

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 26, 1905.

MARK TWAIN, AT 70, IS GAY AND LOQUACIOUS

Interviewed for The Journal on the Eve of His Birthday, the Prince of Humorists Talks Entertainingly on Many Subjects--Says All Work Is Play--But Life Is No Joke.

New York, Nov. 25. MARK TWAIN will be 70 years old on Thanksgiving day, and he has never done a day's work in his life. He told me so himself, sitting in one of the cheerful, spacious rooms of the old-fashioned stately New York house where he will probably call his city home as long as he lives. I probably started upon hearing this unlooked-for statement from the lips of the good, gray humorist, for he repeated emphatically: "No, sir, not a day's work in all my life. What I have done I have done because it has been play. If it had been work I shouldn't have done it."

Who was it who said, "Blessed is the man who has found his work?" Whoever it was he had the same idea in his mind. Mark, you see, says his work is not somebody's else's work. The work that is really a man's own work is play and not work at all. Cursed is the man who has found some other man's work and cannot lose it. When we talk about the great workers of the world we really mean the great players of the world. The men who are men and sweat under the weary load of toil that they bear never can hope to do anything great. How can they when their souls are in a ferment of revolt against the employment of their hands and brains? The product of slavery, intellectual or physical, can never be great.

As He Is Today. To me who saw him standing there, straight and virile, in the clear, uncompromising light of the early winter afternoon, it seemed that there must be years of good, hard, joyous play left yet in the prince of American humorists. There is really no other title for him. We are all good democrats, of course, and yet we cannot call him the president of American humorists. Nor can we bring ourselves to dub him the dean of American humorists, either, because that has about it a certain suggestion of decrepitude, and nothing is less suggestive of the Mark Twain of today than decrepitude.

Straight and spare as a New England pine, his great mane of thick white hair falling shaggy back from his brow, his thin, mobile upper lip covered with a heavy drooping mustache that is yet only shading toward grayness, his eyes always clear, now reflective and now flashing with the fire of the thoughts that leap like lightning behind them, the words fall from the lips in that deliberate drawl which tens of thousands will never be able to forget so long as memory has ears, his face unlined and his cheeks touched with a ruddy glow, and only about the corners of his eyes the little tell-tale crow's feet that seventy years have scratched there--nobody who saw him thus could ever possibly think of Mark Twain as old. No, there is nothing of the "last leaf" effect about Samuel L. Clemens.

At Work in Bed. "I'm glad you came to see me to-day," he said, "as I'm up and about, which I shouldn't have been if I had been doing anything of consequence. You're surprised at that, are you?" I admitted that I didn't understand. "Well," he went on slowly, "I've

found that whenever I've got some work to do--" "You mean play, of course," I ventured. "Of course, of course; but we're all slaves to the use of conventional terms and I'll stick to them to avoid confusion. Whenever I've got some work to do I go to bed. I got into that habit some time ago when I had an attack of bronchitis. Suppose your bronchitis lasts six weeks. The first two you can't do much but attend to the barking and so on, but the last four I found I could work in bed. The first thing you can work you don't mind staying in bed. "I liked it so well that I kept it up after I got well. There are a lot of advantages about it. If you're sitting at a desk you get excited about what you are writing and the first thing you know the steam heat or the furnace has raised the temperature until you've almost got a fever, or the fire in the grate goes out and you get a chill, or if somebody comes in to attend to the fire he interrupts you and gets you off the trail of your writing. "So I go to bed. I can keep an equable temperature there without trying and go on about my work without being bothered. Work in bed is a pretty good gospel--at least for a man who's come, like me, to the time of life when his blood is cooled. This was a queer talk from those virile lips. The only frost you can perceive about Mark Twain is in his hair, and that is a crisp, invigorating frost, like that of a sparkling November morning.

How Work and Play Differ. "Well, Mr. Clemens," I said, "what you say about work and play may be true, but a good many people would think that the immense amount of labor you went through to pay the debts of the publishing house of C. L. Webster & Co. after that firm went to smash was entitled to be called by the name of hard work." "Not at all," retorted Mr. Clemens, very seriously. "All I had to do was deliver a few hundred lectures. As for traveling about the country from one place to another for years--the nuisance of getting about and bad hotels and so on--those things are merely the incidents that every one expects to meet in life. The people who had to publish my books, the agents who had to arrange my lectures, the lawyers who tried to stop me from writing, the editors and other legal documents--they were the men who did the real work. My part was merely play. If it had been work I shouldn't have done it. I was never intended for work--never could do it--can't do it now--don't see any use in it."

