

# A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

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MARK TWAIN

*With an Introduction and Notes  
by Stephen Railton*

*Illustrations by Dan Beard*

GEORGE STADE  
CONSULTING EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



BARNES & NOBLE CLASSICS  
NEW YORK

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## FROM THE PAGES OF *A CONNECTICUT YANKEE* IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

“I shall never see my friends again—never, never again. They will not be born for more than thirteen hundred years yet.” (page 30)

“Merlin has wrought a spell! *Merlin*, forsooth! That cheap old humbug, that maundering old ass? Bosh, pure bosh, the silliest bosh in the world! Why, it does seem to me that of all the childish, idiotic, chuckle-headed, chicken-livered superstitions that ev—oh, damn Merlin!” (pages 52-53)

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. (page 83)

There never was such a country for wandering liars; and they were of both sexes. (page 103)

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. (page 176)

There is no accounting for human beings. (page 219)

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. (page 298)

“There is that about earthly pomps which doth ever move to reverence.” (page 335)

“The law is clear: it doth not require the claimant to prove ye are slaves, it requireth you to prove ye are *not*.” (page 366)

“Dreams that were as real as reality—delirium, of course, but so real!” (page 467)

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## MARK TWAIN

Mark Twain was born Samuel Langhorne Clemens on November 30, 1835. When Sam was four years old, his family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, a small town later immortalized in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. After the death of his father, twelve-year-old Sam quit school and supported his family by working as a delivery boy, a grocer's clerk, and an assistant blacksmith until he was thirteen, when he became an apprentice printer. He worked for several newspapers, traveled throughout the country, and established himself as a gifted writer of humorous sketches. Abandoning journalism at points to work as a riverboat pilot, Clemens adventured up and down the Mississippi, learning the 1,200 miles of the river.

During the 1860s he spent time in the West, in newspaper work and panning for gold, and traveled to Europe and the Holy Land; *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872) are accounts of those experiences. In 1863 Samuel Clemens adopted a pen name, signing a sketch as "Mark Twain," and in 1867 Mark Twain won fame with the publication of a collection of humorous writings, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches*. After marrying and settling in Connecticut, Twain wrote his best-loved works: the novels about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and the nonfiction work *Life on the Mississippi*. Meanwhile, he continued to travel and had a successful career as a public lecturer.

In his later years, Twain saw the world with increasing pessimism following the death of his wife and two of their three daughters. The tone of his later novels, including *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, became cynical and dark. Having failed as a publisher and suffering losses from ill-advised investments, Twain was forced by financial necessity to maintain a heavy schedule of lecturing. Though he had left school at an early age, his genius was recognized by Yale University, the University of Missouri, and Oxford University in the form of honorary doctorate degrees. He died in his Connecticut mansion, Stormfield, on April 21, 1910.

## **THE WORLD OF MARK TWAIN AND A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT**

- 1835** Samuel Langhorne Clemens is born prematurely in Florida, Missouri, the fourth child of John Marshall Clemens and Jane Lampton Clemens.
- 1839** The family moves to Hannibal, the small Missouri town on the west bank of the Mississippi River that will become the model for the setting of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*.
- 1840** American newspapers gain increased readership as urban populations swell and printing technology improves.
- 1847** John Clemens dies, leaving the family in financial difficulty. Sam quits school at the age of twelve.
- 1848** Sam becomes a full-time apprentice to Joseph Ament of the Missouri *Courier*.
- 1850** Sam's brother Orion, ten years his senior, returns to Hannibal and establishes the *Journal*; he hires Sam as a compositor. Steamboats become the primary means of transport on the Mississippi River.
- 1852** Sam edits the failing *Journal* while Orion is away. After he reads local humor published in newspapers in New England and the Southwest, Sam begins printing his own humorous sketches in the *Journal*. He submits "The Dandy Frightening the Squatter" to the *Carpet-Bag* of Boston, which publishes the sketch in the May issue.
- 1853** Sam leaves Hannibal and begins working as an itinerant printer; he visits St. Louis, New York, and Philadelphia. His brothers Orion and Henry move to Iowa with their mother.
- 1854** Transcendentalism flourishes in American literary culture; Henry David Thoreau publishes *Walden*.
- 1855** Sam works again as a printer with Orion in Keokuk, Iowa.
- 1856** Sam acquires a commission from Keokuk's Daily Post to write humorous letters; he decides to travel to South America.
- 1857** Sam takes a steamer to New Orleans, where he hopes to find a ship bound

