pp. 406-407, we read:

Ah, Sandy, what a right heart she had, how simple, and genuine, and good she was! She was a flawless wife and mother; and yet I had married her for no other particular reasons, except that by the customs of chivalry she was my property until some knight should win her from me in the field. She had hunted Britain over for me; had found me at the hanging-bout outside of London, and had straightway resumed her old place at my side in the placidest way and as of right. I was a New Englander, and in my opinion this sort of partnership would compromise her, sooner or later. She couldn’t see how, but I cut argument short and we had a wedding.

• **Do the Yankee and Sandy have a happy marriage?**

Yes, it is excellent and happy.

On p. 407, we read:

Now I didn’t know I was drawing a prize, yet that was what I did draw. Within the twelvemonth I became her worshiper; and ours was the dearest and perfectest comradeship that ever was. People talk about beautiful friendships between two persons of the same sex. What is the best of that sort, as compared with the friendship of man and wife, where the best impulses and highest ideals of both are the same? There is no place for comparison between the two friendships; the one is earthly, the other divine.

• **What is the Yankee’s daughter’s name, and how did she get that name?**

Sandy named her. Sandy thought that she was naming her after a lost darling of the Yankee, and in a way, she was. She named her “Hello-Central.”

On p. 407, we read:

In my dreams, along at first, I still wandered thirteen centuries away, and my unsatisfied spirit went calling and harking all up and down the unreplying vacancies of a vanished

world. Many a time Sandy heard that imploring cry come from my lips in my sleep. With a grand magnanimity she saddled that cry of mine upon our child, conceiving it to be the name of some lost darling of mine. It touched me to tears, and it also nearly knocked me off my feet, too, when she smiled up in my face for an earned reward, and played her quaint and pretty surprise upon me:

“The name of one who was dear to thee is here preserved, here made holy, and the music of it will abide always in our ears. Now thou’lt kiss me, as knowing the name I have given the child.”

But I didn’t know it, all the same. I hadn’t an idea in the world; but it would have been cruel to confess it and spoil her pretty game; so I never let on, but said:

“Yes, I know, sweetheart — how dear and good it is of you, too! But I want to hear these lips of yours, which are also mine, utter it first — then its music will be perfect.”

Pleased to the marrow, she murmured:

“HELLO-CENTRAL!”

I didn’t laugh — I am always thankful for that — but the strain ruptured every cartilage in me, and for weeks afterward I could hear my bones clack when I walked.

• **Where has the Yankee been for the last few weeks?**

The Yankee, Sandy, and their daughter, Hello-Central, have been away in France. Their daughter has been ill, and they left England in order to help improve her health.

On p. 402, we read:

The doctors said we must take the child away, if we would coax her back to health and strength again. And she must have sea-air. So we took a man-of-war, and a suite of two hundred and sixty persons, and went cruising about, and after a fortnight of this we stepped ashore on the French coast, and the doctors thought it would be a good idea to make something of a stay there. The little king of that region offered us his hospitalities, and we were glad to accept. If he had had as many conveniences as he lacked, we should have been plenty comfortable enough; even as it was, we made out very well, in his queer old castle, by the help of comforts and luxuries from the ship.

Later, we find out that the doctors are working for the Catholic Church.

Hello-Central is suffering from membranous croup.

Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913) defines “croup” in this way:

An inflammatory affection of the larynx or trachea, accompanied by a hoarse, ringing cough and stridulous, difficult breathing; esp., such an affection when associated with the development of a false membrane in the air passages (also called membranous croup).

Source: <http://dict.die.net/membranous%20croup/>

Date Downloaded: June 2, 2004

• **If you are willing to do some research, write about the Interdict. What is it, and why does**

it affect people so strongly?

Here are a couple of definitions of “interdict”:

An Interdict usually refers to an order from a Pope which declares a country without religious support by the Catholic Church. It suspends all public worship and withdraws the church’s sacraments. An interdict issued against a country was to it the equivalent of issuance of excommunication against an individual. An interdict would cause all the churches to be closed, and almost all the sacraments not to be allowed (ie preventing marriage, confession, extreme unction, the eucharist). An interdict against a country would often cause the citizens of that country to demand the government fix whatever caused the interdiction, or in some cases to rebel and overthrow the government.

Source: <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Interdict>

Date Downloaded: 3 June 2004

An interdict is a censure, or prohibition, excluding the faithful from participation in certain holy things. These holy things are all those pertaining to Christian worship, and are divided into three classes:

- * the Divine offices, in other words the Liturgy, and in general all acts performed by clerics as such, and having reference to worship
- * the sacraments, excepting private administrations of those that are of necessity;
- * ecclesiastical burial, including all funeral services.

Source: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08073a.htm>

Date Downloaded: 31 March 2003

On pp. 409-410, we read:

I approached England the next morning, with the wide highway of salt water all to myself. There were ships in the harbor, at Dover, but they were naked as to sails, and there was no sign of life about them. It was Sunday; yet at Canterbury the streets were empty; strangest of all, there was not even a priest in sight, and no stroke of a bell fell upon my ear. The mournfulness of death was everywhere. I couldn’t understand it. At last, in the further edge of that town I saw a small funeral procession — just a family and a few friends following a coffin — no priest; a funeral without bell, book, or candle; there was a church there close at hand, but they passed it by weeping, and did not enter it; I glanced up at the belfry, and there hung the bell, shrouded in black, and its tongue tied back. Now I knew! Now I understood the stupendous calamity that had overtaken England. Invasion? Invasion is a triviality to it. It was the interdict!

I asked no questions; I didn’t need to ask any. The Church had struck; the thing for me to do was to get into a disguise, and go warily. One of my servants gave me a suit of clothes, and when we were safe beyond the town I put them on, and from that time I traveled alone; I could not risk the embarrassment of company.

• **Is there a possible inconsistency here?**

On pp. 398-399, we read:

I was very happy. Things were working steadily toward a secretly longed-for point. You see, I had two schemes in my head which were the vastest of all my projects. The one was to overthrow the Catholic Church and set up the Protestant faith on its ruins — not as an Established Church, but a go-as-you-please one; and the other project was to get a decree issued by and by, commanding that upon Arthur's death unlimited suffrage should be introduced, and given to men and women alike — at any rate to all men, wise or unwise, and to all mothers who at middle age should be found to know nearly as much as their sons at twenty-one. Arthur was good for thirty years yet, he being about my own age — that is to say, forty — and I believed that in that time I could easily have the active part of the population of that day ready and eager for an event which should be the first of its kind in the history of the world — a rounded and complete governmental revolution without bloodshed.

One of the Yankee's goals was to overthrow the Catholic Church. Apparently, he has not done that. Or, if he has done that, now the Catholic Church is striking back.

CHAPTER 42: WAR!

• Why does the war start? (Note: Sir Launcelot manipulates the stock market.)

The war starts because of materialism. This is something that the Yankee brought to Camelot.

The war starts in part because of a fault of 19th-century America. Sir Launcelot engages in speculation and skins some Knights financially. Clarence tells the Yankee (p. 413),

“Well, the king might have gone on, still happy and unsuspecting, to the end of his days, but for one of your modern improvements — the stock-board. When you left, three miles of the London, Canterbury and Dover were ready for the rails, and also ready and ripe for manipulation in the stock-market. It was wildcat, and everybody knew it. The stock was for sale at a give-away. What does Sir Launcelot do, but — ”

“Yes, I know; he quietly picked up nearly all of it for a song; then he bought about twice as much more, deliverable upon call; and he was about to call when I left.”

“Very well, he did call. The boys couldn't deliver. Oh, he had them — and he just settled his grip and squeezed them. They were laughing in their sleeves over their smartness in selling stock to him at 15 and 16 and along there that wasn't worth 10. Well, when they had laughed long enough on that side of their mouths, they rested-up that side by shifting the laugh to the other side. That was when they compromised with the Invincible at 283!”

“Good land!”

“He skinned them alive, and they deserved it — anyway, the whole kingdom rejoiced. ...”

Sir Launcelot buys a lot of stock — more than exists. He is able to do that because other knights sell it as a put. That is, they sell it to Sir Launcelot at a certain price and promise to deliver the stock later. Of course, they hope to buy the stock at a lower price than they sold it. However, Sir Launcelot buys all the stock and more, so when he calls for the stock to be delivered, they are forced to buy the stock from him at outrageously high prices so that they can deliver it to him.

For revenge, two of the skinned Knights — Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine — tell King Arthur about Guinever’s affair with Sir Launcelot. King Arthur wants to burn Guenever at the stake as a way of purifying her, but Sir Launcelot rescues her. War breaks out — King Arthur versus Sir Launcelot. In addition, King Arthur fights Sir Mordred. King Arthur kills Sir Mordred, and Sir Mordred kills King Arthur.

• How does Sir Launcelot manipulate the stock market? (What is a “call” anyway? Hint: It is used in securities trading.)

This is how Sir Launcelot manipulates the stock market:

- Sir Launcelot buys up all the stock in a railroad.
- Sir Launcelot then buys extra stock at \$15 and \$16 a share from Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine. The stock is worth less than \$10.
- Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine don’t have the stock they are selling to Sir Launcelot. They are planning to buy it at less than \$10 a share later in the market.
- Sir Launcelot asks for delivery of the stock he has bought. Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine discover that there is no stock in the market and they have to buy it from Sir Launcelot.
- Sir Launcelot sells the stock to Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine for \$283 a share.

This is what *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, 2001, has to say about puts and calls:

Puts and Calls

In securities trading. A call is a contract that gives the holder the right to purchase a given stock at a specific price within a designated period of time. It is the opposite of a put, which is a contract that allows the holder to sell a given stock at a specific price within a designated period of time. Puts and calls are both types of privileges, or options, that add flexibility to the securities market. In return for a put or call, the investor pays a fee to the potential buyer or seller of the stock (the maker), who, in turn, pays a commission to the broker who brought the two parties together. Calls are generally used by investors who want to profit from a rise in stock prices but, at the same time, want to avoid sharp losses. Thus, an investor holding a call chooses one of two options. If the market advances he can buy the designated security at the lower price quoted in the call, and then sell the stock at a profit. If the market declines, he can simply exercise his option not to buy the stock, thereby avoiding a major loss, the only expense being the cost of the option. A put is used by investors seeking to profit from a fall in stock prices. For example, an investor holding a put for a stock that declines in price is able to sell the stock at the higher price quoted in the put, thereby profiting by the amount the stock declines from the put price; if the stock price rises the investor can lose only the money used to purchase the put option. Puts and calls are generally written for one, two, three, or six months, although any period over 21 days is accepted by the New York Stock Exchange. A straddle and a spread are combinations of puts and calls occasionally used by sophisticated investors. In a more generalized sense, the term call may refer to any demand for payment.

• What happens to Sir Launcelot, Queen Guenever, King Arthur, and Sir Mordred? (Note:

Some editions use the spelling “Lancelot.”)

These are the main events:

- The Yankee and Sandy left England with Hello-Central.
- Sir Launcelot squeezes Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaire in a stock manipulation.
- Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaire get revenge by telling Sir Arthur about Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever.
- Some people supported King Arthur, and some people supported Sir Launcelot.
- King Arthur sent Queen Guenever to the stake to “purify” her with burning.
- Sir Launcelot rescued Queen Guenever and killed everyone in his way.
- Sir Launcelot went to his castle, Joyous Gard, with many knights.
- King Arthur followed Sir Launcelot there, and a great battle arose.
- The Church patched up the quarrel between Sir Launcelot and King Arthur, but Sir Gawain did not join the peace. Sir Gawain was still bitter about the deaths of his brothers, Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, innocent bystanders whom Sir Launcelot unknowingly slew while saving the Queen from being burned to death.
- Sir Gawain ordered Sir Launcelot to come and fight him.
- King Arthur joined Sir Gawain in the battle against Sir Launcelot, leaving the kingdom in the hands of his nephew, Sir Mordred.
- Sir Mordred attempted to take over the kingdom permanently. He wanted to marry Guenever, but she escaped and fled to the Tower of London.
- Sir Mordred came after her, and the Bishop of Canterbury hit him with the Interdict.
- King Arthur returned and fought Sir Mordred.
- Talk of peace occurred, with Sir Mordred getting Cornwall and Kent during King Arthur’s lifetime and the entire kingdom after King Arthur died.
- The two met to sign a treaty, but a snake bit a knight, and the knight drew his sword to kill the snake. Seeing the knight draw his sword, knights on both sides began fighting.
- In the fight, Sir Mordred and King Arthur killed each other.
- The Interdict is on both Sir Mordred and the Yankee. As long as the Yankee is alive, it shall not be removed.

