

CONDENSED CLASSICS

PUDD'NHEAD WILSON

By MARK TWAIN
Condensation by John Kendrick Bangs.



"I am sorry to know you are smoking so much, Mr. Clemens," remarked a lady in Mark Twain's early days. "This is the second time within the week I have seen you with a box of cigars under your arm." "Don't be disturbed, dear Madam," replied Mark, in a confidential tone, "I'm just moving again."

With characteristic humor Samuel Langhorne Clemens indicated the vicissitudes of his early days. He was born in Florida, Mo., Nov. 30, 1835. The common schools gave him all the formal education he got.

"Roughing It," "The Gilded Age" (in conjunction with Charles Dudley Warner), "Tom Sawyer," "A Tramp Abroad," "The Prince and the Pauper," "Huckleberry Finn," "The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson" were some of the various books which kept Americans and Europeans laughing for many years. Mark Twain died April 21, 1910.

DAWSON'S LANDING, on the Missouri side of the Mississippi, in 1830, was a modest village with few claims to distinction. Conspicuous among her first citizens was York Leicester Driscoll, forty years of age, judge of the county court, of unblemished Virginia stock, unhappily childless, and esteemed by everybody that knew him. Another citizen of repute was Col. Cecil Burielgh Essex, who, except for one important particular, later disclosed, has nothing to do with this story. Resident here also was a certain Percy Northumberland Driscoll, brother of the judge, married, and a prosperous owner of slaves, among whom was a likely weench of twenty, Roxana by name. Into the Driscoll home on the first of February, 1830, two boy babies were born. One of these, christened Tom, was the son of Percy Northumberland Driscoll, the other, tagged with the name of Valet de Chambre, or "Chambers" for short, was the son of the slave-girl Roxana, by a father at first unknown but later revealed to be Colouel Essex. Within a week of the birth of Driscoll's son the mother died, and in the natural course of events both boys were entrusted to the maternal care of the slave-mother.

About the same time into this quiet community came one David Wilson, hopefully anticipating a successful legal career, a hope blasted in the morning, since a gift of irony, one of David's most tangible assets, fell upon ears so literal as to be unappreciative, and suspicious of humor.

"I wish I owned half of that dog," said David one morning when a snarling yellow cur disturbed him.

"Why?" asked somebody.

"Because then I would kill my half!" replied David.

His hearers fell away from him in alarm. How could a man kill half of a dog without killing the other half also? Surely this man must be out of his mind.

"A lummock," said one.

"A perfect jackass," said another.

"He's a pudd'nhead, that's what he is!" said a third.

And from that day forward "Pudd'nhead Wilson" he was.

Now Pudd'nhead had two fads—palmistry, and finger-prints. The first he occasionally practiced, lacking clients to practice law upon, and the second he collected with great assiduity. No man, woman or child, ever entered the circle of Pudd'nhead's acquaintance without leaving a finger-print, or his thumb-mark, behind, and all of these were carefully named, recorded, dated and filed. Thus it happened that one day came Roxana and her two charges, Tom, the son of Driscoll, and Chambers, the son of herself and another. As like as two peas were the babies, in color, size and lineaments—so like that save to a mother's eyes they were indistinguishable, and the finger-prints of all were taken, labeled, dated, and added to the collection of Pudd'nhead Wilson.

What more natural than that the likeness of the two infants—Tom's own father could not tell him from the slave-baby—should suggest to a mother's heart an interchange of the children by which the slave should become the master and the master the slave, especially when the heart was constantly oppressed by the fear that when her babe grew to manhood he might be "sold down the river," that ever-present tormenting dread of the slave of the upper waters? What more natural than, there being no chance of detection, Roxana for love of her son should yield to that temptation and forthwith turn Chambers into Tom and Tom into Chambers by a single interchange of garments, these being the only outward and visible signs by which the boys were differentiated anyhow? It was in this manner that it came to be the proud offspring of the house of Driscoll grew into the slave boy Chambers, abused

and neglected and that the seemingly white child of a negro-slave and an unknown father became the scion of a family of unblemished lineage.