for South America. Instead, he signs on as an apprentice to river pilot Horace Bixby and spends the next two years learning how to navigate a steamship up and down the Mississippi. His experiences become material for *Life on the Mississippi* and his tales of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

- 1858** Sam's brother Henry dies in a steamboat accident.
- 1859** Samuel Clemens becomes a fully licensed river pilot.
- 1861** The American Civil War erupts, putting an abrupt stop to river trade between North and South. Sam serves with a Confederate militia for two weeks before venturing to the Nevada Territory with Orion, who had been appointed by President Abraham Lincoln as secretary of the new Territory.
- 1862** After an unsuccessful stint as a miner and prospector for gold and silver, Clemens begins reporting for the *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, Nevada.
- 1863** Clemens signs his name as "Mark Twain" on a humorous travel sketch printed in the *Territorial Enterprise*. The pseudonym, a riverboat term meaning "two fathoms deep," connotes barely navigable water.
- 1864** After challenging his editor to a duel, Twain is forced to leave Nevada and lands a job with a San Francisco newspaper. He meets Artemus Ward, a popular humorist, whose techniques greatly influence Twain's writing.
- 1865** Robert E. Lee's army surrenders, ending the Civil War. While prospecting for gold in Calaveras County, California, Twain hears a tale he uses for a story that makes him famous; originally titled "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," it is published in New York's *Saturday Press*.
- 1866** Twain travels to Hawaii as a correspondent for the *Sacramento Union*; upon his return to California, he delivers his first public lecture, beginning a successful career as a humorous speaker.
- 1867** Twain travels to New York, and then to Europe and the Holy Land aboard the steamer Quaker City; during five months abroad, he contributes to California's largest paper, Sacramento's *Alta California*, and writes several letters for the New York Tribune. He publishes a volume of stories and sketches, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches*.
- 1868** Twain meets and falls in love with Olivia (Livy) Langdon. His overseas writings have increased his popularity; he signs his first book contract and begins *The Innocents Abroad*, sketches based on his trip to Europe and the Holy Land. He embarks on a lecture tour of the American Midwest.

- 1869** Twain becomes engaged to Livy, who acts as his editor from that time on. *The Innocents Abroad*, published as a subscription book, is an instant success, selling nearly 100,000 copies in the first three years.
- 1870** Twain and Livy marry. Their son, Langdon, is born; he lives only two years.
- 1871** The Clemens move to Hartford, Connecticut.
- 1872** *Roughing It*, an account of Twain's adventures out West, is published to enormous success. The first of Twain's three daughters, Susy, is born. Twain strikes up a lifelong friendship with the writer William Dean Howells.
- 1873** Ever the entrepreneur, Twain receives the patent for Mark Twain's Self-Pasting Scrapbook, an invention that is a commercial success. He publishes *The Gilded Age*, a collaboration with his neighbor Charles Dudley Warner that satirizes the post-Civil War era.
- 1874** His daughter Clara is born. The family moves into a mansion in Hartford in which they will live for the next seventeen years.
- 1876** *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is published.
- 1877** Twain collaborates with Bret Harte—an author known for his use of local color and humor and for his parodies of Cooper, Dickens, and Hugo—to produce the play *Ah Sin*.
- 1880** Twain invests in the Paige typesetter and loses thousands of dollars. He publishes *A Tramp Abroad*, an account of his travels in Europe the two previous years. His daughter Jean is born.
- 1881** *The Prince and the Pauper*, Twain's first historical romance, is published.
- 1882** Twain plans to write about the Mississippi River and makes the trip from New Orleans to Minnesota to refresh his memory.
- 1883** The nonfiction work *Life on the Mississippi* is published.
- 1884** *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a book Twain worked on for nearly ten years, is published in England; publication in the United States is delayed until the following year because an illustration plate is judged to be obscene.
- 1885** When *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is published in America —by Twain's ill-fated publishing house, run by his nephew Charles Webster—controversy immediately surrounds the book. Twain also publishes the memoirs of his friend former President Ulysses S. Grant.