Note: In mythology, after Sir Launcelot hears of the death of King Arthur, he lives in a hermitage and repents his sins. In addition, Guinever spends the rest of her life in a convent, repenting her sins.

CHAPTER 43: THE BATTLE OF THE SAND BELT

- **The Yankee decides to go to war. Does he have any other options? What do you suppose**

he would do if he won the war?

The other option is to simply do nothing. If he wanted to, he could simply become a hermit, like Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*. He could enter a hermitage. However, that is not in his character.

If the Yankee wins the war, the effect would probably be good. He would establish civilization and defy the one established church.

• Why does the Yankee blow up his civilization? Is that a good reason?

On pp. 430, 432, we read:

In that explosion all our noble civilization-factories went up in the air and disappeared from the earth. It was a pity, but it was necessary. We could not afford to let the enemy turn our own weapons against us.

It is a shame that the Yankee does this. If he had not blown up his civilization, perhaps some part of it would have remained.

He gives as an excuse for blowing up his civilization that he didn't want it used against him, but perhaps it would have been better if he had left it alone. Even if he were killed, having the civilization would be better for humanity.

However, perhaps the civilization had already been killed by the one established church.

Of course, Mark Twain is writing what is in part a historical novel, and he can't change history. Civilization ends with the end of Camelot, and Britain sinks back into the Dark Ages.

• In this novel, Twain criticizes the Middle Ages, but he also criticizes modern civilization. In this chapter, what criticisms can be made of modern warfare?

This chapter seems to foretell the horrible slaughter of World War I. We see massive destruction of knights by Hank Morgan and a small band of picked youths (52 boys and Clarence). The youths are those who have been raised without a belief in superstition and so remain loyal to the Yankee.

In this chapter, we see science being used to wage modern warfare against medieval knights. Of course, modern warfare wreaks havoc against the medieval knights.

On pp. 430, 432, we read:

At last we could make out details. All the front ranks, no telling how many acres deep, were horsemen — plumed knights in armor. Suddenly we heard the blare of trumpets; the slow walk burst into a gallop, and then — well, it was wonderful to see! Down swept that vast horse-shoe wave — it approached the sand-belt — my breath stood still; nearer, nearer — the strip of green turf beyond the yellow belt grew narrow — narrower still — became a mere ribbon in front of the horses — then disappeared under their hoofs. Great Scott! Why, the whole front of that host shot into the sky with a thunder-crash, and became a whirling tempest of rags and fragments; and along the ground lay a thick wall of smoke that hid what was left of the multitude from our sight.

Time for the second step in the plan of campaign! I touched a button, and shook the bones of England loose from her spine!

In that explosion all our noble civilization-factories went up in the air and disappeared from the earth. It was a pity, but it was necessary. We could not afford to let the enemy turn our own weapons against us.

Now ensued one of the dullest quarter-hours I had ever endured. We waited in a silent solitude enclosed by our circles of wire, and by a circle of heavy smoke outside of these. We couldn't see over the wall of smoke, and we couldn't see through it. But at last it began to shred away lazily, and by the end of another quarter-hour the land was clear and our curiosity was enabled to satisfy itself. No living creature was in sight! We now perceived that additions had been made to our defenses. The dynamite had dug a ditch more than a hundred feet wide, all around us, and cast up an embankment some twenty-five feet high on both borders of it. As to destruction of life, it was amazing. Moreover, it was beyond estimate. Of course, we could not count the dead, because they did not exist as individuals, but merely as homogeneous protoplasm, with alloys of iron and buttons.

On pp. 439-440, we read:

Land, what a sight! We were enclosed in three walls of dead men! All the other fences were pretty nearly filled with the living, who were stealthily working their way forward through the wires. The sudden glare paralyzed this host, petrified them, you may say, with astonishment; there was just one instant for me to utilize their immobility in, and I didn't lose the chance. You see, in another instant they would have recovered their faculties, then they'd have burst into a cheer and made a rush, and my wires would have gone down before it; but that lost instant lost them their opportunity forever; while even that slight fragment of time was still unspent, I shot the current through all the fences and struck the whole host dead in their tracks! There was a groan you could hear! It voiced the death-pang of eleven thousand men. It swelled out on the night with awful pathos.

A glance showed that the rest of the enemy — perhaps ten thousand strong — were between us and the encircling ditch, and pressing forward to the assault. Consequently we had them all! and had them past help. Time for the last act of the tragedy. I fired the three appointed revolver shots — which meant:

“Turn on the water!”

There was a sudden rush and roar, and in a minute the mountain brook was raging through the big ditch and creating a river a hundred feet wide and twenty-five deep.

“Stand to your guns, men! Open fire!”

The thirteen gatlings began to vomit death into the fated ten thousand. They halted, they stood their ground a moment against that withering deluge of fire, then they broke, faced about and swept toward the ditch like chaff before a gale. A full fourth part of their force never reached the top of the lofty embankment; the three-fourths reached it and plunged over — to death by drowning.

Within ten short minutes after we had opened fire, armed resistance was totally annihilated, the campaign was ended, we fifty-four were masters of England. Twenty-five thousand men lay dead around us.

But how treacherous is fortune! In a little while — say an hour — happened a thing, by

my own fault, which — but I have no heart to write that. Let the record end here.

The source of the below statistics is <http://www.abmc.gov/>:

116,516 Americans lost their lives during World War I.

405,399 Americans lost their lives during World War II.

54,246 American servicemen and -women lost their lives during the Korean War.

CHAPTER 44: A POSTSCRIPT BY CLARENCE

• The Yankee manages to kill 25,000 Knights in chapter 43, but he is trapped in chapter 44. Why?

On p. 443, we read:

[...] We were in a trap, you see — a trap of our own making. If we stayed where we were, our dead would kill us; if we moved out of our defenses, we should no longer be invincible. We had conquered; in turn we were conquered. The Boss recognized this; we all recognized it. If we could go to one of those new camps and patch up some kind of terms with the enemy — yes, but The Boss could not go, and neither could I, for I was among the first that were made sick by the poisonous air bred by those dead thousands. Others were taken down, and still others.

Basically, they can't leave the cave, or they will be captured. However, if they stay in the cave, they will have to breathe in the "poisonous air" created by the stench of the decaying 25,000 dead knights.

The Boss can't leave because he is wounded. On p. 442, we read:

I, Clarence, must write it for him. He proposed that we two go out and see if any help could be accorded the wounded. I was strenuous against the project. I said that if there were many, we could do but little for them; and it would not be wise for us to trust ourselves among them, anyway. But he could seldom be turned from a purpose once formed; so we shut off the electric current from the fences, took an escort along, climbed over the enclosing ramparts of dead knights, and moved out upon the field. The first wounded man who appealed for help was sitting with his back against a dead comrade. When The Boss bent over him and spoke to him, the man recognized him and stabbed him. That knight was Sir Meliagraunce, as I found out by tearing off his helmet. He will not ask for help any more.

• What are the things that can destroy civilization? (Include things from the Middle Ages and from modern civilization.)

WAR

We see that war can destroy civilization. War can do that in both the 6th century and the 19th century. War breaks out, and King Arthur is killed. The Yankee destroys his own civilization, saying that he doesn't want it to be used against him. War destroys the civilization that the Yankee has established in the 6th century.

War can certainly do the same thing in the 19th and following centuries. The final chapters of

Connecticut Yankee seem to foretell the awful slaughter of World War I. Since then, we have come up with even more terrible ways of killing ourselves and others.

Twain shows that our modern-day, scientific society poses its own dangers. For example, today the United States has weapons of mass destruction that would amaze King Arthur's Knights. Science has made modern warfare horrific.

IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION

Ignorance and superstition can also destroy a civilization. We see that in King Arthur's England. Merlin is the representative of ignorance and superstition, and his spell finally works at the end of the novel, when he succeeds in sending the Yankee back to the 19th century.

The end of the novel shows the forces of superstition and ignorance destroying the progress that the Yankee had created. Finally, a spell by Merlin works. That spell is a symbol of the power of superstition and ignorance — power that can overwhelm and destroy progress. At the same time, the end of the novel shows the dangers of science when it is used to create weapons of mass destruction.

POLLUTION

If we pollute the planet enough, possibly our babies could be born with or acquire low IQs. (This could be the basis for an interesting science fiction novel.)

Global warming caused by pollution could also end up killing us.

POWER POLITICS

The Yankee is against the Roman Catholic Church because it engages in power politics. The Yankee does find that many of the priests who work with the common people are kind and decent human beings, but the priests who are higher in the hierarchy are more interested in gaining power over people than in helping people — something that Jesus would not like.

The Yankee believes that the Roman Catholic Church in 6th-century England supported these things: hereditary nobility, social inequality, superstition, and the meek subservience of the masses to authority and tradition.

Power politics, of course, can also lead to war.

NATURAL DISASTERS

A new Ice Age or global warming or a meteor could destroy civilization.

Plagues of various kinds can destroy Humankind.

• Morgan le Fay is evil. The Yankee's name is Hank Morgan. Does the shared name, in your opinion, have any significance? (Note that "le" in "Morgan le Fay" has an "e" and is not capitalized.)

We believe in many of the things that Hank Morgan believes in, but we recognize the awfulness of the modern warfare he brings to medieval England. That warfare is evil. It is much worse than the evil of Morgan le Fay in sheer numbers of people killed.

• Who kills more people: Morgan le Fay or Hank Morgan (the Yankee)?

Hank Morgan kills many more people than Morgan le Fay.

One tragedy of modern times is that we have so many different ways to effectively and efficiently kill human beings.

- **What happens to the Yankee?**

The Yankee goes out to help any wounded knights he can, and Sir Meliagraunce stabs him.

On p. 442, we read:

I, Clarence, must write it for him. He proposed that we two go out and see if any help could be accorded the wounded. I was strenuous against the project. I said that if there were many, we could do but little for them; and it would not be wise for us to trust ourselves among them, anyway. But he could seldom be turned from a purpose once formed; so we shut off the electric current from the fences, took an escort along, climbed over the enclosing ramparts of dead knights, and moved out upon the field. The first wounded man who appealed for help was sitting with his back against a dead comrade. When The Boss bent over him and spoke to him, the man recognized him and stabbed him. That knight was Sir Meliagraunce, as I found out by tearing off his helmet. He will not ask for help any more.

Merlin also casts a spell (that actually works!) to make the Yankee sleep until the 19th century.

- **What happens to Merlin?**

Later, an old woman shows up to “help,” and she turns out to be Merlin, who casts a spell — it actually works! — to make the Yankee sleep until his own century. The Yankee is left in a deep recess of the cave. Merlin laughs so hard that he leans against an electric fence and is electrocuted to death.

- **What happens to Clarence?**

Does Clarence die?

Yes.

