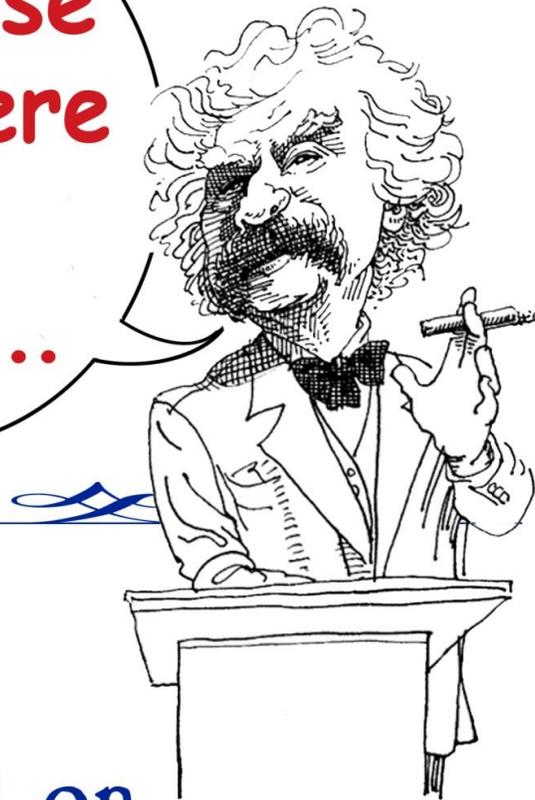


ENJOY a Sampler of

Suppose
you were
an
idiot...

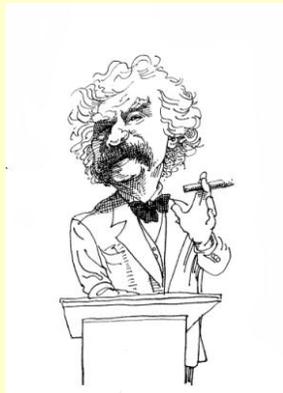


Mark
Twain on
Politics and Politicians

Edited by
Conor Cunneen

*Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you
were a member of Congress. But I repeat
myself.*

Mark Twain, a Biography

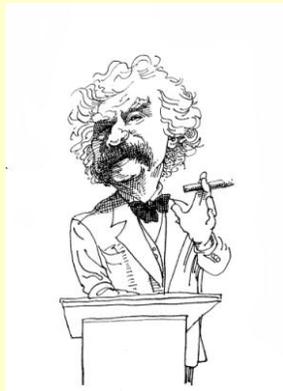


*Whiskey is taken into the committee rooms in
demijohns and carried out in demagogues.*

Mark Twain Notebook

Mark Twain on ABRAHAM LINCOLN

We are here to honor the birthday of the greatest citizen, and the noblest and the best, after Washington, that this land or any other has yet produced. The old wounds are healed, you and we are brothers again; you testify it by honoring two of us--once soldiers of the Lost Cause, and foes of your great and good leader-- and we testify it by laying our honest homage at the feet of Abraham Lincoln,

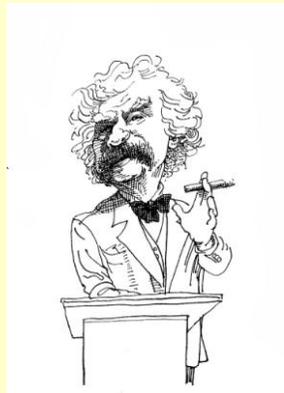


and in forgetting that you of the North and we of the South were ever enemies, and remembering we are now indistinguishably fused together and nameable by one common great name--Americans!

Lincoln Birthday Celebration, February 11th 1901

(Much more on Abraham Lincoln in *Suppose You Were an Idiot... Mark Twain on Politics and Politicians*)

And I was a newspaper reporter four years in cities, and so saw the inside of many things; and was reporter in a legislature two sessions and the same in Congress one session, and thus learned to know personally three sample



bodies of the smallest minds and the selfishest souls and the cowardliest hearts that God makes.

Letter fragment 1891 from Mark Twain: A Biography

"I think you are the best soul and the noblest I ever knew, Colonel Sellers! and if the people only knew you as I do, you would not be tagging around here a nameless man—you would be in Congress."