- 1888** He receives an honorary Master of Arts degree from Yale University.
- 1889** He publishes *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the first of his major works to be informed by a deep pessimism. He meets Rudyard Kipling, who had come to America to meet Twain, in Livy's hometown of Elmira, New York.
- 1890** Twain's mother dies.
- 1891** Financial difficulties force the Clemens family to close their Hartford mansion; they move to Berlin, Germany.
- 1894** Twain publishes *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson*, a dark novel about the aftermath of slavery, which sells well, and *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, which does not. Twain's publishing company fails and leaves him bankrupt.
- 1895** Twain embarks on an ambitious worldwide lecture tour to restore his financial position.
- 1896** He publishes *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and *Tom Sawyer, Detective*. His daughter Susy dies of spinal meningitis.
- 1901** Twain is awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Yale.
- 1902** Livy falls gravely ill. *Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn*, a stage adaptation of the novel, opens to favorable reviews. Though he is credited with coauthorship, Twain has little to do with the play and never sees it performed. He receives an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Missouri.
- 1903** Hoping to restore Livy's health, Twain takes her to Florence, Italy.
- 1904** Livy dies, leaving Twain devastated. He begins dictating an uneven autobiography that he never finishes.
- 1905** Theodore Roosevelt invites Twain to the White House. Twain enjoys a gala celebrating his seventieth birthday in New York. He continues to lecture, and he addresses Congress on copyright issues.
- 1906** Twain's biographer Albert Bigelow Paine moves in with the family.
- 1907** Twain travels to Oxford University to receive an honorary Doctor of Letters degree.
- 1908** He settles in Redding, Connecticut, at Stormfield, the mansion that is his final home.

- 1909** Twain's daughter Clara marries; the author dons his Oxford robe for the ceremony. His daughter Jean dies.
- 1910** Twain travels to Bermuda for his health. He develops heart problems and, upon his return to Stormfield, dies, leaving behind a cache of unpublished work.

## INTRODUCTION

Mark Twain has taken his characters and readers on all kinds of trips. Huck and Jim on the raft—a poor white boy and an enslaved black man floating down a river looking for freedom—is the image with which modern readers are most likely to associate his work. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was his most popular novel during his lifetime, but among his contemporaries Twain's best-selling books were literal travel books, and he was better known as a travel writer than as a novelist. Between 1869 and 1897 he published *The Innocents Abroad*, about his trip east to Europe and the Holy Land with the Quaker City pilgrims; *Roughing It*, about his earlier adventures going west to the Nevada Territory, California, and Hawaii; *A Tramp Abroad*, which takes readers with him to Europe again; *Life on the Mississippi*, in which he returns to the river he had grown up beside and worked on as a steamboat pilot; and finally *Following the Equator*, in which he travels around the whole world. He imagined even more amazing trips in the books he began but could not finish during the last dozen years of his life: on a comet to heaven, across a germ-filled drop of water under a microscope, through the bloodstream of a drunken tramp. But none of his characters take a stranger trip than Hank Morgan, who gets hit on the head in a factory in Hartford in 1879 and wakes up to find himself just outside Camelot in the year 528.