On pp. 443-444, we read:

The Boss has never stirred — sleeps like a stone. If he does not wake to-day we shall understand what kind of a sleep it is, and his body will then be borne to a place in one of the remote recesses of the cave where none will ever find it to desecrate it. As for the rest of us — well, it is agreed that if any one of us ever escapes alive from this place, he will write the fact here, and loyally hide this Manuscript with The Boss, our dear good chief, whose property it is, be he alive or dead.

No note is added to the manuscript, so Clarence and the other boys die. Because they die, the manuscript is near the Boss, who finds it when he awakens.

CHAPTER 45: FINAL P.S. BY M.T.

- **Why does the Yankee wish to return to King Arthur’s England?**

Some critics suggest that the Yankee wants to return to King Arthur’s England because purity is

there. Of course, this is completely wrong. Ignorance and superstition are there. Twain has just spent hundreds of pages telling us about the evils of King Arthur's England. It would be a major mistake for him to suddenly write about how great King Arthur's England is in the final pages of his novel.

Instead, the Yankee wishes to return to King Arthur's England for these reasons:

- 1) His wife and daughter are there.
- 2) He came very close to establishing civilization there, and he hopes to be able to succeed if he returns there.

Some things are wrong with both the 6th and the 19th centuries. (And the 21st century.)

• In this novel, do you think that Mark Twain is criticizing our belief in progress? Is he criticizing imperialism? Is he criticizing both?

Perhaps Twain is criticizing Imperialism.

We ought not to take Progress for granted.

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APPENDIX B: PAPER TOPICS

- How does Mark Twain criticize society in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*?
- To what extent is *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* a satiric criticism of the 19th century (and modern times) as opposed to a satiric criticism of the 6th century?
- How does Mark Twain use Realism to educate people about the Middle Ages?
- How does Twain satirize both the 6th and the 19th centuries (and modern times)?
- How does Twain satirize the 19th century (and modern times)?
- What is the life of the lower classes like? How do their lives compare to the lives of the lower classes in the 19th century?
- Write a character analysis of the Connecticut Yankee. What are his strengths and weaknesses? (Note: If you write about this question, you must — among other things — write about the end of the novel and how the Yankee brings modern warfare to Camelot.)
- Write a character analysis of King Arthur. What are his strengths and weaknesses?
- Compare and contrast the Connecticut Yankee and King Arthur.
- Compare and contrast the Connecticut Yankee and Merlin.
- Discuss the themes of crime, punishment, and justice in the novel.
- Discuss the class system (church, nobility, freemen, and slaves) as revealed in the novel.
- Discuss how the novel can be interpreted as a criticism of American Imperialism and of an over-optimistic belief in progress.
- Discuss the theme of religion in the novel.
- Discuss the theme of education (or training) in the novel.
- Write a paper on the theme that, as Lord Acton said, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”
- Suppose that the Connecticut Yankee were to institute the American Bill of Rights in his medieval civilization. What would be the effect on Camelot? (See Appendix D for the Bill of Rights.)

APPENDIX C: PAPER HINTS

- **How does Mark Twain criticize society in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*?**
- **To what extent is *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* a satiric criticism of the 19th century as opposed to a satiric criticism of the 6th century?**
- **How does Twain satirize both the 6th and the 19th centuries?**
- **How does Twain satirize the 19th century (and modern times)?**

Note: If you write about Mark Twain's satire of the 19th century and modern times, organize your paper by topics. Do not go from one chapter of the novel to another chapter. Put related topics together. For example, slavery, tenant farming (after the Civil War), and lynching are all related topics. They will form a long section of many paragraphs in your paper. Another organizing technique is to put the 19th century criticisms first and the criticisms of modern times (advertising, pollution, materialism, weapons of mass destruction) last.

19th century

Ch. 13 & Ch. 29: Lack of civil rights following freeing of slaves. (Freemen.)

Ch. 26: Newspapers.

Ch. 29: Tenant farming.

Ch. 30 & Ch. 31: Lynchings.

Ch. 31: Children play at being a mob.

Ch. 21 & 34: Slavery in the 19th century.

Ch. 21: The Chain Gang.

Ch. 34: Must prove that you are free.

Ch. 34: Orator praises freedom in front of slaves.

Ch. 42: Stock market manipulation.

Modern, too

Ch. 16 & Ch. 22: Advertising.

Ch. 22: Air pollution (soap factory).

Ch. 22 & Ch. 42: Modern materialism (Siege Perilous, Hermit and sewing machine).

Ch. 43: Modern warfare and weapons of mass destruction.

Does Twain satirize these things?

- Idea of progress? (The Yankee brings civilization to Camelot, but he blows up his civilization.)
- Superstition? — America.
- Witch burning (Salem)? — America. (Ch. 35).

- Torture? — America? (Ch. 17).
- Imperialism? — America?
- Are the Yankee (and America) overconfident in what they think they can accomplish?
- **How does Mark Twain use Realism to educate people about the Middle Ages?**
- Yankee traveling in armor. Very uncomfortable.
- Slavery.
- Lots of ignorance and superstition.
- One way to organize this paper is to go from social class to social class: slaves and peasants, knights and nobles, magicians, and monks.
- **What is the life of the lower classes like? How do their lives compare to the lives of the lower classes in the 19th century?**
- Torture in dungeons of Morgan le Fay.
- Many silly laws that freemen have to follow.
- Freemen are much like slaves of the 19th century.
- More freedom in America of the late 19th century.
- **Write a character analysis of the Connecticut Yankee. What are his strengths and weaknesses? (Note: If you write about this question, you must — among other things — write about the end of the novel and how the Yankee brings modern warfare to Camelot.)**

One way to organize this paper is to write about the good qualities of the Yankee, and then to write about the bad qualities of the Yankee.

Ch. 17: Allows Morgan le Fay to hang musicians.

Ch. 40: Censorship and Sir Dinadan.

Ch. 43: Brings modern warfare and weapons of mass destruction to Camelot.

- **Write a character analysis of King Arthur. What are his strengths and weaknesses?**
- Nobility in the smallpox hut.
- For slavery until he experiences it.
- **Compare and contrast the Connecticut Yankee and King Arthur.**

Democracy versus monarchy.

19th century versus 6th century.

- **Compare and contrast the Connecticut Yankee and Merlin.**

Science versus magic. And: Knowledge versus superstition.

APPENDIX D: THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The Ten Original Amendments: The Bill of Rights.

Passed by Congress September 25, 1789.

Ratified December 15, 1791.

AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT II

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

AMENDMENT VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

AMENDMENT VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

APPENDIX E: SHORT REACTION MEMOS

The questions in this short guide can be used in discussions; however, they can also be used for short reaction memos. For example, I do this at Ohio University. See below for the assignment and sample short reaction memos.

How Do I Complete the Reaction Memo Assignments?

During the quarter, you will have to write a series of short memos in which you write about the readings you have been assigned.

Each memo should be at least 250 words, not counting long quotations from the work of literature. Include a word count for each memo, although that is not normally part of the memo format.

Following the memo heading (To, From, Re, Date, Words), write the question you are answering and the part of the book that the question applies to.

You may answer one question or more than one question. I will supply you with a list of questions that you may answer

Note that a Works Cited list is needed if you use quotations.

For examples from my Great Books courses at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, see below.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *Odyssey*, Book 12 Reaction Memo

Date: Put Today's Date Here

Words: 323

***Odyssey*, Book 12: Is Odysseus a bad leader?**

This is an important question in the *Odyssey*. After all, Odysseus leads 12 ships and many men to Troy, but the ships are all destroyed and all of his men die and he returns home to Ithaca alone. Who is responsible for the deaths of Odysseus' men? Is Odysseus responsible for their deaths, or

do the men bear some responsibility for their own deaths? Many readers prefer Odysseus, the great individualist, to Aeneas, the man who founds the Roman people, but then they realize that all of Odysseus' men died, while Aeneas succeeded in bringing many Trojans to Italy. When readers think of that, they begin to have a greater respect for Aeneas.

From the beginning of the *Odyssey*, this has been an issue. The bard says that the men perished because of the "recklessness of their own ways" (1.8). However, we notice that Odysseus is asleep at odd times. In Book 10, Aeolus gives Odysseus a bag in which the contrary winds have been tied up. This allows Odysseus to sail to Ithaca safely. However, they reach the island and see smoke rising from the fires, Odysseus goes to sleep and his men open the bag, letting the contrary winds escape, and the ship is blown back to King Aeolus' island. Similarly, in Book 12, on the island of the Sun-god, Odysseus is asleep when his men sacrifice the Sun-god's cattle.

It does seem that Odysseus does not bear the blame for his men's death. In many cases, they do perish through their own stupidity. In other cases, of course, they die during war or during adventures, but in those times, Odysseus was with them, and he could have died, too.

One other thing to think about is that Odysseus is telling his own story. Could he be lying? After all, some of the adventures he relates are pretty incredible. (Probably not. The gods vouch for some of what he says.)

Works Cited

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *Inferno*, Canto 1 Reaction Memo

Date: Put Today's Date Here

Words: 263

***Inferno*, Canto 1**

• What do you need to be a member of the Afterlife in Dante's *Inferno*?

To be a member of the afterlife in Hell, you must meet a number of criteria:

- 1) You must be dead.
- 2) You must be an unrepentant sinner.
- 3) You must be a dead, unrepentant sinner by 1300.

Of course, only dead people — with a few exceptions such as Dante the Pilgrim — can be found in the *Inferno*.

Only unrepentant sinners can be found in the *Inferno*. Everyone has sinned, but sinners who repented their sins are found in Purgatory or Paradise, not in the *Inferno*.

Dante set his *Divine Comedy* in 1300, so the characters who appear in it are dead in 1300.

Inferno, Canto 1

• What does it mean to repent?

A sinner who repents regrets having committed the sin. The repentant sinner vows not to commit the sin again, and he or she does his or her best not to commit the sin again.

Inferno, Canto 1

• What is the geography of Hell? In *The Divine Comedy*, where is Hell located?

Hell is located straight down. We will find out later that when Lucifer was thrown out of Paradise, he fell to the Earth, ending up at the center of the Earth. The center of the Earth is the lowest part of Hell. Lucifer created the Mountain of Purgatory when he hit the Earth.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *Candide*, Ch. 26-30

Date: Today's Date

Words: 368

Ch. 30: Write a brief character analysis of the old man and his family.

When Candide and his friends meet the old man, the old man is “sitting in front of his door beneath an arbor of orange trees, enjoying the fresh air” (119). The old man basically ignores politics that he cannot influence. Some people have recently been killed in Constantinople, and the old man does not even know their names. However, the old man does enjoy some material things, including good food, and he enjoys hospitality.

The old man invites Candide and his friends to enjoy some refreshments inside his house. They are served with “several kinds of fruit-favored drinks” and “boiled cream with pieces of candied citron in it, oranges, lemons, limes, pineapples, pistachio nuts, and mocha coffee” (119). The old man and his family have an abundance of food, but although Candide wonders if the old man has an enormous farm, the old man tells him, “I have only twenty acres of land, which my children and I cultivate. Our work keeps us free of three great evils: boredom, vice, and poverty” (119).

From this brief encounter, we learn several things:

- The old man and his family are content — even happy.
- The old man and his family ignore the wars and murders and crimes that happen elsewhere.
- The old man and his family have enough. They work hard on their little farm, and they have plenty of food and good things to eat.
- The old man and his family have only 20 acres, but 20 acres are enough.

Candide and his friends decide to emulate the old man and his family. Each of them begins to work hard on their little farm. Cunegonde learns to make pastry, Paquette begins to embroider, and the old woman does the laundry and repairs the linen. Brother Giroflée becomes a carpenter,

and Candide and the others grow “abundant crops” (120). At the end of the short novel, the group of friends seem to have come the closest they can to happiness in a world filled with evil, but it does take an effort on their part. As Candide says in the short novel’s last words, “... we must cultivate our garden” (120).

