

# re: Mark Twain

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Mark Twain speaks in Delaware Ohio 10 February 1885 – *(This is copied with all punctuation, spellings, etc. just as it was in the newspaper. Please note that Samuel Clemens birthday was 30<sup>th</sup> of November, not December as is written in the article)*

Delaware Herald, 29 January 1885 – SKETCH OF MARK TWAIN

Personal Appearances – Career as a Correspondent & Editor – A Hard Worker (Cleveland Leader)

Mark Twain has a big head stuck on by a long neck to a pair of round shoulders. He came on to the stage as though he were half asleep, and he looked to me as though nature, in putting him together, had, somehow, gotten the joints mixed. He has a big face, a nose large enough to represent any kind of genius, and eyes large, black and sleepy. He has a thick, bushy mane of hair, which is now iron gray, and a bushy mustache which overhangs his characteristic mouth. As he stood on the stage he reminded me much of a mammoth interrogation point, and as he drawled out his words with scarcely a gesture his voice made me think of a little buzz saw slowly grinding inside a corpse. He did not laugh while he uttered his funniest jokes, and when the audience roared he merely stroked his chin or pulled his mustache.

Still he could not help being satisfied, and I do not doubt the contrast of his first days in Washington, when he came here years ago and had hard work making money enough to pay his board bills, came forcibly before him. Though it is not generally known, Mark Twain was once a Washington correspondent. He came here from the west with Senator Stewart and for a time wrote letters to The Alta California and The New York Tribune. He used to drink a good deal in those days, and was hardly considered a reputable character. It was shortly before this that he made the trip from which he wrote "Innocents Abroad," and this book he wrote here from the notes he took during his tour. The book made him both famous and wealthy.

His manuscript he first sent to several prominent publishers, but they all rejected it, and he was about giving up in despair when a Hartford company took hold of it. The result was they made \$75,000 off the book and sold more than 200,000 copies of it. It was after this that Mark Twain tried editing The Buffalo Express. A man who worked on the paper at the time told me today that this venture of his was not a success. He loafed around the office, guying the office boy, and telling jokes and stories rather than writing, and the only fruit of his Buffalo experience was his marriage which, like "Innocents Abroad," turned out well. His wife brought a pot of gold into the family and when he got to Elmira he found that his father-in-law had made him the present of a brownstone front and thrown in a coachman with a bug on his hat. Twain did not remain in Elmira, however, but went to Hartford and began to write "Roughing It." This was also successful and established his name.

Mark Twain probably makes as much out of his books as any other writer in the country. He has his Hartford firm publish his books for him, and he so arranges it that he gets a royalty on those printed in Europe. He is better known in foreign lands than any other American writer, and he is an international character. Many of the scenes are taken from real life, and his descriptions of travel are in the main true. He is a hard worker and while at Hartford he writes in his billiard room in the attic. Like Trollope, he believes that there is nothing like a piece of shoemaker's wax on the seat of one's chair to turn out a good literary work, and, like Blaine, he has a fixed amount of writing for each day's duty. He rewrites many of his chapters and some of them have been

scratched out and interlined again and again. Mr. Clemens – everyone knows Mark Twain's name is Clemens – will be 49 years old on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December. He is a Missouri man by birth and has taken care of himself ever since he was 15. He has been a practical printer, a steamboat pilot, a private secretary, a miner, a reporter, a lecturer, and a bookmaker.