It occurred to me to ask Mr. Clemens to tell the secret of the vital hold he has had for years upon the most intelligent people of the English-speaking world--a grip upon the public mind such as no mere humorist has ever held or ever could hold.

Humorist's Trials. "Well," he answered, "I know it is a difficult thing for a man who has acquired a reputation as a funny man to have a serious thought and put it into

words and be listened to respectfully, but I thoroughly believe that any man who's got anything worth while to say will be heard if he only says it often enough. Of course, what I have to say may not be worth saying. I can't tell about that, but if I honestly believe I have an idea worth the attention of thinking people it's my business to say it with all the sincerity I can muster. They'll listen to it if it really is worth while and I say it often enough. If it isn't worth while it doesn't matter whether I'm heard or not.

"Suppose a man makes a name as a humorist--he may make it at a stroke, as Bret Harte did, when he wrote those verses about the 'Heathen Chinee.' That may not be the expression of the

real genius of the man at all. He may have a genuine message for the world. Then let him say it and say it again and then repeat it and let him seek it in sincerity. People will warn him at first that he's getting a bit out of his line, but they'll listen to him at last, if he's really got a message--just as they finally listened to Bret Harte.

"Dickens had his troubles when he tried to stop jesting. The 'Sketches by Boz' introduced him as a funny man, but when Boz began to take himself seriously people began to shake their heads and say: 'That fellow Boz isn't as funny as he was, is he?' But Boz and his creator kept right on writing in earnest, and they listened after a time, just as they always will listen to anybody worth hearing.

"Life Is No Joke." "I tell you, life is a serious thing, and, try as a man may, he can't make

the puzzled expression of the fatuous soul who is conscientiously searching for the meaning of life. He has failed to get the point of the joke. But say it again and maybe he'll understand you. No man need be a humorist all his life. As the patent medicine man says, there is hope for all."

"You are far from being a bad man; you are a reformer," thought I, remembering the "Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg."

"The quality of humor," Mr. Clemens went on hurriedly for him--"is the commonest thing in the world. I mean the perceptive quality of humor. In this sense every man in the world is a humorist. The creative quality of humor--the ability to throw a humorous cast over a set of circumstances that before had seemed colorless is, of course, a different thing. But every man in the world is a perceptive humorist. Everybody lives in a glass

house. Why should anybody shy bricks at a poor humorist or advise him to stick to his trade when he tries to say a sensible thing?" "Even the English?" I suggested.

"The English don't deserve their reputation," insisted Mr. Clemens. "They are as humorous a nation as any in the world. Only humor, to be comprehensible to anybody, must be built on a foundation with which he is familiar. If he can't see the foundation the superstructure is to him merely a freak--like the Flatiron building without any visible means of support--something that ought to be arrested.

"You couldn't, for example, understand an Eskimo joke, yet they have their jokes--plenty of them. There's a passage in Parkman that tells of the home life of the Indian--describes him sitting at home in the wigwam with his squaw and papooses--not the stoical, icy Indian with whom we are familiar, who wouldn't make a jest for his life or notice one that anybody else made, but the real Indian that few white men ever saw--simply rocking with mirth at some tribal witticism that probably wouldn't have commended itself in the least to Parkman.

"And, so you see, the quality of humor is not a personal or a national monopoly. It's as free as salvation, and I'm afraid, far more widely distributed. But it has its value, I think. The hard and sordid things of life are too hard and too sordid and too cruel for us to know and touch them year after year without some mitigating influence, some kindly veil to draw over them, from time to time, to blur the craggy outlines, and make the thorns less sharp and the cruelties less malignant."

Mr. Clemens doesn't mind being 70 years old, but he isn't especially gay about it.

"When our anniversaries roll up too high a total," he said, "we don't feel in a particularly celebratory mood. We often celebrate the wrong anniversaries and lament the ones we ought to celebrate."