Works Cited

Voltaire. *Candide*. Trans. Lowell Bair. New York: Bantam Books, 1981. Print.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, Ch. 1-4 Reaction Memo

Date: Put Today’s Date Here

Words: 286

CH. 3: “KNIGHTS OF THE TABLE ROUND”

• What hints do we have of the relationship between Queen Guenever and Sir Launcelot?

Some hanky-panky is going on between Sir Launcelot and King Arthur’s wife, Queen Guenever. Some six or eight prisoners address her, and they tell her that Sir Kay the Seneschal has captured them. Immediately, everybody present feels surprise and astonishment. The queen looks disappointed because she had hoped that Sir Launcelot captured the prisoners.

As it turns out, they were. Sir Launcelot first rescued Sir Kay from some attackers, then he took Sir Kay’s armor and horse and captured more knights. All of these prisoners were actually captured by Sir Launcelot, not by Sir Kay at all.

Two passages let us know that something is going on between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever:

1. The first is subtle; she looks disappointed when Sir Kay says that he captured the knights: “Surprise and astonishment flashed from face to face all over the house; the queen’s gratified smile faded out at the name of Sir Kay, and she looked disappointed ...” (503).

2. The other is much more overt and occurs after Guenever learns that the knight who really captured the prisoners was Sir Launcelot: “Well, it was touching to see the queen blush and smile, and look embarrassed and happy, and fling furtive glances at Sir Launcelot that would have got him shot in Arkansas, to a dead certainty” (503).

Works Cited

Twain, Mark. *Four Complete Novels*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1982. Print.

APPENDIX F: MARK TWAIN’S LIFE

What was Mark Twain’s real name?

Mark Twain’s real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens.

What is one story of how Mark Twain got his pseudonym?

Of course, a pseudonym is a fictional name. Many writers publish works of literature using a fictional name or pseudonym.

When Sam Clemens was a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, he liked the words that rivermen called when they measured 12 feet of water. This much water had a depth of two fathoms, so the rivermen called out, “Mark twain.” The phrase meant, “Note that (or mark) there are two (or twain) fathoms of water.” Since two fathoms of water was deep enough to be safe for the steamboat, the pilot could heave a sigh of relief.

Mr. Twain once took his family for a trip on a steamboat, and he stood on the deck listening to the cries of “Mark twain” coming from the rivermen. His daughter Clara came up to him and said, “I have hunted all over the boat for you. Don’t you know they are calling for you?”

Twain scholar Stephen Railton points out that the phrase “Mark twain” can be either good news or bad news. River steamboats needed a certain level of water in order to stay afloat — between 9 ½ and 10 ½ feet. If the water was getting shallower when the person measuring the level of water shouted “Mark twain,” that was bad news. If the water was getting deeper when the person measuring the level of water shouted “Mark twain,” that was good news.

Similarly, in much of Twain’s writing is an ambiguity. His writing can be very funny, but it is also sharply satiric. He uses satire to criticize the bad parts of being human beings. Satire is humorous criticism. The humor makes you laugh, but the criticism can make you cry.

What is the other, less known story of how Mark Twain got his pseudonym?

When Sam Clemens was a newspaper reporter working in the Nevada Territory, he used a variety of pseudonyms, including Mark Twain.

The second story of how he got his pseudonym was that he drank a lot, and he enjoyed drinking a lot although he didn’t have much money. Sam Clemens always ordered two drinks when he walked into the saloon either because he was powerful thirsty, or because he wanted to treat a friend.

Therefore, he opened up a tab in the saloon. When he walked into the saloon, he would call out, “Mark twain.” This meant, “Mark (or write down) two more drinks on my tab.”

In time, he adopted the pseudonym “Mark Twain.”

Mark Twain and Bill Nye journeyed to Nevada, where the frontiersmen tried to drink them under the table. However, after a night of hard drinking, the only people still conscious were Mr. Twain and Mr. Nye. Finally, Mark Twain told his friend, “Well, Bill, what do you say we get out of here and go somewhere for a drink?”

What does the phrase “mark twain” mean?

The phrase means “note the two.” Of course, many two’s appear in Mark Twain’s writings. The major two that appears in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and of course another notable two appears in *The Prince and the Pauper*. In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, another notable two, besides Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, is the King and the Duke.

Which is the best biography of Mark Twain?

The best biography of Mark Twain is probably Justin Kaplan's *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*, which won the Pulitzer Prize. Mr. Kaplan focuses mainly on Mark Twain and his life in 1865 and after. Of course, 1865 is the year the Civil War (1861-1865) ended.

What happened to Sam Clemens from 1835-1955 (His Birth and Youth)?

On November 30, 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in a very small village named Florida in Missouri. He was the sixth child among seven children, but only three of his siblings survived to become adults. In those days, death during childhood was common because antibiotics and other modern medicines had not been discovered. His older siblings were his brother Orion and his sister, Pamela. He also had a younger brother named Henry. Sam was born when Halley's Comet was very visible from the Earth.

When Sam was four years old, his family moved to Hannibal, Missouri. This is the village that Mark Twain writes about as St. Petersburg in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This is where Sam grew up among other children and had many experiences such as exploring a cave that appear in his novels.

As a young schoolboy, Sam got into trouble with his teacher, and she sent him outside to find a switch that she could use to hit him. Young Sam returned with a wood shaving that would definitely not hurt if it were used as a switch.

When Sam was 11, his father, John Marshall Clemens, died of pneumonia acquired while riding in the rain as he sought to be elected to public office to support his family. John was a big dreamer, but his dreams never came to fruition. His businesses tended to fail, and his family was impoverished.

In his book *Roughing It*, Mark Twain wrote:

He left us a sumptuous legacy of pride in his fine Virginia stock and his national distinction, but I presently found I could not live on that alone without occasional bread to wash it down with.

His family needed money, so Sam went to work as a typesetter in printing offices. This, of course, involved working with words, although other people wrote the words.

One important fact of Sam's early life is that Missouri was a slave state. This meant that slaves surrounded Sam when he was growing up, and it meant that people who supported slavery surrounded him when he was growing up. As a result, he accepted slavery when he was young. He once wrote, "In church we were told, 'God approved it. Slavery was a holy thing.'"

However, Sam did see slaves being mistreated — even killed — when he was growing up. He also saw slaves waiting to be taken down the Mississippi River to be sold to plantation owners.

But at the same time he played with young slave children when he was growing up. In addition, he listened to stories told by elderly slaves. In particular, he listened to stories told by an elderly slave named Dan'l, who told him the story about "The Golden Arm," a story that Mark Twain told often during lectures and a story that actor Hal Holbrook tells in his one-man show *Mark Twain Tonight*.

When Sam was 17 or 18 years old, he ran away from Hannibal, Missouri, and he went to New York to see the World's Fair there. He never lived in Hannibal again.

What happened to Sam Clemens from 1855-1865 (Mark Twain is born)?

Sam did return to the Mississippi River, however, becoming a riverboat pilot after being apprenticed under pilot Horace Bixby. He wrote about his time of his life in his fictionalized autobiography titled *Life on the Mississippi*.

As a cub steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, Mark Twain was taught a valuable, but embarrassing, lesson by an experienced pilot, Mr. Bixby. Mr. Bixby asked Mark if he knew enough to take the steamboat across the next crossing. Aware that there was plenty of water in the channel and no chance of running aground, Mark replied that of course he could, since “I couldn’t get bottom there with a church steeple.” Mr. Bixby replied, “You think so, do you?” Something in Mr. Bixby’s voice shook Mark’s confidence, which Mr. Bixby’s leaving Mark alone in the pilothouse did nothing to restore. The crossing did not go smoothly. Mark imagined shallow water and reefs everywhere, and eventually had to be rescued by Mr. Bixby, although there was absolutely no danger of grounding the steamboat. After the ordeal, Mr. Bixby told his protégé, “You shouldn’t have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don’t turn coward. That isn’t going to help matters any.”

Mark Twain told this story in *Life on the Mississippi*: A riverboat pilot named Stephen was out of money and in New Orleans. Aware of Stephen’s plight, a steamboat captain offered him the job of piloting a steamboat up the Mississippi — but at a salary of \$125 instead of Stephen’s usual salary of \$250. Having no choice, Stephen accepted the offer, but he piloted the boat up the middle of the river so that it had to fight the current instead of seeking the stiller water nearer the shore. Much slower boats sped past the steamboat Stephen was piloting. When the captain remonstrated with Stephen, he replied, “I know as much as any man can afford to know for \$125.” On hearing this, the captain raised Stephen’s salary to \$250, and Stephen began to make that steamboat fly upstream.

In 1859, Sam received his riverboat license. He served as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River until 1861, when the Civil War broke out.

Sam could have served either the North or the South as a riverboat pilot, but he briefly served as a Confederate irregular on horseback before going west. He wrote about this part of his life in “The Private History of a Campaign that Failed.” Of course, after the Civil War both the North and the South could have been angry at him. The North could have been angry at him because he fought briefly for the South, and the South could have been angry at him because he served only briefly and went West quickly. However, neither side became angry at him. Humor is an excellent way of deflecting anger, and both the North and the South laughed at his explanation of why he went West: He got tired of constantly retreating.

Sam’s older brother, Orion, had been appointed Secretary of the Nevada Territory, and Sam went West with Orion. Many prospectors were searching for and finding silver, which they mined, and Sam was hopeful — or even certain — that he would become rich as a prospector.

Sam never did find silver — or gold — metal. However, he did find lots of humor. The miners amused themselves by telling tall tales, and Sam listened to those stories, and later he retold them in his books. His first important story, “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” is one he heard out West. In Sam’s hands, these stories became silver and gold of a different sort.

Because Sam had no luck as a prospector, he decided to make a living with words. He had been making money by publishing articles — in the form of letters — in newspapers, and he got a job as a reporter at the *Virginia City Enterprise*.

Because Sam had no money, he walked 120 miles to get to his new job.

In her book *Mark Twain in Nevada*, Effie Mona Mack wrote about the cheapness of life in the frontier. In 1863, a man who was shot and died in Virginia City, Nevada, remained under a billiards table from 4 a.m. until noon while frontiersmen continued to shoot billiards above him. The coroner was too busy to come and take away the corpse.

Still, humor existed out West, and Sam provided some of it. Early in 1863, he started using the pseudonym “Mark Twain,” and this is the pseudonym that stuck. Many of his articles were humorous, and the name “Mark Twain” became associated with humor, especially in 1865, when he published “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” the story that made him nationally famous after it was published in the east and in newspapers across the country. The Civil War was over, people were tired of suffering, and they were eager to laugh at Mark Twain’s story.

What happened to Mark Twain from 1865 to 1875 (Sam comes east)?

Mark Twain went East, and in 1867, he took a trip to Europe and the Holy Land. His expenses were paid by a California newspaper for which he worked.

Mark had earlier published a book titled *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Stories*, but the book was badly proofread and did not sell many copies, so he regarded his first real book as *Innocents Abroad*, which was written about his trip to Europe and the Holy Land. This book was his best-selling book during his life — his best-selling novel during his life was *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. *Innocents Abroad* is well worth reading today; in it, Mark Twain criticizes both Europe and the Holy Land. The United States comes off well by comparison.

One other important thing happened to Mark Twain during his trip abroad. He saw an ivory miniature portrait of Olivia Langdon, the sister of fellow traveler Charles Langdon, and he fell in love. Eventually, he married her, but it took some persuasion.

Olivia’s family was wealthy, in contrast to Mark Twain’s family. She was 10 years younger than he was, and Mark Twain’s manners were much rougher than those of Olivia and her family. One of the things that Mark Twain did was to ask her to help him reform. He called her “Livy.”