*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* may be the world's first novel about time travel. It certainly has the most fantastic plot of all Twain's fictions. But the inspiration to send a modern American through time as well as space sprang directly out of Twain's long-standing literary goals. The story of the story begins on a Saturday in December 1884, with Twain traveling around the country on a reading tour to promote *Huck Finn*. In a bookstore in Rochester, New York, George Washington Cable, his fellow novelist and partner on the tour, suggested that *Le Morte d'Arthur* (*The Death of Arthur*), Sir Thomas Malory's classic romance about the knights of the Round Table, would make good reading matter for the trip. Twain bought the book, began reading it the next day, and shortly afterward made a note in his journal about an idea for a sketch:

Dream of being a knight errant in armor in the middle ages. Have the notions & habits of thought of the present day mixed with the necessities of that. No pockets in the armor. No way to manage certain requirements of nature. Can't scratch. Cold in the head—cant blow—can't get a handkerchief, can't use iron sleeve.

The emphasis here is on the idea's comic possibilities. The literary goal Twain's audience always expected him to put first was making them laugh. As a professional humorist, he learned early that people are much more likely to laugh when they're nervous or uncomfortable. Sex, for example, that staple of modern stand-up, is not inherently funny, but it is a subject to which almost everyone attaches some degree of discomfort. The mores of Twain's late-Victorian America ruled out sex as a subject; people laugh when they're anxious, not when they're offended or shocked. But the principle of making an audience uneasy enough to laugh applies to any subject in

which they are emotionally over-invested, and his culture's proprieties and evasions gave Twain many other opportunities to make his audience uneasy. One of his favorite strategies was treating something they considered sacred in a mocking or irreverent spirit. A knight in shining armor was a subject that you were supposed to approach on bended knees. If, while looking up at that knight, you notice his nose is running, the disequilibrium caused by this clash between the sacred and the profane, between what a culture enshrines and what it represses, will probably seek to discharge itself through laughter. The movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* proves that Camelot is still a target-rich environment for comedy to attack; and in Mark Twain's time, when the standard for depicting the days of knights was set by elegiac works like Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (finished in 1885), the territory Twain works in the novel was even more vulnerable to burlesque and parody.

Twain never forgot that the job his readers paid him for was making them laugh, but that was only one of his literary goals. In an autobiographical dictation made near the end of his life, he explains how his achievement differs from that of "mere humorists" by asserting that "I have always preached." As a text for a sermon, that dream of being a knight whose body itches in places he can't reach points toward Twain's project as an American realist. To Twain as a humorist, texts like Malory's book were good things to make fun of, the "straight" resources he could exploit. But Twain also belonged to the generation of nineteenth-century novelists who defined their work as a revolt against the romance tradition. Giving that archetype of romance heroism, the knight in armor, the common "requirements of nature" exposes the ideal world of books to the real world of such things as bodily "necessities." Hank's favorite expletive throughout *Connecticut Yankee* is "Great Scott!" This is Twain's way of keeping his narrative in dialogue with the medieval novels of Walter Scott, the British writer who, for him, epitomized the factitiousness of literary romance. Twain talks about Scott directly in *Life on the Mississippi*, where he makes it clear that his quarrel is not simply aesthetic. Scott, according to Twain, did "more real and lasting harm, perhaps, than any individual that ever wrote"; a book like Scott's *Ivanhoe* was even "in great measure responsible" for the Civil War, because its unrealistic representations warped the minds of the white South away from "the genuine and wholesome civilization of the nineteenth century" and toward "the jejune romanticism of an absurd past that is dead." (There is an echo of this charge in William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, where we're told that the horse on which Sutpen rides off to the war got its name from a Scott novel.) What Twain says in *Life* about history anticipates the argument he puts into Hank's mouth: that the true Reign of Terror was not the violence of the French Revolution, but the ancien regime, the centuries of aristocratic privilege and abuse—Hank calls it "a thousand years of such villainy" (p. 128). Because of enchanters like Malory, Scott, and Tennyson it is the past that "none of us has been taught to see ... as it deserves" (p. 128).