Where He Lives. This particular anniversary finds him domiciled within sight of the Washington monument in the city of Washington, in the frame of the billowy sweep of remote great ranges rise to view and fold, upon fold, wave upon wave, soft and blue and unworldly, to the horizon fifty miles away.

Thirty-Five Days' Work. "It is claimed that the atmosphere of the New Hampshire highlands is exceptionally bracing and stimulating, and a fine aid to hard and continuous work. It is a just claim, I think. I came in May, and wrought thirty-five successive days without a break. It is possible that I could not have done it elsewhere. I do not know; I have not had any disposition to try it before. I think I got the disposition out of the atmosphere this time. I feel quite sure, in fact that that is where it came from.

"I am ashamed to confess what an intolerable pile of manuscript I grow out in the thirty-five days, therefore I will keep the number of words to myself. I wrote the first half of a long tale--'The Adventures of a Microbe'--and put it away for a finish next summer, and started another long tale--'The Mysterious Stranger'; I wrote the first half of it and put it with the other for a finish next summer. I stopped then. I was not tired, but I had no books on hand that needed finishing this year except one that was seven years old. After a little I took that one up and finished it. Not for publication, but to have it ready for revision next summer.

"Since I stopped work I have had for two months' holiday. The summer

has been my working time for thirty-five years, to have a holiday in it (in America) is new to me. I have not broken it, except to write 'Eve's Diary' and 'A Horse's Tale'--short things occupying the mill twelve days.

"This year our summer was six months long and ended with November and the flight home to New York, but next year we hope and expect to stretch it another month and end it the 1st of December."

BY UNIVERSITY ACTORS Annual Performance Will Be Given Dec. 14 at the Unique.

The two plays, "The Cricket on the Hearth" and "Nance Oldfield," will be presented at the Unique theater on Dec. 14 and the members of the University Dramatic club are making great preparations for the performance. Rehearsals have been going on for over a month and the appearance of the undergraduate actors before the footlights will be made an event of the university year.

Dr. Richard Burton early in the year consented to play the part of "aleb Thummer" in "The Cricket on the Hearth," but on account of lecture work he has been obliged to discontinue the club and the role will be played by Willard Adley, a student of decided dramatic ability.

As is customary, the theater will be draped with maroon and gold, the college colors, and other features distinctive of college life will be introduced. Fraternities and societies will occupy the boxes and prominent society women of Minneapolis will be asked to act as patronesses.

The Dramatic club at the University is an organization to which only students of historic institutions are admitted and the competition for places in the casts of the different productions is always spirited. It is the ambition of the club to build a miniature theater on the university campus and the proceeds of the entertainments will be used for this purpose.

WEDDED IN ST. PAUL Congressman C. B. Buckman and Miss Margaret Shea Are Married.

Congressman C. B. Buckman of Little Falls, Minn., was united in marriage yesterday with Miss Margaret Shea of St. Paul, a former resident of Little Falls. The ceremony was performed at 4 o'clock at the home of Mrs. Viola De Matton, 304 North Exchange street, with whom the bride has resided for several years. Rev. M. O. Stockland, pastor of the Methodist church, Little Falls, conducted the services.

The rooms were decorated with palms and cut flowers and the bridal couple took their stand under an immense bell of evergreen. Among the guests were Senator Moses E. Clapp, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Fuller of Little Falls and several St. Paul friends of the bride. The wedding party dined at the Merchants hotel, after which Mr. and Mrs. Buckman left for Washington. After congress adjourns they will return to Minnesota and make their permanent home at Little Falls.

IN HONOR OF HAAKON VII. Norwegian Club of St. Paul Holds Banquet at Merchants Hotel.

King Haakon's arrival in Christiania yesterday was celebrated by the Norwegian club of St. Paul with a banquet last night at the Merchants hotel. About 160 members were present and Consul E. H. Hobe presided as toastmaster. Consul Hobe spoke for Haakon VII., wishing him long life and continued prosperity as king of the new Norway, and Dr. Edvard Boeckman spoke for Norway. An original poem appropriate for the occasion was read by T. Wegge, a member of the Norwegian students' chorus which toured the United States last summer.