When Mark Twain wanted to marry Olivia Langdon, the daughter of a wealthy family in Connecticut, her father asked him to provide character references. Mr. Twain gave him the names of some prominent men, including ministers, whom he had known in the West. Unfortunately, the men reported that Mr. Twain was “born to be hung” and would end up in a “drunkard’s grave.” Nevertheless, Mr. Langdon allowed Mr. Twain to marry his daughter, saying, “Take the girl. I know you better than they do.”

As you may expect, Mark Twain was a hard man to reform, and his reformation was a work in progress:

- Mark Twain liked to visit neighbors informally — without wearing a collar or tie. This

upset his wife, Livy, so Mr. Twain wrapped up a package which he sent to his neighbors along with a note that read: “A little while ago, I visited you for about half an hour minus my collar and tie. The missing articles are enclosed. Will you kindly gaze at them for 30 minutes and then return them to me?”

- Mark Twain enjoyed reading and writing in bed. One day, a reporter was coming over to interview him, so his wife, Livy, said, “Don’t you think it would be a bit embarrassing for the reporter — your being in bed?” Mr. Twain replied, “Why, Livy, if you think so, we might have the other bed made up for him.”

- Mark Twain believed that vigorous cussing was one of the greatest joys of life; unfortunately, his wife, Livy, disagreed. One morning, Mr. Twain cut himself while shaving, so he vigorously shouted a long stream of cuss words. Livy, in an attempt to shock him, calmly repeated each word he had said. Mr. Twain smiled at his wife, then said, “You know the words, dear Livy, but you don’t know the tune.”

Mark Twain and Livy got married in 1870, and immediately Mark became a member of the upper class as a result of marrying well. Livy’s father even gave them a house in Buffalo, New York. It was a surprise. Mark Twain was expecting to have to stay in a hotel, but instead his father-in-law presented him and Livy with a house. Mark Twain joked that his father-in-law could stay there anytime he wanted to — and he wouldn’t have to pay anything, either.

Eventually, Mark Twain and Livy moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where he had built a house. The house was lavish, and it required seven servants to run. Mark Twain had to work very hard to pay the bills. In fact, sometimes he and his family lived in Europe to cut down on living expenses.

Mark Twain was a true original. He lived for years in Hartford, Connecticut, whose most learned citizen was J. Hammond Trumbull. Mr. Twain was very impressed by him — because he knew how to use profanity in 27 languages. While Mr. Twain was living in Hartford, he attended a baseball game at which a boy stole his umbrella. Mr. Twain offered two rewards: \$5 for the umbrella, and \$200 for the boy’s corpse.

What happened to Mark Twain from 1875 to 1885 (productivity and happiness)?

From 1875 to 1885, Mark Twain was at his happiest and his most productive. This is when he published the novels he is most remembered for.

Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876.

He published *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1881.

He published *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885.

During this time, a son named Langdon was born, but the child died when he was two years old. Mark Twain felt guilty because he had taken his son out for a ride in a carriage and had not noticed that the furs keeping his son warm had fallen from around his legs. The son died of diphtheria in 1872.

Mark Twain also had three daughters, all of whom he loved deeply. In 1872, Susy was born. As a young girl, she wrote a book, the first sentence of which stated, “We are a very happy family.” Daughter Clara was born in 1874, and daughter Jean was born in 1880.

However, Mark Twain needed money. His elaborate house required \$100,000 annually to maintain, and he once wrote in a letter to one of his friends, “My household expenses are something ghastly.”

In part because of this, Mark Twain was always in search of ways to make money — lots of money. He invested in many inventions that he hoped would make his fortune, but unfortunately these inventions seldom worked out and ended up costing him money instead of making him money.

What happened to Mark Twain from 1885 to 1895 (bankruptcy)?

Mark Twain wrote two important novels during this time: He published *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* in 1889, and he published *Pudd’nhead Wilson* in 1894.

Unfortunately, much of the money he made was going into keeping his speculative ventures afloat. He invested a fortune into perfecting the Paige typesetting machine, but the machine was never perfected. This machine was supposed to do mechanically what Sam had done as a teenager: set type so it could be printed. (The Duke sets type in one of his scams in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.) Unfortunately, this machine and its failure bankrupted Mark Twain.

In 1894, he found that he was bankrupt, and that he owed \$100,000 — a lot of money now, and a great fortune at the time.

What happened to Mark Twain from 1895 to 1910 (the last 15 years of his life)?

Mark Twain did not stiff his creditors. He got financial advice from Henry Rogers, a Standard Oil executive, and he set out on an around-the-world lecture tour to earn money to pay off all his debts. He did pay off his debts, and in his old age he actually had lots of money.

Mark Twain was a lecturer for a long time. He did not always enjoy it, but the audience did. He was able to draw humor from his life of lecturing:

- Mark Twain understood small print and advertising. One of his advertisements for a lecture tour consisted of the huge words “MAGNIFICENT FIREWORKS” followed by the small print “were in contemplation for this occasion, but the idea has been abandoned.” Another of his advertisements read, “The doors open at 7; the trouble begins at 8.”
- While on a lecture tour, Mark Twain got a shave in a local barber shop. The barber knew that he was shaving a stranger, but he didn’t recognize Mr. Twain, so he said, “You’ve come into town at the right time. Mark Twain is lecturing tonight.” When Mr. Twain said that he was planning to attend the lecture, the barber asked if he had bought his ticket yet. Hearing that he had not, the barber said that he would have to stand, as most of the tickets were already sold. Mr. Twain sighed, then said, “That’s my luck. Whenever that fellow gives a lecture, I always have to stand.”
- When Mark Twain was scheduled to speak at a small town, he would often enter a store and ask if people knew about his lecture being scheduled that night. Once he entered a grocery store and asked if there were anything special going on that evening. The grocer replied, “I think there’s a lecture tonight — I’ve been selling eggs all day.”

Of course, Mark Twain was widely loved, and his books were widely loved. He also earned a

large amount of respect because he had paid all his debts.

However, Mark Twain suffered in his old age because of deaths in the family.

First Susy died in 1896 of spinal meningitis, an infection. This hit Mark Twain hard. He loved his daughter, and he did not get to see her before she died. The last time he saw her was when he set off on his around-the-world lecture tour. She died at the end of the tour, but before Mark Twain made it home again.

His wife, Livy, died in 1904. For much of the time Mark Twain was not allowed to see her, as the doctors thought that seeing him might excite Livy and that would be bad for her. They often exchanged affectionate notes, however.

His daughter Jean died on December 24, 1909. She had an epileptic seizure when taking a bath and drowned to death.

Mark Twain was often depressed and unhappy at the end of his life. He wrote dark stories such as *The Mysterious Stranger*. Much of his writing remained unfinished and unpublished.

He also worked on his *Autobiography*, which remained unfinished at the time of his death.

Still, Mark Twain retained his humor:

- When Mark Twain was very old, he sometimes would reach for a doorknob but miss it. He then would turn to his secretary and say, “Just practicing.”
- When his wife, Livy, worried that his spending lots of time in bed reading and writing might sap his strength, she had their daughter Clara read him a biographical passage about the poet William Cullen Bryant, who at age 80 was still taking vigorous and invigorating early-morning walks. Mr. Twain said, “Mr. Bryant was wonderful to do those early risings, and all that at eighty. If ever I get to be eighty, I mean to do them, too.”
- When he was even older, and a widower, he built and lived in a house he called Stormfield. Quickly, burglars stole the silverware from the house. Also quickly, Mr. Twain posted this note on the front door of the house: “To the next burglar. There is nothing but plated ware in this house, now and henceforth. You will find it in that brass thing in the dining-room over in the corner by the basket of kittens. If you want the basket, put the kittens in the brass thing.”
- Before he died, he felt ill. Of course, he was widely loved by the reading public, and many fans sent him home remedies in hopes that they would make him feel better. He replied using this letter: “Dear Sir (or Madam). I try every remedy sent to me. I am now on no. 67. Yours is 2,653. I am looking forward to its beneficial results.” In his old age, Mr. Twain was also still capable of savage satire: He advocated the passing of a law that would forbid white people from lynching black people on Christmas.

Mark Twain died on April 21, 1910, of a heart attack. A nation mourned him. Halley’s Comet was visible from the earth that year.

APPENDIX G: MARK TWAIN: ANECDOTES

Spelling

When Samuel Langhorne Clemens was a schoolboy, he was very good at spelling and usually won the Friday afternoon spelling bee in his class. However, one Friday he deliberately misspelled a word so a young girl he liked would win. As an adult writer, Mr. Clemens used the pseudonym “Mark Twain.”

Name

Mark Twain’s real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. When he was a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, he liked the words that rivermen called when they measured 12 feet of water. This much water had a depth of two fathoms, so the rivermen called out, “Mark twain.” The phrase meant, “Note that (or mark) there are two (or twain) fathoms of water.” Since two fathoms of water was deep enough to be safe for the steamboat, the pilot could heave a sigh of relief. Mr. Twain once took his family for a trip on a steamboat, and he stood on the deck listening to the cries of “Mark twain” coming from the rivermen. His daughter Clara came up to him and said, “I have hunted all over the boat for you. Don’t you know they are calling for you?”

Steamboat Pilot

As a cub steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, Mark Twain was taught a valuable, but embarrassing, lesson by an experienced pilot, Mr. Bixby. Mr. Bixby asked Mark if he knew enough to take the steamboat across the next crossing. Aware that there was plenty of water in the channel and no chance of running aground, Mark replied that of course he could, since “I couldn’t get bottom there with a church steeple.” Mr. Bixby replied, “You think so, do you?” Something in Mr. Bixby’s voice shook Mark’s confidence, which Mr. Bixby’s leaving Mark alone in the pilothouse did nothing to restore. The crossing did not go smoothly. Mark imagined shallow water and reefs everywhere, and eventually had to be rescued by Mr. Bixby, although there was absolutely no danger of grounding the steamboat. After the ordeal, Mr. Bixby told his protégé, “You shouldn’t have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don’t turn coward. That isn’t going to help matters any.”

Shoddy Contractors

While anchored before Constantinople (an adventure he described in *Innocents Abroad*), Mark Twain read up on the history of the Hellespont, a narrow channel of water over which the Persian king Xerxes ordered a bridge of ships to be built that his armies could cross on their way to attack Greece. The first bridge was destroyed, Mr. Twain writes, so Xerxes ordered the contractors to be rebuked — in other words, he had them beheaded. The second bridge was much more sturdy. According to Mr. Twain, “If our Government would rebuke some of our shoddy contractors occasionally, it might work much good.”

Innocents Abroad

While Mark Twain was traveling in Europe (an adventure he wrote about in *Innocents Abroad*), a number of tour guides made his life miserable, so with the help of a few friends, he decided to make the tour guides’ lives miserable. For the duration of the trip, Mark Twain and his friends refused to be impressed by anything a tour guide showed them. Once, a tour guide showed them a letter handwritten by Christopher Columbus. One of Mark Twain’s friends looked at the letter

and complained about the sloppy penmanship, “Why, I have seen boys in America only fourteen years old that could write better than that.”

Irritating Tour Guides

While traveling, Mark Twain and his friends tortured irritating tour guides by constantly asking if someone was dead. Thus, when a tour guide showed them a bust of Christopher Columbus, they would ask, “Is he dead?” Once, Mr. Twain and friends visited the Capuchin Cemetery, where the bones of dead monks were used to make arches and other ornaments. One of the exhibitions of the cemetery was the corpse of a monk who had been dead for 150 years. Mr. Twain decided to cut the tour short because he could tell that his friends were tempted to ask, “Is he dead?”

Climbing Stairs

While visiting the cathedral at Milan, Italy, Mark Twain and a friend wished to go aloft. A sacristan told the party “to go up one hundred and eighty-two steps and stop till he came.” According to Mr. Twain, “It was not necessary to say stop — we should have done that anyhow. We were tired by the time we got there.”

