

July 30/93.

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Dear Mr. Hall:

This time "Pudd'head Wilson" is a success! Even Mrs. Clemens, the most difficult of critics, confesses it, & without reserves or qualifications. Formerly she would not consent that it be published either before or after my death. I have pulled the twins apart & made two individuals of them; I have sunk them out of sight, they are mere flitting shadows, now, & of no importance; their story has disappeared from the book. Aunt Betsy Hale has vanished wholly, leaving not a trace behind; Aunt Patsy Cooper & her daughter Rowena have almost disappeared -

They scarcely walk across the stage. The whole story is centred on the murder & the trial; from the first chapter ~~to the end~~ the movement is straight ahead without divergence or side-play to the murder & the trial; everything that is done or said or that happens is a preparation for those events. Therefore, 3 people stand up high, from beginning to end, & only 3 — Puddihead, "Tom" Driscoll & his nigger mother Roxana; none of the others are important, or get in the way of the story or require the reader's attention. Consequently, the scenes & episodes which were the strength of the book formerly are stronger than ever, now.

When I began this final reconstruction the story contained

81,500 words; now it contains only 58,000. I have knocked out everything that delayed the march of the story — even the description of a Mississippi steamboat. There ain't any weather in, & there ~~is~~ ^{ain't} any scenery — the story is stripped for flight!

Now, then, what is she worth?

The amount of matter is but 3,000 words short of the American Claimant, for which the syndicate paid \$12,500. There was nothing new in that story, but the finger-prints in this one is virgin ground — absolutely fresh, and mighty curious & interesting to everybody. I don't want any more syndication — nothing short of \$20,000 anyway, & that I can't get — but won't you see how much the Cosmopolitan will stand? At the rate ^{Walker} ~~it~~ paid for

the little story he bought last spring, this one would be worth toward \$9,000 - say \$8,500. At the rate he offered me later for 12 contributions (on any subject) of 2,500 to 3,500 words each (an average of 3,000 each or 36,000 for the 12), the price would be - well, I don't quite know what. But - a ~~58,000~~ 58,000-word story is worth a higher rate than random sketches & contributions, and maybe Walker will stand a raise. Now you just praise the thing up, & get his price & cable me

"Walker offers [so many] dollars."

I will cable "Accept"

or

"Try elsewhere."

If I cable the latter, go privately & try the Century. If they won't stand a raise, cable me thus:

"Gilder no better"

or

"Gilder offers [name sum]"

+ I will return answer.

Do your best for me, for I do not sleep, these nights, for visions of the poor-house.

This in spite of the hopeful tone of yours of 11th to Langdon (just received) from him with approving words — for in me hope is very nearly expiring. Everything does look so blue, so dismally blue!

=

By + by I shall take up the Rhone open-boat voyage again, but not now — we are going to be moving around too much. I have torn up some of it, but I still have 15,000 words that Mrs. Clemens approves + that

I like. I may go at it in Paris again next winter, but not unless I know I can write it to suit me.

Otherwise I shall tackle Adam once more, & do him in a kind of a friendly & respectful way that will commend him to the Sunday schools. I've been thinking out his first life-days to-day & framing his childish & ignorant impressions & opinions for him.

Will ship Puddin'head in a few days. When you get it, cable as fol — ~~WAAA~~

Mark Twain,
Cone Brownship, London
Received

Or cable through Drexel Harjes if they have an ~~in~~ inexpensive cable-address of one word — as no doubt they have.
Sincerely, Yrs. S.L.C.

P.S. I may run over in October, but it's only the nearest way.

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, A. L. S., 30 July 1893,
to Fred J. Hall.

July 30/93.

Dear Mr. Hall:

This time "Pudd'nhead Wilson" is a success! Even Mrs. Clemens, the most difficult of critics, confesses it, & without reserves or qualifications. Formerly she would not consent that it be published either before or after my death. I have pulled the twins apart & made two individuals of them; I have sunk them out of sight, they are mere flitting shadows, now, & of no importance; *their* story has disappeared from the book. Aunt Betsy Hale has vanished wholly, leaving not a trace behind; aunt Patsy Cooper & her daughter Rowena have almost disappeared— [p. 2] they scarcely walk across the stage. The whole story is centered on the murder & the trial; from the first chapter to the last [these three words deleted] the movement is straight ahead without divergence or side-play to the murder & the trial; everything that is done or said or that happens is a preparation for those events. Therefore, 3 people stand up high, from beginning to end, & only 3—Pudd'nhead, "Tom" Driscoll, & his nigger mother Roxana; none of the others are important, or get in the way of the story or require the reader's attention. Consequently, the scenes & episodes which were the strength of the book formerly are stronger than ever, now.

When I began this final reconstruction the story contained [p. 3] 81,500 words; now it contains only 58,000. I have knocked out every-

thing that delayed the march of the story—even the description of a Mississippi steamboat. There ain't any weather in, & there ain't any scenery—the story is stripped for flight!

Now, then what is she worth? The amount of matter is but 3,000 words short of the American Claimant, for which the syndicate paid \$12,500. There was nothing new in that story, but the finger-prints in this one is virgin ground—absolutely *fresh*, and mighty curious & interesting to everybody.

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I will cable “Accept”

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“Try elsewhere.”

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By & by I shall take up the Rhone open-boat voyage again, but not now—we are going to be moving around too much. I have torn up some of it, but still have 15,000 words that Mrs. Clemens approves & that [p. 6] I like. I may go at it in Paris again next winter, but not unless I *know* I can write it to suit me.

Otherwise I shall tackle Adam once more, & do him in a kind of a friendly & respectful way that will commend him to the Sunday schools. I've been thinking out his first life-days to-day & framing his childish & ignorant impressions & opinions for him.

Will ship Pudd'nhead in a few days. When you get it, cable as fol—Mary [deleted]

MARK TWAIN,
Care Brownship, London
Received.

Or cable through Drexel Harjes if *they* have an inexpensive cable-address of one word—as no doubt they have.

Sincerely Yrs. S L C.

[vertical left margin of p. 6:] P. S. I *may* run over in October, but it's only the merest *may*.

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Published, garbled and with serious omissions and additions, in Paine, II, 590–592 (in the *right* material, 4 substantive and 11 accidental variations from the Lewis MS, not counting abbreviations); with the omissions and additions corrected—but not 3 accidentals—in Hill, pp. 354–356 (no. 286), which appends Paine's postscript to no. 289 (pp. 358–360).

Notes: 1. Clemens was writing from Krankenheil, Germany. As late as March 1894 he was campaigning to publish *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* by subscription only, but in that year both subscription and trade (Harper) editions came out.

2. The Samuel McClure Syndicate paid the first installment of a \$12,500 contract for *The American Claimant* in June 1891.

3. Wilson was the first literary detective to use fingerprints in solving a crime—in this case, insoluble otherwise.

4. John Brisben Walker of *Cosmopolitan* published "Is He Living, Or Is He Dead?," "The Esquimau Maiden's Romance," and "Travelling with a Reformer" in the latter months of 1893. The first of these is "the little story he bought last spring" (sent, with "Adam's Diary," from Florence on 13 March 1893). Hall had acknowledged receiving the *original Pudd'nhead* on 10 March.

5. Richard Watson Gilder of *Century* was to have had the second refusal

of "Is He Living, Or Is He Dead?" and "Adam's Diary" (see Hill's no. 278, 13 March 1893).

6. Charles J. Langdon was Olivia Clemens's brother.

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