But a mere change of clothes and condition does not penetrate far below the surface. A silken gown cannot alter the currents of a shoddy soul, and while externally the spurious heir was all F. F. V., internally he was negro. After a few years, never having discovered the deception practiced upon him by Roxana, Percy Driscoll died, penniless, but his brother, the Judge, his prayer for children of his own denied, adopted the supposititious Tom, and made the boy his heir. He sent him to college. He gave him every advantage that an affectionate father could have given a boy of his own, but the raw material which was the real Tom was poor, and the soil unfruitful. The boy acquired a taste for dissipation for which the simple life of Dawson's Landing offered no assuagements. He plunged into the gay whirl of St. Louis, garnering nothing but disgraceful gambling debts. Worst of all he was at heart a snob, abused the real heir now become his slave, and acquired a profound detestation for his ancient nurse, Roxana, of whose real relation to him he was unaware, until goaded to intense resentment by his contemptuous and brutal treatment, she acquainted him with the terrible facts of his birth and ancestry, and demanded that he treat her as a mother on penalty of exposure.

The revelation prostrated the impostor for a brief period, but failed to spur him on to better behavior. He went from bad to worse, stooping even to housebreaking in order to obtain funds to pay his gambling debts. In his mother's power, and she not at all disinclined to blackmail, he was driven to all sorts of expedients to satisfy his own and her demands. But through it all he managed to maintain an outward appearance of superiority that enabled him to dazzle his inferiors and deceive his equals. The Judge's love for the boy blinded him to the lad's evil character, but once he nearly disinherited him on the score of cowardice. A pair of mysterious Italian twins settled at Dawson's Landing, and at a public meeting, Tom having provoked him to action by his insolence, Luigi, the stronger of the two, had kicked the scion of the House of Driscoll off the stage into the audience, the stain of which insult a real F. F. V. would have wiped out upon the field of honor, but for which the cowardice of Tom found ample satisfaction in the police court, which proceeding so outraged the good judge that for the honor of his family he personally fought a duel with the offending Italian, wounding him, and thus laying the foundations for much future trouble.

Came now the supreme touches of the career of the spurious Tom. For the payment of newly acquired gambling debts, with Roxana's consent Tom sold his own mother back into the slavery from which at Driscoll's death she had been freed, but in violation of his promises he sold her "down the river," a crime that reacted upon his unfeeling heart when the resourceful Roxana escaped, and under threat of exposure of his real status twenty-one he was an A. B. and A. M. of Trinity college, Cambridge, a minister of the Church of England and a Puritan on his way across the Atlantic to the Massachusetts Bay colony. There was no church for him, since the only three in existence—Boston, Salem and Watertown—had efficient ministers. So he was one of the "original planters" of Wethersfield, Conn., and a "watcher," 1834-40. Then he was one of the founders of Milford, New Haven plantation. Next he was a magistrate representing Milford in the New Haven colony and also charged with the duty of dividing land. Meanwhile he preached wherever opportunity offered.

In 1847 he became the minister of the Watertown church. There he preached till his death in 1883. Church and state were pretty much the same thing in those days, so the village affairs kept him a busy man. He found time, however, to publish for many years an almanac, for which he made all the astronomical calculations and wrote the text. He was also the first fellow and overseer of Harvard university. Incidentally he also found time to marry twice. Cotton Mather in his "Magnalia Christi Americana," says he had 28 children; this is a misstatement, but he did have 16. His epitaph in Latin on the tombstone in East Waltham, Mass., thus sums up his life:

"Sacred to the memory of John Sherman, a man distinguished for piety, character and truth; a profound theologian; as a preacher a veritable Chrysostom; unsurpassed in his knowledge of the liberal arts, particularly the mathematics; a faithful pastor of the Church of Watertown in New England; an overseer and fellow of Harvard college. After a life of faithful service to Christ in the church for upwards of 45 years in the fullness of time he passed away and received from Christ the palm of victory, in the seventy-second year of his age, August 8, A. D. 1885."

The twins were acquitted, the defrauded heir lifted out of slavery and restored to his inheritance, and Tom forever branded as an impostor who was "sold down the river" for the benefit of the creditors of the late Percy Northumberland Driscoll.