David and Goliath

In *The Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain wrote about visiting the Mosque of Omar and other interesting sites in the Holy Land. He writes, “Just outside the mosque is a miniature temple, which marks the spot where David and Goliath used to sit and judge the people.” In a footnote, Mr. Twain explains, “A pilgrim informs me that it was not David and Goliath, but David and Saul. I stick to my own statement — the guide told me, and he ought to know.”

Adam’s Grave

While on a trip to the Holy Land, Mark Twain visited the reputed grave of Adam. In *Innocents Abroad*, Mr. Twain writes, “There is no question that he is actually buried in the grave which is pointed out as his — there can be none — because it has never yet been proven that that grave is not the grave in which he is buried.”

Hotels

Mark Twain once stayed in a hotel where the person before him had signed the register, “Countess X — and suite.” Mr. Twain therefore signed the register, “Mark Twain — and valise.”

Zwei Glas

While traveling abroad, Mark Twain heard of an American student who had struggled to learn German for three whole months, but who had learned to say only “*zwei glas*,” which means “two glasses” (of beer). Still, the student reflected, he had learned those words very thoroughly.

Class Attendance

In his book *A Tramp Abroad*, Mark Twain wrote about the lecture system at Heidelberg, where attendance was not mandatory. Often, only a few students showed up for especially arcane lectures. Mr. Twain told of a lecturer who spoke day after day to an audience consisting of three students. One day, two of the students were away, and only one student showed up for the

lecture. The lecturer began his remarks as usual by saying, “Gentlemen,” corrected himself and said, “Sir,” then went on with his lecture.

Learning French

While in San Francisco, Mark Twain undertook to learn French. One day, a Frenchman who knew no English started asking questions of a group Mr. Twain was in. Because Mr. Twain was the only person in the group who had studied French, he listened to the Frenchman. However, before Mr. Twain had said a half-dozen words of French in reply, the Frenchman fainted, possibly from hunger. Mr. Twain said later, “I’ll learn French if it kills every Frenchman in the country.”

Learning German

When Mark Twain decided to take his family to Germany, his family started to study German. He even instructed Rosa, his German maid, to speak only German to his children. His daughter Susy tried to learn the language, but she said to her mother, “I wish Rosa was made in English.”

Language

Mark Twain wrote in *Innocents Abroad* that when he was in Paris, he fell into the trap of thinking that no one around him could speak English. He told a friend, “Dan, just look at this girl — how beautiful she is!” The “girl” turned to him and said, “I thank you more for the evident sincerity of the compliment, sir, than for the extraordinary publicity you have given to it!”

Travel

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can not be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.” — Mark Twain.

Profanity

Mark Twain believed that vigorous cussing was one of the greatest joys of life; unfortunately, his wife, Livy, disagreed. One morning, Mr. Twain cut himself while shaving, so he vigorously shouted a long stream of cuss words. Livy, in an attempt to shock him, calmly repeated each word he had said. Mr. Twain smiled at his wife, then said, “You know the words, dear Livy, but you don’t know the tune.”

More Profanity

“When angry, count to four; when very angry, swear.” — Mark Twain.

Yet More Profanity

The Reverend Joseph Twichell taught Mark Twain how to ride a bicycle. When they were taking a bicycle ride one day — Mr. Twain somewhat unsteadily — they came to a large stone in the middle of the road. Mr. Twain headed right toward the rock and didn’t know what to do to avoid hitting it and crashing. Reverend Twichell offered advice, but Mr. Twain replied, “Shut up, Joe. You ride ahead. I’m going to swear like hell in a minute.”

Work

In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain wrote about working as a common laborer in a quartz mill, where he refined silver ore into silver bricks. After a week of backbreaking labor, he went to his employer and said that although he had come to love the work, he felt that he could not continue working without a raise. The employer countered by saying that he was paying Mr. Twain \$10 a week, which he felt was a fair sum, and just how much of a raise did Mr. Twain want? Mark Twain replied that \$400,000 a month, and board, was all he could reasonably ask, considering the hard times. Of course, Mr. Twain was then ordered off the premises of the quartz mill.

Advertising

As the editor of a Western newspaper, Mark Twain once received a letter from one of its readers: “Dear Sir: When I opened my newspaper this morning, there was a spider inside; does this mean good luck or bad for me?” Mr. Twain replied, “Finding a spider in your paper did not mean either good luck or bad luck for you. He was merely looking to see which merchants advertised, so that he could go to the store of one who did not do so, build his web over the door, and remain peaceful and undisturbed for the rest of his days.”

Mark Twain in Nevada

In her book *Mark Twain in Nevada*, Effie Mona Mack wrote about the cheapness of life in the frontier. In 1863, a man who was shot and died in Virginia City, Nevada, remained under a billiards table from 4 a.m. until noon while frontiersmen continued to shoot billiards above him. The coroner was too busy to come and take away the corpse.

Alcohol

Mark Twain and Bill Nye journeyed to Nevada, where the frontiersmen tried to drink them under the table. However, after a night of hard drinking, the only people still conscious were Mr. Twain and Mr. Nye. Finally, Mark Twain told his friend, “Well, Bill, what do you say we get out of here and go somewhere for a drink?”

Rare Women

Women were a rare sight in the western frontier. Mark Twain relates in *Roughing It* that “once in Star City, in the Humboldt Mountains, I took my place in a sort of long, post-office single file of miners, to patiently await my chance to peep through a crack in the cabin and a sight of the splendid new sensation — a genuine, live Woman! And at the end of half of an hour my turn came, and I put my eye to the crack, and there she was, with one arm akimbo, and tossing flapjacks in a frying pan with the other. And she was one hundred and sixty-five years old, and hadn’t a tooth in her head.” (In a footnote, Mr. Twain says that since he is now in a calmer mood, he would knock 100 years off her age.)

No Place for a Presbyterian

Mark Twain, during his travels as a young man, went to Virginia City, Nevada, where a mining boom had brought in saloons, gambling places, and brightly painted women. Mr. Twain said, “It was no place for a Presbyterian, and I did not long remain one.”

Begging

Mark Twain was once down on his luck in San Francisco and almost resorted to begging. Here’s how he tells it: “I remember a certain day in San Francisco, when, if I hadn’t picked up a dime

that I found lying in the street, I should have asked someone for a quarter. Only a matter of a few hours and I'd have been a beggar. That dime saved me, and I have never begged — never.”

Snoring

Mark Twain was in a sleeper on a train, snoring loudly, when a porter awoke him to say that his snoring was keeping the other passengers awake. Mr. Twain said that he never snored, but the porter insisted that he had heard him. Mr. Twain replied, “You shouldn't believe all you hear.”

Traveling by Train

Mark Twain was riding on a train from Hartford, Connecticut, to New York City when a woman asked him if the train would stop at Grand Central Station. Mr. Twain replied, “I hope it will, madam, for if it does not there will be the devil of a smash.”

An Eccentric Friend

Mark Twain was at the races outside London, where he met a friend who had lost all his pocket money gambling and who asked if Mr. Twain would buy him a ticket back to London. “I'm nearly broke myself but I'll tell you what I'll do,” Mr. Twain replied. “You can ride under my seat and I'll hide you with my legs.” The friend agreed, but unknown to the friend, Mr. Twain bought two train tickets. When the train inspector came by to collect the tickets, Mr. Twain handed him the two tickets, then said, “My friend is a little eccentric and likes to ride under the seat.”

Noisy Clocks

Humorist Mark Twain, author of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, once stayed at the home of political cartoonist Thomas Nast, who first used the images of an elephant and a donkey to represent the Republican and the Democratic parties. During the night, Mr. Twain was bothered by the sounds of the Nast family's clocks, so he got up and stopped all of them. The next morning, everyone overslept. Mr. Twain explained what had happened and stated that the clocks had been working too hard, so they should benefit from a good night's rest.

Practical Jokes

Mark Twain was addicted to practical jokes — especially when they were jokes he played on other people. One day, when he was looking out the window of an editor's office on the third floor of a building, he noticed a friend of his standing immediately below. Unfortunately for his friend, Mr. Twain had just been made the recipient of the gift of a watermelon by the editor. You can guess what happened to the friend and the watermelon. Still, Mr. Twain reflected, the friend came out ahead because the practical joke spoiled the watermelon, making it unsuitable for eating.

Beds

Mark Twain enjoyed reading and writing in bed. One day, a reporter was coming over to interview him, so his wife, Livy, said, “Don't you think it would be a bit embarrassing for the reporter — your being in bed?” Mr. Twain replied, “Why, Livy, if you think so, we might have the other bed made up for him.”

An Interview

Edgar White, a reporter, was once asked to interview Mark Twain on a certain subject. He went to Mr. Twain's hotel close to midnight, and was shown to Mr. Twain's room. Mr. Twain was in bed, reading and smoking. Unfortunately, Mr. Twain announced that he couldn't talk about the reporter's proposed topic, as a contract he had signed forbade it. Mr. White was understandably disappointed and said in that case he had nothing to write about. "I've been in that fix many and many a time," Mr. Twain said. "Now if I were the reporter and you were the man in bed I'd tell how, over the vigorous remonstrances of the clerk I'd come up here in the dead hour of the night and aroused you from a sound sleep to" Mr. White interrupted to point out that that was not the truth — the clerk had politely shown him to the room and Mr. Twain had not been asleep. Mr. Twain sighed, then said, "If you're going to let a little thing like that stand in the way, I'm afraid I can't help you. Good night." Mr. White decided to write an article stating the absolute truth, just as it is related here. The newspaper ran his article under a big headline.

Photograph

A man was repeatedly told that he looked just like Mark Twain, so he finally sent Mr. Twain a photograph and asked if it were a good resemblance. Mr. Twain wrote back, saying that the photograph was such a good resemblance that he was using it instead of a mirror to shave by.

Lecture Tour

While on a lecture tour, Mark Twain got a shave in a local barbershop. The barber knew that he was shaving a stranger, but he didn't recognize Mr. Twain, so he said, "You've come into town at the right time. Mark Twain is lecturing tonight." When Mr. Twain said that he was planning to attend the lecture, the barber asked if he had bought his ticket yet. Hearing that he had not, the barber said that he would have to stand, as most of the tickets were already sold. Mr. Twain sighed, then said, "That's my luck. Whenever that fellow gives a lecture, I always have to stand."

No Visit

Mark Twain wrote a letter to a friend, asking him to visit. The friend wrote back, "God be with you, for I cannot." Mark Twain wrote this note at the bottom of his friend's letter, then sent it back: "He didn't come. Next time please send someone we can depend upon."

Birthday Letter

Some friends of Mark Twain wrote him a humorous letter for his birthday, but then discovered that they did not have his address, because he was so often globetrotting. So the friends addressed the letter: "MARK TWAIN. LORD KNOWS WHERE." A few months later, one of the friends in the group received a note from Mr. Twain: "HE DID."

Letters

Sometimes Mark Twain was slow in answering letters. Once a friend wanted a quick reply from Mr. Twain, so he enclosed in his letter some paper and a stamp. Very quickly, a postcard arrived from Mr. Twain: "Thanks for the sheet of writing paper and the stamp. Please send an envelope."

A Thank-You Letter

In December 1908 Mark Twain received a gift of tobacco and whiskey from some family friends. In his thank-you letter, he wrote, "I had just reformed, but it is not too late to rearrange that."

Angry Letters

When Mark Twain got angry, he used to write a letter denouncing the person who had made him angry, but he wouldn't mail the letter right away. He waited three days, and if he was still angry at the end of that time, he mailed the letter. But if he had stopped being angry, he would burn the letter.

An Angry Letter

Mark Twain once wrote this letter to the gas company: "Some day you will move me almost to the verge of irritation by your chuckle-headed Goddamned fashion of shutting your Goddamned gas off without giving any notice to your Goddamned parishioners. Several times you have come within an ace of smothering half of this household in their beds and blowing up the other half by this idiotic, not to say criminal, custom of yours. And it has happened again today. Haven't you a telephone?"