That is Hank's job: to cure readers of what (in *Life on the Mississippi*) Twain calls "the Sir Walter disease" by teaching them to see the feudal realities left out of Scott's account. At the start Hank tells us that he is "barren of sentiment" and "poetry" (p. 19). Thus he can serve as an accurate reporter on the medieval world that Scott represents by chivalrous heroes like *Ivanhoe* and beautiful heroines like Rowena.

Alongside the “noble cavalcade” of plumed knights in chapter 1, for instance, Hank also sees “the muck, and swine, and naked brats ... and shabby huts” (p. 25), the reality of life for the common people of Arthur’s realm, the poverty, ignorance, injustice, and slavery that never get described in the ideal world romance creates. Having brought Hank across 1,300 years Twain takes him on two more trips, both through Arthur’s realm: first with Sandy (chapters 11-20), then with the King (chapters 27-38). The sights Hank sees on these travels—the tortured prisoners in Morgan le Fay’s dungeon, the impoverished peasant family dying of small-pox—work to disenchant readers of any nostalgia they might have felt for the mythic past.

As a means of establishing a realistic perspective on feudal England, Hank resembles Huck Finn, whom Tom Sawyer is always upbraiding for not having read any romances about noble robbers and suffering aristocrats. There are literal slaves in both *Huck Finn* and *Connecticut Yankee*, but both novels are perhaps most concerned with the form of mental enslavement that we can call ideological or cultural, that Hank himself calls “training”: the way that one’s perception of reality is shaped or determined by “inherited ideas,” by the values and prejudices of a particular time and place. Huck believes, for example, that slavery is right and that he is wicked to help Jim run toward freedom. The people of the sixth century believe in the legitimacy of slavery, too, and in magic and dragons, and in all kinds of other ideas that, to Hank’s eyes, seem equally irrational: the divine right of kings, for example, and the legitimacy of an established church. Twain’s larger concern, however, is with the idea of the past that his contemporary readers have inherited from romances. Hank’s unpoetic point of view is only one of the weapons Twain deploys against that idea. He also attacks it with bursts of righteous indignation, with sentimental scenes of peasant and slave mothers, and with humor that is often brilliantly outrageous, as when Sandy’s noble ladies are revealed to be a sty full of pigs—in—cluding “one small countess ... with hardly any hair on her back” (p. 200). Hank blows up Merlin’s tower, itself a relic of older times; Twain seeks to explode the fantasy of a nobler past. Hank brings electricity to Camelot, making it “the best electric-lighted town in the kingdom” (p. 430); Twain tries to illuminate the Dark Ages themselves.

And as an American realist, Twain has an additional stake in this revisionary project. Hank travels through space as well as time. The books Twain is rewriting, like the past Hank revisits, are European. American literature has always been postcolonial. The United States won political independence before the end of the eighteenth century, but cultural independence—in particular from the inferiority complex that all former colonies acquire—was something Twain knew his country still had to struggle for. Throughout the nineteenth century American writers felt that the long shadow cast by the achievements of European literature and art stunted their own growth; their economic as well as artistic well-being was bound up with the question of whether American readers would agree with Emerson when, two years after Sam Clemens was born, he declared that “we have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe.” In his nonfiction travel book *The Innocents Abroad* Twain himself goes east to the Old World and, as a typical American tourist, spends a lot of time in museums and cathedrals, dutifully looking at the works of the old masters. One reason *Innocents Abroad* was the best-selling of all his books among his contemporaries is that in it

Twain defines a way of looking that enables an American to laugh at those idols of high culture and, by laughing, to knock the achievements of Europe off the pedestals from which they seemed to tower over anything an American could achieve. “I never felt so fervently thankful,” he writes in the middle of his account of traveling through Italy, “as I did yesterday when I learned that Michael Angelo was dead.” *Connecticut Yankee*’s most exuberant declaration of freedom from such old masters is probably the scene in chapter 39 of Hank as a cowboy, lassoing Sir Launcelot and dragging him off his horse.