The banquet hall was decorated in the American and Norwegian colors and all the guests wore badges of red, white and blue.

DEMOCRATS WILL HAVE HOT FIGHT

MINNEAPOLIS STORM CENTER OF BIG SALOON FIGHT.

Same Forces Lined Up Last Year as Hearst and Anti-Hearst Factions Will Be Opposed Next Year on Mayorality Proposition--Sunday Closing Fight Will Be Fierce.

No democratic campaign would be complete without two factions in the party, each seeking to overcome the other by fair means or foul. To preserve the ancient traditions of the democracy the local factions are already planning to go to battle with the adversary as soon as the municipal campaign is opened, soon after New Year. The same divisions in the party that prevailed last year are likely to be seen in the next campaign.

There will be no Hearst and anti-Hearst factions, as the causes for this split are eliminated. The same factions, however, will be lined up against one another on the mayorality proposition. On one side will be the victorious Hearst radical wing, on a public corporate control platform, demanding reforms in the matter of corporate control and cheaper charges from the public service corporations. Six streetcar fares for 25 cents will be a slogan.

At the head of this party and its candidate will probably be State Labor Commissioner W. H. Williams, who headed the radical movement last year. Mr. Williams has not said that he will be the faction leader or candidate, but the fact that many of his friends and former lieutenants are already doing some work for him is a fairly safe indication that he is interested. It is positively known that he does indorse the platform of public control and corporate regulation.

The Haynes Faction. On the other side will be the Haynes faction of the party, which formed the anti-Hearst organization of the 1904 campaign. Former Mayor J. C. Haynes is the choice of this faction for mayor, and it is understood with little room for doubt that Mr. Haynes will be a candidate. He will make his campaign on the business administration which he gave the city while in office.

Under the campaign of both factions will be a sub-surface policy regarding the handling of the saloon and Sunday

CAN'T TELL LIES OVER THE 'PHONE

TALKERS WILL HAVE TO LOOK OUT FOR TELEPHONE.

New Invention Records Indelibly the Lightest Words of Business Man or Fond Swain--Expected to Prove of Great Value to the Office for Purpose of Recording Dictation.

Woe to the young man who promises things to his sweetheart over the telephone, and to the business man who talks of business arrangements over the telephone, if he doesn't want to be brought to book after the telephone comes into commercial use.

The little instrument, which was brought to Minneapolis yesterday for inspection, is the evolution of a young man who superintends the telephone system of Denmark, Vladimir Poulsen. It records both ends of a telephone conversation indelibly. After the manner of the phonograph it will reproduce the conversation word for word and even tone for tone. It's a dangerous little thing for one who doesn't mean what he says over the telephone.

J. Shirley Eaton of New York, formerly associate editor of the Wall Street Journal, is on a visit over Sunday with his cousin, W. G. Andrews. He brought with him one of the fifteen perfected telephones in the United States. It was manufactured in Copenhagen and is not yet reduced to a commercial basis. Mr. Eaton considers that it is the most important scientific production that has been brought into Minneapolis in years and an examination of the machine seems to justify Mr. Eaton's opinion. One reason is that it is an incarnation of an idea that overturned all notions of magnetism. It is the result of a new principle in magnetism and the application of it. It does some wonderful things, puts to shame all forms of the phonograph as now known, and exhibits a wider field than the telephone.

Performs Freak Feats. The telephone performs some feats that may be called freaks. At the same time it has a sober undertone of business and it is the commercial side, now almost brought to perfection, that is to appeal to the public, although its amusement possibilities are extensive.

All Ready. On Dec. 4, the new line of the Soo between Thief River Falls and Kenmare will be open for business. Call at 119 Third street S for full particulars.

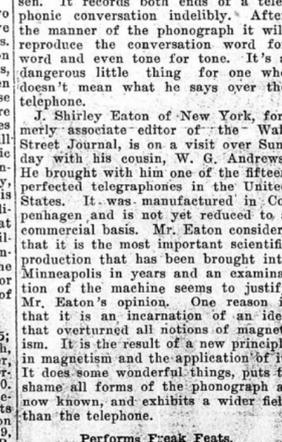
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