Jokes

Many people who tell stories have the bad habit of stopping repeatedly to ask the listener if he or she has heard the story before. Henry Irving was one such person. In telling a story to Mark Twain, he stopped three different times to ask if Mr. Twain had heard the story before. Finally, Mr. Twain could stand it no longer and said, "I can lie once, I can lie twice for the sake of politeness, but there I draw the line. I not only heard the story — I invented it."

Sholom Aleichem

Sholom Aleichem (1859-1916) was a Yiddish humorist. Among the characters he created in his stories were those that became the basis of *Fiddler on the Roof*. In 1906, he came to the United States, where he met Mark Twain, to whom he was introduced as the "Jewish Mark Twain." Mr. Twain then said that he would like to be introduced in Yiddish to Mr. Aleichem as the "American Sholom Aleichem."

Introductions

A boy named Pat, comic writer H. Allen Smith's nephew, had a unique way of introducing his uncle to his friends. One of Mr. Smith's many books was on the coffee table, and whenever one of Pat's friends came by, Pat would pick up the book, read one of the blurbs on the cover, then use the blurb as an introduction; for example, "Meet my uncle. He's a screwball" or "Meet my uncle. He's another Mark Twain."

Insults

While in the company of Mark Twain, the French author Paul Bourget insulted all Americans by saying, "When an American has nothing else to do, he can always spend a few years trying to discover who his grandfather was." Mr. Twain replied, "And when all other interests fail for a Frenchman, he can always try to figure out who his father was."

Tobacco

Mark Twain constantly smoked cigars. Sometimes, he visited his friend and fellow novelist William Dean Howells, who declared that after Mr. Twain had stayed with him for a few days, he had to air out his entire house because Mr. Twain smoked from the time he got up to the time

he went to bed — and sometimes later. Often, Mr. Howells would go to Mr. Twain's bedroom at night and find him in bed asleep with a lit cigar in his mouth. (According to Mr. Twain, moderate cigar smoking consists of smoking “only one cigar at a time.” He also said that the first cigar he had smoked was probably not a good one — “or the previous smoker would not have thrown it away so soon.”)

Smoking Cigars

“More than one cigar at a time is excessive smoking.” — Mark Twain.

Invitations

Enrico Caruso was multi-talented — in addition to being the best tenor of his time, he was a skilled caricaturist. When Mark Twain invited a number of cartoonists to a dinner, but did not invite him, Mr. Caruso was disappointed and said, “Perhaps he knows me only as a tenor.”

Life on the Mississippi

Mark Twain told this story in *Life on the Mississippi*: A riverboat pilot named Stephen was out of money and in New Orleans. Aware of Stephen's plight, a steamboat captain offered him the job of piloting a steamboat up the Mississippi — but at a salary of \$125 instead of Stephen's usual salary of \$250. Having no choice, Stephen accepted the offer, but he piloted the boat up the middle of the river so that it had to fight the current instead of seeking the stiller water nearer the shore. Much slower boats sped past the steamboat Stephen was piloting. When the captain remonstrated with Stephen, he replied, “I know as much as any man can afford to know for \$125.” On hearing this, the captain raised Stephen's salary to \$250, and Stephen began to make that steamboat fly upstream.

Money

People thought that Mark Twain received a dollar a word for his writing. Someone once sent him a dollar and requested, “Please send me a word.” Mr. Twain wrote back, “Thanks.”

“Take the Girl”

When Mark Twain wanted to marry Olivia Langdon, the daughter of a wealthy family in Connecticut, her father asked him to provide character references. Mr. Twain gave him the names of some prominent men, including ministers, whom he had known in the West. Unfortunately, the men reported that Mr. Twain was “born to be hung” and would end up in a “drunkard's grave.” Nevertheless, Mr. Langdon allowed Mr. Twain to marry his daughter, saying, “Take the girl. I know you better than they do.”

Gifts

Mark Twain married a woman from a wealthy family. Arriving in Buffalo, New York, Mr. and Mrs. Twain were driven to a house, where his new wife told Mr. Twain that house mansion was a gift to them from her father. Mr. Twain shook hands with his father-in-law, then said, “If you ever come to Buffalo, bring your grip [suitcase] and stay all night — it won't cost you a cent.”

Clothing

Mark Twain liked to visit neighbors informally — without wearing a collar or tie. This upset his

wife, Livy, so Mr. Twain wrapped up a package which he sent to his neighbors along with a note that read: “A little while ago, I visited you for about half an hour minus my collar and tie. The missing articles are enclosed. Will you kindly gaze at them for 30 minutes and then return them to me?”

Help Yourself

In his book *Roughing It*, Mark Twain tells a story that was old in 1872. A traveler sat down at a table on which was nothing but mackerel and mustard. The traveler asked, “Is that all there is?” The landlord replied, “*All!* Why, thunder and lightning, I should think there was mackerel enough there for six people.” The traveler said, “But I don’t like mackerel.” The landlord paused a moment, then said, “Oh — then help yourself to the mustard.”

Golf

Mark Twain once golfed with a very bad player who constantly missed the golf ball, striking the ground instead and throwing dust into the air where it settled on Mr. Twain’s hair and clothes, and in his mouth. When the very bad player asked Mr. Twain for his opinion of the golf course, he replied, “The best I’ve ever tasted.”

Hot Soup

Mark Twain once put a spoonful of very hot soup in his mouth, then turned his head and spit it out. He then remarked to his friends, “Some darn fools would have swallowed that.”

Fishing

A man once asked Mark Twain if he had caught any fish lately. Mr. Twain said that he had caught 12 trout the day before. Hearing this, the man said, “Obviously, you don’t know who I am. I am a game warden, and the season for catching trout is over.” Mr. Twain replied, “Obviously, you don’t know who I am. I am the biggest liar in the world.”

Cloves

At one time, people chewed cloves to make their breath smell good. Once, a melancholy man who was depressed by statistics regarding death told Mark Twain, “Do you realize that every time I breathe an immortal soul passes into eternity?” Mr. Twain replied, “Have you ever tried cloves?”

Friends

Mark Twain attended a large dinner where the topic of conversation was Heaven and Hell. Mr. Twain remained quiet — something very uncharacteristic of him. When a woman asked him, “Why don’t you say something? I would like to hear your opinion,” he replied, “Madam, you must excuse me. I am silent of necessity — I have friends in both places!”

Pun

Because of his white hair and large moustache, Mark Twain resembled Melville Fuller, the Chief Justice of the United States. While Mr. Twain was visiting Washington, D.C., a little girl saw him, mistook him for Mr. Fuller, and asked, “Mr. Chief Justice Fuller, won’t you write something for me in my autograph book?” Mr. Twain agreed, wrote “It’s glorious to be full but

it's heavenly to be Fuller," and then signed his own name.

Autographs

A nine-year-old boy knocked on Mark Twain's hotel door to get an autograph, not knowing that Mr. Twain was very ill. The boy was about to be sent away when Mr. Twain called from his sickbed and asked that the boy be sent in to see him. He then wrote in the boy's autograph book, "So live, that when you come to die, even the undertaker will be sorry."

Mark Twain and a Preacher

Humorist Mark Twain once attended a sermon that he listened to very intently. After church was over, he told the preacher, "I have a book at home that has every word of your sermon in it." The preacher was astonished because he thought that he had written his sermon without plagiarism. The preacher was also worried because he thought that he had perhaps read a sermon at seminary, then unconsciously plagiarized it while writing his sermon. Therefore, the preacher asked Mr. Twain to send him the book to look at. Mr. Twain did send him the book — it was a dictionary.

Dictionaries

While speaking at a graduation class at a grammar school, Mark Twain awarded one of the students a dictionary. As he gave it to the boy, Mr. Twain said, "This is a very interesting and useful book, my son. I have studied it often but I never could discover the plot."

Printers

Mark Twain was once upset with the way that the printers of one of his books had changed his punctuation, so he said, "In the beginning God Almighty made men, and then He made damn fools, and when He got His hand in He must have made printers."

Punctuation

Books should be properly edited and punctuated. When sending a book to his publishers, Mark Twain added this note: "Gentlemen: .,?!"" — *";,: Please scatter these throughout according to your taste."

Book Shelves

Mark Twain once showed a visitor his library. The visitor commented on the large numbers of books piled everywhere — on the floor, in chairs, everywhere handy. Mr. Twain explained, "It's next to impossible to borrow shelves."

Dedication

Mark Twain dedicated his first book — *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches* — to "John Smith" because he had heard that people always buy a copy of any book that is dedicated to them. Mr. Twain wrote, "It is said that the man to whom a volume is dedicated, always buys a copy. If this prove true in the present instance, a princely affluence is about to burst upon the author."

Publisher

A man had the opportunity to publish Mark Twain's first book, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*, but declined it. Years later, the man chanced to meet Mr. Twain, and told him, "I refused a book of yours and for this I stand without competitor as the prize ass of the nineteenth century."

Lawyers

After Mark Twain had finished a humorous after-dinner speech, a lawyer stood up, put his hands in his pockets, then said, "Doesn't it strike this company as a little unusual that a professional humorist should be so funny?" Mr. Twain replied, "Doesn't it strike this company as a little unusual that a lawyer should have his hands in his own pockets?"

Two Important Facts

Before giving a speech, Mark Twain once introduced himself in this way: "I know of only two important facts about the man I am introducing. First, he has never been in a state prison, and second, I can't imagine why."

Punishment

As a young schoolboy, Samuel Langhorne Clemens got into trouble with his teacher, and she sent him outside to find a switch that she could use to hit him. Young Samuel returned with a wood shaving that would definitely not hurt if it were used as a switch. Later in life, Samuel became better known to the world as the celebrated humorist Mark Twain.

High Praise

The writer J.I.C. Clarke once introduced Mark Twain and very highly praised the stories Mr. Twain had set in Yuba Dam, saying that they were the best things Mr. Twain had ever written. Mr. Twain then stood up and enthusiastically praised a German girl for 10 minutes — to no point, it seemed. Finally, Mr. Twain said, "Gentlemen, I suppose you are wondering what my story of that German girl has to do with Mr. Clarke's speech and his reference to Yuba Dam. Well, nothing at all, and that's just it. I never wrote about Yuba Dam. Mr. Clarke is thinking of Bret Harte." Everyone, including an embarrassed Mr. Clarke, laughed, then Mr. Twain and Mr. Clarke shook hands.

Advertising

Mark Twain understood small print and advertising. One of his advertisements for a lecture tour consisted of the huge words "MAGNIFICENT FIREWORKS" followed by the small print "were in contemplation for this occasion, but the idea has been abandoned." Another of his advertisements read, "The doors open at 7; the trouble begins at 8."

Public Speaking

When Mark Twain was scheduled to speak at a small town, he would often enter a store and ask if people knew about his lecture being scheduled that night. Once he entered a grocery store and asked if there were anything special going on that evening. The grocer replied, "I think there's a lecture tonight — I've been selling eggs all day."

More Public Speaking

On a voyage, Mark Twain and Chauncey Depew were asked to speak after dinner. Mr. Twain spoke for 20 minutes and was a huge hit with the audience. Mr. Depew then arose and said, “Mr. Toastmaster and Ladies and Gentlemen, before this dinner Mark Twain and I made an agreement to trade speeches. He has just delivered my speech, and I thank you for the pleasant manner in which you received it. I regret to say that I have lost the notes of his speech and cannot remember anything he has to say.” Mr. Depew then sat down to much laughter. The next day a passenger on the ship said to Mr. Twain, “I consider you were much imposed upon last night. I have always heard that Mr. Depew is a clever man, but really, that speech of his you made last night struck me as being the most infernal rot.”