In other words, as Twain had done in *Innocents Abroad*, in *Connecticut Yankee* Hank goes back east to vindicate the notion that as human progress moved forward through time it also moved westward in space, from a benighted Old World to a blessed new one. For Twain, the essence of the medieval past is not chivalry but slavery: “Any Established Church,” Hank writes, is “an established slave-pen” (pp. 154-155); “a privileged class, an aristocracy, is but a band of slaveholders under another name” (p. 256); the people of the sixth century are either “slaves, pure and simple,” or “slaves in fact, [though] without the name” (p. 79). By contrast the New World, the nineteenth-century America from which Hank comes, is defined by freedom of religion, a democratic political system, the free enterprise of capitalism, the free inquiry of the scientific method. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain calls the present moment “the plainest and sturdiest and infinitely greatest and worthiest of all the centuries the world has seen.” When he looks at the past through Hank’s eyes, everything he sees seems to confirm that faith.

At least that is the way *Connecticut Yankee* was read in its time. “A book that appeals to all true Americans,” “a book that every man, woman, and child in this country should read and be proud of,” “thoroughly patriotic”—so claimed the ads for the novel in 1889. It was brought out by the publishing company that Twain himself owned, and so he had complete control over how it was advertised and promoted. Potential buyers were promised a celebration of modern American superiority to old England, and if the reactions of contemporary reviewers are representative, that is what they got. English reviewers condemned the novel as “a vulgar travesty,” an unfunny and irreverent desecration of a noble tradition. All but one of the American reviews I have found were enthusiastic about its cultural politics. Twain’s friend and fellow realist William Dean Howells called it “an object-lesson in democracy,” American humor “employed in the service of humanity.” “Mark Twain has come up from the people,” said a paper in California, is “American to the backbone,” and has written a “bright and witty” satire on England. One Boston reviewer even noted that as examples of “the advance in popular bookmaking,” the novel’s illustrations offered yet more proof of American progress. The only negative American review agreed that the novel’s aim was “the glorification of American democracy,” but protested that it failed “through [its] extreme partiality” to Hank’s smugly modern and nationalistic perspective.

Whether or not they shared that perspective, the reviewers were sure Twain did. No contemporaries were tempted to read the novel’s first-person narrative as ironic or unreliable. Twenty-first-century readers are likely to have a more complex response, and not just because our postmodern sensibility is so attuned to irony. Because in

effect we must travel back a dozen decades to read Hank's story, we are in somewhat the same outsider's position in relation to him that he occupies in the sixth century. We can see what he is blind to: the way his training reflects the preconceptions and beliefs of his time and place. Once he realizes the leverage his thirteen-century head start gives him on the primitive world he finds himself in, Hank sets out to reform and enlighten the Dark Ages. Having come from a factory, he equates progress with industrialization. He calls his system of schools "Man-factories." There's no mistaking the pride in his voice when he tells us in chapter 10, "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" (p. 95). If we listen closely, we can hear his unexamined faith right alongside his pride: That word "missionaries" indicates that he believes in technology as devoutly as the Arthurians believe in magic. To him, just as the great inventors like Gutenberg and Bell are "the creators of this world—after God" (p. 342), so the machines they invented can save the world from its ills. The patent office Hank sets up as his first action as the King's minister is his equivalent to a cathedral.

Late-nineteenth-century America was one of the great ages of mechanical invention, and Hank's faith in industrialization and progress was widely shared: A great many city seals designed in this period used factories with smokestacks pouring out black smoke as the symbol of growth. But as the novel itself progresses, it puts a lot of pressure on Hank's uncritical belief in technology. We may hardly notice the metaphor with which, in chapter 10, he concludes his boast about the "Beginnings of Civilization":

My works showed what a despot could do with the resources of a kingdom at his command. Unsuspected by this dark land, I had the civilization of the nineteenth century booming under its very nose! ... There it was, as sure a fact, and as substantial a fact as any serene volcano, standing innocent with its smokeless summit in the blue sky and giving no sign of the rising hell in its bowels (pp. 97-98).

