



Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, and Essays, Volume 1: 1852-1890

Mark Twain

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This Library of America book, with its companion volume, is the most comprehensive collection ever published of Mark Twain's short writings — the incomparable stories, sketches, burlesques, hoaxes, tall tales, speeches, satires, and maxims of America's greatest humorist. Arranged chronologically and containing many pieces restored to the form in which Twain intended them to appear, the volumes show with unprecedented clarity the literary evolution of Mark Twain over six decades of his career.

The nearly two hundred separate items in this volume cover the years from 1852 to 1890. As a riverboat pilot, Confederate irregular, silver miner, frontier journalist, and publisher, Twain witnessed the tragicomic beginning of the Civil War in Missouri, the frenzied opening of the West, and the feverish corruption, avarice, and ambition of the Reconstruction era. He wrote about political bosses, jumping frogs, robber barons, cats, women's suffrage, temperance, petrified men, the bicycle, the Franco-Prussian War, the telephone, the income tax, the insanity defense, injudicious swearing, and the advisability of political candidates preemptively telling the worst about themselves before others get around to it.

Among the stories included here are "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," which won him instant fame when published in 1865, "Cannibalism in the Cars," "The Invalid's Story," and the charming "A Cat's Tale," written for his daughters' private amusement. This volume also presents several of his famous and successful speeches and toasts, such as "Woman — God Bless Her," "The Babies," and "Advice to Youth." Such writings brought Twain immense success on the public lecture and banquet circuit, as did his controversial "Whittier Birthday Speech," which portrayed Boston's most revered men of letters as a band of desperadoes.

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