The gladness died out of the Colonel's face, and said gravely: "I have always been a friend of your family, and I think I have always tried to do right as between man and man, according to my lights.

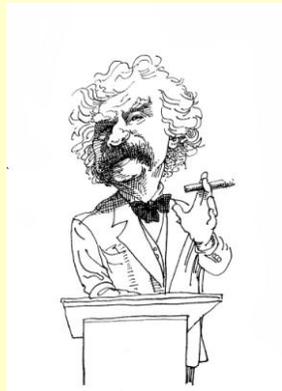


Now I don't think there has ever been anything in my conduct that should make you feel justified in saying a thing like that."

The Gilded Age

A jay hasn't got any more principle than a Congressman. A jay will lie, a jay will steal, a jay will deceive, a jay will betray; and four times out of five, a jay will go back on his solemnest promise.

What Stumped the Blue Jay

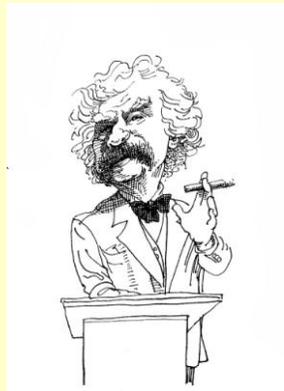


That is true, Colonel. To be sure you can buy now and then a Senator or a Representative but they do not know it is wrong, and so they are not ashamed of it.

The Gilded Age

*Shall we ever have a Congress, a majority of
whose members are hopelessly insane?*

Probably not.

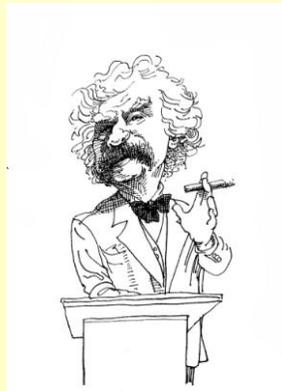


*But it is possible —unquestionably such a
thing is possible.*

Letter to sister, 1869

Why, it is telegraphed all over the country and commented on as something wonderful if a congressman votes honestly and unselfishly and refuses to take advantage of his position to steal from the government.

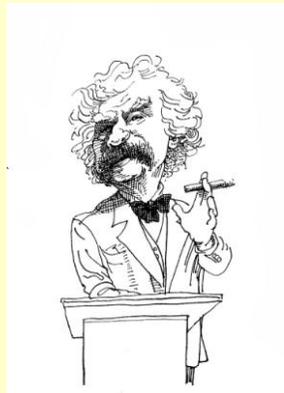
The Gilded Age



A man's first duty is to his own conscience and honor—the party or the country come second to that.

Letter to William Dean Howells, 1884

*You must not place too much weight upon this
idea of moving the capital from Washington.
St. Louis is in some respects a better place for
it than Washington, though there isn't more*



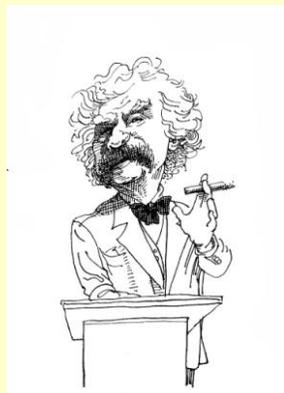
than a toss-up between the two after all....

One is dead and the other in a trance.

Letter to sister 1869

Principles aren't of much account anyway, except at election-time. After that you hang them up to let them season.

Mark Twain Speeches: Municipal Corruption

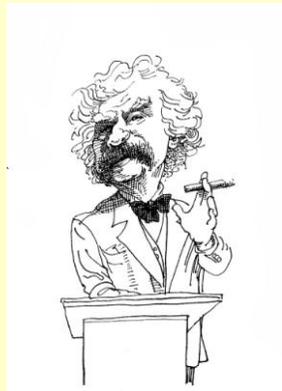


Alice was one of those patriotic women in the rural districts, who think men are still selected for Congress on account of qualifications for the office.