When he tells us about the smoky success of his soap factory in chapter 16, however, the irony is harder to overlook. Like a great many American travelers to Europe, Hank is appalled at the natives' lack of hygiene, and he uses their inability to realize how dirty they are as further proof of the numbing effects of training. Since Hank knows that cleanliness is next to godliness, he sets up a factory to manufacture soap at the castle in Camelot, and sends the knights of the Round Table out to peddle it to the populace.

My soap factory felt the strain early ... running night and day; and the atmospheric result was getting so pronounced that the king went sort of fainting and gasping around ... 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 (p. 155).

"It," of course, is air pollution. While the soap removes the dirt from people's bodies, the factory belches dirt into the air they breathe, but just as only Hank objects to their uncleanness, so only the Arthurians complain about the damage the factory is doing

to the environment. We may look at both and see not just how dirt remains a fact of life in either case but also how completely conditioned are both sixth-century Britons and the nineteenth-century American, how completely reality for them all has been defined by what their training has taught them to see or not see.

Hank's blind faith in technology never wavers, not even when one of its shiniest new inventions turns the "Valley of Holiness" into the "Valley of Hellishness." That happens in chapter 24, when Hank discovers that technicians from one of his Man-factories have secretly installed a telephone in a cave in the valley where he has just had one of his most spectacular public triumphs, making a fountain flow again and convincing the locals to bathe in its waters. Finding this symbol of progress in a cave once occupied by a hermit is for Hank, according to his own language, a religious sign:

Now what a radical reversal of things this was; what a jumbling together of extravagant incongruities; what a fantastic conjunction of opposites and irreconcilables—the home of a bogus miracle become the home of a real one, the den of a medieval hermit turned into a telephone office! (p. 246).

The technician operating the phone is equally surprised to see Hank, having been told over the newly established telephone line that Hank's triumph at the "Valley of Holiness" happened in a place called the "Valley of Hellishness." Hank realizes it was a problem with static on the line: "Confound a telephone, anyway. It is the very demon for conveying similarities of sound that are miracles of divergence from similarity of sense" (p. 247). The repetition of the word "miracle" reverses or at least complicates its sense. Is technology a divine or a demonic "miracle"? What world is Hank creating by industrializing the sixth century—a holy or a hellish one?

If these questions seem abstract or even comic in the context of words as sounds, what Hank sees with his own eyes at the novel's conclusion drives the issue of technology home with graphic seriousness. Any retelling of the myth of Camelot has to end unhappily, to be sure, and one of the conditions that anyone telling a tale about traveling back in history has to accept is that, since the past cannot change, any record of the visit must be erased; but the shape Twain's imagination gave the catastrophic climax of *Connecticut Yankee* is astounding. When the tension between Hank's reforms and the status quo erupts into war, Hank and his team of trained boys set up another kind of machine in another cave: a huge dynamo, capable of generating enough power to electrocute thousands of people at one time. Hank's technology, which includes land mines and Gatling guns, allows him to annihilate an army of knights. But after the battle, as he and his technicians find themselves trapped by the bodies of the 25,000 men they have killed, they discover their technology has conquered them too—and made those figures of speech about hell on earth all too literal. Hank's boys die, in fact, of air pollution, from the environmental impact of the rotting corpses their killing machines have produced. Readers in 1889 could not know how prescient this ending was, how closely the landscape created by Hank's weaponry resembles the waste land that modern warfare would make of much of Europe in the twentieth century. But it's hard to believe those readers were not troubled by the way the story that began with a comic dream ends with a military-industrial nightmare. If