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What of the Checks?



Let me entreat one thing of thee and I will adventure to promise thee a good year. The request is in itself reasonable and may to thee be eternally profitable. It is only this: duly to prize and diligently to improve time for the blessed end it was given for and is yet graciously continued unto thee by eternal God.—REV. JOHN SHERMAN (1613-1685).

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

WHAT of the checks that you and I are going to draw on the Bank of Time in 1922—if we keep on drawing checks through the year?

"There's nothing new under the sun," according to a very old saying. It's true, too, in a sense. But in another sense it most certainly isn't true. For there is something new every time New Year's day comes around.

There are several things that are new at New Year's beside the New Year. There's a new chance. There's a new responsibility. There's a new balance in the Bank of Time. There's a new bank book. So, what will the check stubs show at the end of the year?

Rev. John Sherman had a right to make his "reasonable request," if practicing what one preaches gives that right. His "three score and ten" were busy years. He was born at Dedham, Essex, England, and before he was twenty-one he was an A. B. and A. M. of Trinity college, Cambridge, a minister of the Church of England and a Puritan on his way across the Atlantic to the Massachusetts Bay colony. There was no church for him, since the only three in existence—Boston, Salem and Watertown—had efficient ministers. So he was one of the "original planters" of Wethersfield, Conn., and a "watcher," 1834-40. Then he was one of the founders of Milford, New Haven plantation. Next he was a magistrate representing Milford in the New Haven colony and also charged with the duty of dividing land. Meanwhile he preached wherever opportunity offered.

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Let us hope that the "reasonable request" that this early Puritan put to himself was to him "eternally profitable." In any event, he stands forth as a fine sample of a sturdy American pioneer family that has given four immortals to the nation—Roger Sherman, one of the framers of the Declaration of Independence; General W. T. Sherman; Secretary of State John Sherman; Vice President James S. Sherman.

Certainly his request is one that is always reasonable. And it is one that was never more reasonable than now. The year 1922 is a year when every good American should endeavor "duly to prize and diligently to improve time." It is a year with a challenge. It is a year with a promise.

Though in folly and in blindness
And in sorrow still we grope,
Yet in man's increasing kindness
Lies the world's stupendous hope.

And it is a reasonable request to every red-blooded, thinking, patriotic American. Such a man knows that nobody can stand still; that he has either to progress or fall back. The progressive man accepts responsibilities as the measure of his capabilities. He never shirks them, for he recognizes in them the price he must pay for advancement.

Competition is going to be keen this year. The dollar is going to be hard to get. Men who have been getting twice what they were before and have had lots of money to spend are going to feel the pinch. It looks as if everybody who works for a living will have to work a little harder. It may be that life will seem hard. But what of it? Life has always been hard—perhaps it was meant to be. Anyway, it is something that has got to be lived and mastered. It's the business of men "to greet the unseen with a cheer" and "to advance on chaos and the dark."

Of course all of us cannot have a hand in the big things that must be done in meeting the challenge of 1922. But if all of us do the little things we may, 1922 will indeed be the "Happy New Year" of our greetings.

To save a little money;
To praise a little more;
To smile when days are sunny
And when the tempests pour;
To pay less heed to sinning
And more to kindly thought;
To see beyond the winning
Just how the fight was fought;
To be a little kinder,
A little braver, too,
To be a little blinder
To trivial things men do,
To give my hand to labor,
Nor whimper that I must;
To be a better neighbor
And worthier of a trust
To play the man, whatever
The prize at stake;
God grant that I shall never
These New Year pledges break.

Anyone looking for something to do in the way of helping along can help bolster up the morals of his community. The war has done what all wars do. And the leeches on society are always active at such times. Just now we are facing all sorts of loose living and the public at large apparently feels little concern. Any man or woman can at least help by setting a good example.

A good American can help just now by putting his respect for the law strongly in evidence. For the law is the law. If it is a poor law, it should be changed. But until it is changed, it should be obeyed—whether it relates to the shooting of game birds or to the use of liquor or to the speed of automobiles or to murder or to anarchy. Many people who would hotly resent the charge that they are anarchists take delight in evading the laws and in making sport of the laws.