The Gilded Age

Mark Twain on THEODORE ROOSEVELT

“I knew I had in me somewhere a definite feeling about the President if I could only find the words to define it with. Here they are, to a hair--from Leonard Jerome: 'For twenty years I have loved Roosevelt the man and hated Roosevelt the statesman and politician.'”



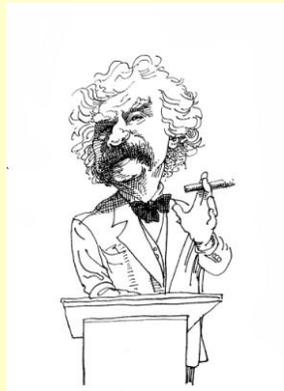
President Roosevelt is to-day, by very long odds—overwhelming odds—the most popular being, human or divine, visible or invisible, that has ever sojourned in America.

Mark Twain Autobiography

(Much, much more on Roosevelt in *Suppose You Were an Idiot... Mark Twain on Politics and Politicians*)

*There is something good and motherly about
Washington, the grand old benevolent
National Asylum for the Helpless.*

The Gilded Age

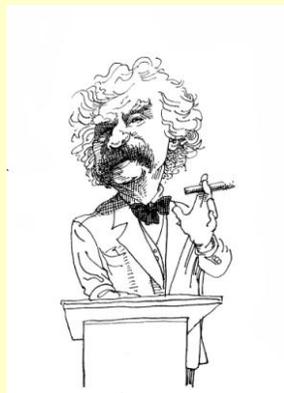


*This vile, dirty effort to rob the public
treasury, by the kites and vultures that now
infest the filthy den called Congress*

The Gilded Age

Mark Twain on ULYSSES S. GRANT

The only time General Grant ever mentioned liquor to me was about last April or possibly May (1885). He said, 'If only I could build up my strength! The doctors urge whiskey and champagne, but I can't take them. I can't abide the taste of any kind of liquor.' Had he made a conquest so complete that even the taste of liquor had become an offense? Or was

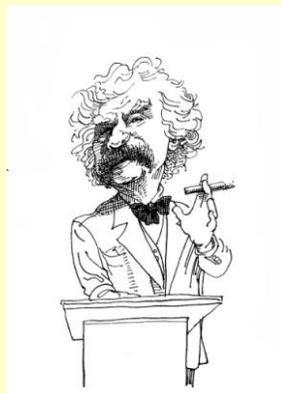


he so sore over what had been said about his habit that he wanted to persuade others and likewise himself that he had never even had the taste for it? It sounded like the latter but that's no evidence.

He told me in the Fall of '84 that there was something the matter with his throat and that at the suggestion of the

physicians he had reduced his smoking to one cigar a day. Then he added in a casual way that he didn't even care for that one and seldom smoked it. I could understand that feeling.

He had set out to conquer not the habit but the inclination - the desire. He had gone to the root, not the trunk. It's the perfect way and the only way (I speak from experience).



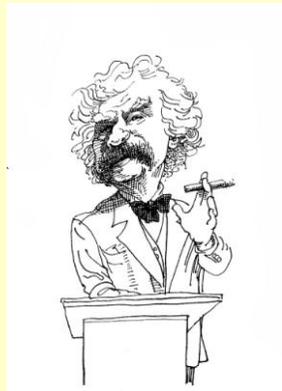
How I do hate these enemies of the human race who go around enslaving God's free people with pledges - to quit drinking instead of wanting to quit drinking.

I am reminded now of another incident..... (more in *Suppose You Were an Idiot... Mark Twain on Politics and Politicians*)

Mark Twain on KING LEOPOLD of Belgium

In fourteen years Leopold has deliberately destroyed more lives than have suffered death on all the battlefields of this planet for the past thousand years..... this moldy and piety-mouthing hypocrite, this bloody monster whose mate is not findable in human history anywhere.....

Mark Twain in Eruption



(Much more on Leopold - "the pirate King of Belgium" in *Suppose You Were an Idiot... Mark Twain on Politics and Politicians*)

**Suppose
you were
an
idiot...**



**Mark
Twain on
Politics and Politicians**

Edited by
Conor Cunneen