Speech

Mark Twain once attended a dinner with the understanding that he would not make a speech. Near the end of the dinner, Mr. Twain arose and everyone applauded. Mr. Twain then said, “Waiter, please pass the bread.”

Speakers Should Be Brief

Mark Twain once told a story that illustrated why speakers should be brief: Mr. Twain said he attended a church when a missionary began to speak. At first Mr. Twain was fired up with enthusiasm for the missionary’s work and wanted to donate the \$400 he had and borrow all he could to give to the missionary. However, the missionary kept talking, and the longer the missionary talked, the less enthusiastic Mr. Twain became — when the offering plate was finally passed around, Mr. Twain stole ten cents from it.

“To Hell With! To Hell With!”

In his sketch “‘Party Cries’ in Ireland,” Mark Twain tells of the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Commonly, according to Mr. Twain, Irishmen would cry out either “To hell with the Pope” or “To hell with the Protestants,” depending on the religion of the crier. This became so common that a law was passed attempting to stop the custom by imposing a fine and court costs on anyone found guilty of giving a party cry. Once, a drunk was found lying in an alley, shouting, “To hell with! To hell with!” A police officer found the drunk and asked him, “To hell with what?” But the drunk replied, “Ah, bedad ye can finish it yourself — it’s too expensive for me!”

Family Prayers

Mark Twain once stayed over at the house of a friend. The next morning, he was seen standing at the top of the staircase. His friend said, “What’s the matter? Why not come on down?” Mr. Twain asked, “Family prayers over yet?” Hearing that they were over, Mr. Twain said, “All right then, I’ll come down.”

Attending Church

Mark Twain attended the church of his friend, the Reverend Joseph Twichell, and he became very interested in the sermon. After the church service was over, Mr. Twain told Reverend Twichell, “Joe, this mustn’t happen again. When I go to church, I go for a good rest and quiet nap. Today I haven’t been able to get a single wink. I tell you it won’t do; and it must not happen again.”

Request for a Donation

Andrew Carnegie was a very wealthy man who had a reputation for donating money to charitable causes. Mark Twain wrote him to say that he wanted to buy a \$2 hymn-book, pointing out that “I will bless you, God will bless you and it will do a great deal of good.” Mr. Twain then added a postscript: “Don’t send me the hymn-book — send me the two dollars.”

Politics

George Haven Putnam was Executive of the Copyright League from 1886-1891 and worked for the passage of bills to protect the copyrights of authors. Often he testified before Congress, sometimes taking along an author to buttress his arguments about the importance of a bill to provide copyright protection. Once he took along Mark Twain, but as soon as the members of Congress saw Mr. Twain, they immediately cried out for a story. For the next hour, Mr. Twain told anecdotes. Finally, the members of Congress had to leave, although no testifying had been done about the bill before Congress. After that experience, Mr. Putnam was careful not to take Mr. Twain along when he went to Congress.

More Politics

President Woodrow Wilson liked to tell a story of his incognito visit to Hannibal, Missouri, famous for its association with Mark Twain, who grew up there. President Wilson fell into conversation with a native and asked, “Have you ever heard of Tom Sawyer?” The native had not, so President Wilson asked, “Have you ever heard of Huckleberry Finn?” Again, the native had not, so President Wilson asked, “Do you know of Pudd’nhed Wilson?” This time, the native recognized the name and said, “Sure do — voted for him twice.”

The Damned Human Race

In his personal copy of Charles Darwin’s *Journal of Researches* (1890), Mark Twain wrote, “Can any plausible excuse be furnished for the crime of creating the human race?”

Ulysses S. Grant

When Ulysses S. Grant was dying of cancer of the throat, he knew he needed money to provide for his family after he died. Mark Twain came to the rescue. He had recently become a publisher, and he agreed to pay Mr. Grant the huge royalty of 20 percent for his memoirs, much more than authors usually received. In July 1885, only three days after he had completed the second volume of his memoirs, Mr. Grant died. His family received more than enough money to take care of their needs, collecting over \$400,000 from the sale of his book.

Mark Twain in Old Age

When Mark Twain was very old, he sometimes would reach for a doorknob but miss it. He then would turn to his secretary and say, “Just practicing.”

A Funeral

A few days before Christmas, a man named Smith at the Players Club asked Mark Twain to lend him his long-tailed black coat, as he needed something suitable to go to a funeral and he hadn’t a long-tailed black coat himself. Mr. Twain agreed, but told Smith to take good care of the contents in the pockets. Smith found an assortment of junk in the pockets, which he wrapped up

and gave to the clerk at Mr. Twain's hotel. When Mr. Twain was given the wrapped-up package later, he remarked that he must be getting an early Christmas present. After unwrapping the "present" and realizing where the junk had come from, he remarked, "I hope that damned Smith's funeral will be a failure."

Reports of Mark Twain's Death

While travelling abroad, Mark Twain read newspapers reports that he had died, so he sent this telegram to the Associated Press: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

Joan of Arc

When he was a young boy, Samuel Langhorne Clemens saw a piece of paper flying down the street. He chased after it, caught it, and discovered that the page came from a biography of Joan of Arc. He asked his brother who she was, discovered that she was a French heroine who had died by being burned at the stake, and started reading as much as he could about her. As an adult, he wrote a book titled *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, using his world-famous pseudonym, Mark Twain.

More Joan of Arc

Among Mark Twain's favorites of the books he had written was *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, about a French heroine for whom Mr. Twain had enormous respect. Mr. Twain met the Archbishop of Orléans, who told him that St. Joan (aka the Maid of Orléans) would no doubt see to it that anyone who wrote so beautifully about her would get into Heaven. Mr. Twain replied that he would be "perfectly satisfied" in the next life if he were near Joan of Arc and as far away as possible from her enemies.

Cremation

Mark Twain once remarked that when his time came, he wanted to be cremated. His pastor replied, "I wouldn't worry about that, if I had your chances."

Deep Pleasure

When Mark Twain was dying, a relative wrote him to say that she had asked some nuns to pray for him. Mr. Twain wrote back, "I am grateful for the prayers of those good nuns and for yours; they have already answered themselves in giving me a deep pleasure."

APPENDIX H: MARK TWAIN: QUOTATIONS

It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt.

Go to Heaven for the climate, Hell for the company.

Suppose you were an idiot, and suppose you were a member of Congress; but I repeat myself.

Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.

A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read.

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.

Truth is stranger than Fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.

In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards.

Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I've done it thousands of times.

A man is never more truthful than when he acknowledges himself a liar.

To succeed in life, you need two things: ignorance and confidence.

The lack of money is the root of all evil.

The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not.

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native criminal class except Congress.

Don't let schooling interfere with your education.

Patriot: the person who can holler the loudest without knowing what he is hollering about.

If the world comes to an end, I want to be in Cincinnati. Everything comes there ten years later.

It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.

There are lies, damned lies, and statistics.

Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.

It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.

When your friends begin to flatter you on how young you look, it's a sure sign you're getting old.

Honesty is the best policy — when there is money in it.

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow.

I can live for two months on a good compliment.

Cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare.

Man was made at the end of the week's work when God was tired.

It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.

If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.

The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year.

Under certain circumstances, profanity provides a relief denied even to prayer.

By trying we can easily endure adversity. Another man's, I mean.

Everything has its limit — iron ore cannot be educated into gold.

Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know.

Man is the only animal that blushes — or needs to.

There are times when one would like to hang the whole human race, and finish the farce.

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.

There is no sadder sight than a young pessimist, except an old optimist.

Never pick a fight with people who buy ink by the barrel.

Familiarity breeds contempt — and children.

Good breeding consists in concealing how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of the other person.

Part of the secret of a success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.

Truth is the most valuable thing we have. Let us economize it.

Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.

No sinner is ever saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon.

I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one.

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.

I have never taken any exercise except sleeping and resting.

Truth is mighty and will prevail. There is nothing wrong with this, except that it ain't so.

Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. Play consists of whatever a body is not

obliged to do.

Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered — either by themselves or by others.

Let us not be too particular; it is better to have old secondhand diamonds than none at all.

I have made it a rule never to smoke more than one cigar at a time.

George Washington, as a boy, was ignorant of the commonest accomplishments of youth. He could not even lie.

I make it a rule never to smoke while I'm sleeping.

To be good is noble; but to show others how to be good is nobler and no trouble.

Humor must not professedly teach and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever.

There are basically two types of people: people who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded.

Go to heaven for the climate and hell for the company.

A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.

Never tell the truth to people who are not worthy of it.

Classic — a book which people praise and don't read.

The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

In a good bookroom you feel in some mysterious way that you are absorbing the wisdom contained in all the books through your skin, without even opening them.

Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

But who prays for Satan? Who, in eighteen centuries, has had the common humanity to pray for the one sinner that needed it most?

God created war so that Americans would learn geography.

Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.

I would rather have my ignorance than another man's knowledge, because I have so much more of it.

It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either.

We ought never to do wrong when people are looking.

Be good and you will be lonesome.

Books are the liberated spirits of men.

A full belly is little worth where the mind is starved.

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

I was born modest, but it didn't last.

All good things arrive unto them that wait and don't die in the meantime.

Never tell the truth to people who are not worthy of it.

APPENDIX I: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for "sounds like" and "two words," then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a master's degree in English and a master's degree in Philosophy. Currently, and for a long time to come, I publish a weekly humorous column titled "Wise Up!" for *The Athens News* and I am a retired English instructor at Ohio U.

Shameless Commerce

Visit David Bruce's storefront at

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/brucebATohioDOTedu>

<http://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/bruceb>

By the way, this storefront offers free downloads of collections of my students' autobiographical essays. For example, one such collection is titled *Love and Friendship: Stories About Growing*

Up. It also has a number of free downloads of collections of good deeds.

If all goes well, I will publish one or two books a year for the rest of my life. (On the other hand, a good way to make God laugh is to tell Her your plans.)

Other Books by the Author

Author: Discussion Guides Series

Dante's Inferno: A Discussion Guide

Dante's Paradise: A Discussion Guide

Dante's Purgatory: A Discussion Guide

Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree: A Discussion Guide

Homer's Iliad: A Discussion Guide

Homer's Odyssey: A Discussion Guide

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: A Discussion Guide

Jerry Spinelli's Maniac Magee: A Discussion Guide

Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl: A Discussion Guide

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": A Discussion Guide

Lloyd Alexander's The Black Cauldron: A Discussion Guide

Lloyd Alexander's The Book of Three: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper: A Discussion Guide

Nancy Garden's Annie on My Mind: A Discussion Guide

Nicholas Sparks' A Walk to Remember: A Discussion Guide

Virgil's Aeneid: A Discussion Guide

Virgil's "The Fall of Troy": A Discussion Guide

Voltaire's Candide: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Discussion Guide

William Sleator's Oddballs: A Discussion Guide

(Oddballs is an excellent source for teaching how to write autobiographical essays/personal narratives.)

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose

From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica

Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose

Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose

Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica

Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose

Author: Kindest People Series

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 1

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 2

Author: (Free) Kindest People Volumes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 3

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 4

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 5

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 6

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds: Volume 7

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 1)

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 2)

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 3)

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 4)

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 5)

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 6)

The Kindest People: Heroes and Good Samaritans (Volume 7)

The Kindest People: Be Excellent to Each Other (Volume 1)

The Kindest People: Be Excellent to Each Other (Volume 2)

The Kindest People: Be Excellent to Each Other (Volume 3)

Some Other Books by David Bruce

250 Anecdotes About Opera

250 Anecdotes About Religion

250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2

The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Dance: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 4: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 5: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 6: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Neighborhoods: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Relationships: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Television and Radio: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Theater: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 1: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Maximum Cool: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Religion: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Resist Psychic Death: 250 Anecdotes

Seize the Day: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

Children's Biography

Nadia Comaneci: Perfect Ten