Every thinking man must realize that this Twentieth century civilization is too complex to be sane, safe and sober. Medical philosophers are unanimous in declaring that we Americans live too hard and too fast; that our rapid ways are harmful both to the individual and to the race; that we should slow up. We are, to use the homely old phrase, burning the candle at both ends. Men try to succeed in business, to rule in politics, to be social leaders—all at the same time. To crowd dissimilar things together has become a national characteristic. Our avocations are often as wearing as our vocations; we play even harder than we work. Thus to crowd two or more lives into one is to borrow of nature. She is a hard creditor and she always exacts payment.

One cannot, of course, indict a whole people. There are still millions of sane, safe and sober people in America. But a society that demands or even countenances such recklessness is in need of reformation. It would be interesting—and startling—to know how many men and women put themselves in an early grave by going the pace that kills.

"Of all sounds of all bells, most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the old year. I never hear it without a gathering up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelve-month; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected, in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth as when a person dies. It takes a personal color; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary poet when he exclaimed: 'I saw the skirts of the departing year.'

"Every first of January that we arrive at is an imaginary milestone on the turp track of human life; at once a resting place for thought and meditation, and a starting place for fresh exertion in the performance of our journey. The man who does not at least propose to himself to be better this year than he was last, must be either very good or very bad indeed. And only to propose to be better is something; if nothing else, it is an acknowledgment of our need to be so, which is the first step towards amendment. But, in fact, to propose to oneself to do well is in some sort to do well, positively; for there is no such thing as a stationary point in human endeavors; he who is not worse today than he was yesterday, is better; and he who is not better, is worse."

So wrote Charles Lamb. Therefore let us make New Year resolutions "duly to prize and diligently to improve time for the blessed end it was given for"—even if we break them.

New Year Gifts

As to the New Year's gift custom, it is supposed to have been derived from the Romans, but is probably much older. Suetonius and Tacitus mention it. Claudius issued a decree forbidding the demanding of presents existing on New Year's day. The Roman custom in Britain found that the colonists kept New Year's in the same fashion. Starting as a pleasant, friendly custom, it rapidly became an

abuse and a nuisance. The kings and feudal nobility of the Middle Ages practically levied on their dependents for gifts. The presents varied according to sex and rank.

FEAST DAY FOR RUSSIAN CHILDREN

In the country towns of Russia New Year's is the great feast day for the children. Boys fill their pockets with dried peas and wheat and go in bands from house to house. People they

have any grudge against are doused with the peas, while they shower the wheat upon their friends. A curious custom also is festooning the handsomest horse and leading him to the house of a nobleman. The peas and wheat shooters follow in droves. Both guests and horse are admitted to the parlor of the lord and the guests receive presents.

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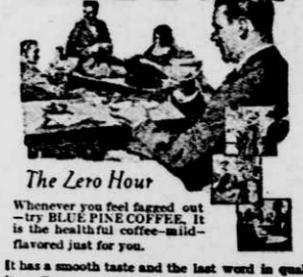
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His Oh Day.
"Waitin' for a train, stranger?" asked the talkative native. "Certainly not," replied the crusty traveler. "What do you think I'd be hanging round a railroad station for, with a couple of suitcases? I'm going to ride a camel from here to San Francisco."

How, indeed
Outside the Gaiety theater in London there is a large poster: "Madame Maria Kousnezoff, World Famous Operatic Diva." A countryman, having some along the Strand, stood gaping at this poster. "Lumme!" he said. "Now how the devil does you woman sing wif her mouth full o' water?"

The Rector Finds an Aid
The rector was on his way to church when he met the gamekeeper. "Ah," said the rector, "how is it, my friend, that I never see you at church?" "Well," said the gamekeeper, "you see, sir, I don't want to make your congregation smaller." "What do you mean?" the rector said sharply. "Well, you see sir," the keeper said, "if I came to church some of the others would go poaching!"—London Morning Post.