

Address:

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Wm. Drexel Hoopes & Co.

Aug. 10/92.

Dear Mr. Hall:

I have dropped that novel I wrote you about, because I saw a more effective way of using the main episode — to wit, by telling it through the lips of Huck Finn. So I have started Huck Finn & Tom Sawyer (still 15 years old) & their friend the freed slave Jim around the world in a stray balloon, with Huck as narrator, & somewhere after the end of that great voyage he will work in the said episode & then nobody will suspect that a whole book has been written & the globe circum navigated merely to get that

Proposed title of the story, "New Adventures of the Merry Berry Finn."

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episode in an effective (+ at  
the same time apparently  
unintentional) way. I have  
written 12,000 words of this narrative,  
& find that the humor flows as  
easily as the adventures &  
surprises + so I shall go  
along + make a book of  
from 50,000 to 100,000 words.  
~~It is a story for boys, of course,~~  
~~but I think will interest any~~

It is a story for boys, of course,  
~~but~~ + I think will interest any  
boy between 8 years + 80.

page 2/12 When I was in New York the  
other day Mrs. Dodge, editor of St.  
Nicholas, wrote + offered me  
\$5,000 for (serial right) a story for  
boys 50,000 words long. I wrote  
back + declined, for I had other  
matter in my mind, then.

17  
Dear Mr. Hall  
I have proposed that novel  
I wrote you about, because I  
have a more effective way  
of writing the main episode  
- to wit, by telling it through  
the lips of Mark Finn. So I  
have started that Finn & Tom  
Sawyer (still 12 years old) &  
their friends the first scene for  
a story.

I can give that the right way to  
write a story for boys is to write it so  
that it will not only interest boys but will  
also strongly interest any man who  
has ever been a boy. That immensely  
enlarges the audience.

Now this story doesn't need to be  
restricted to a child's magazine - it is  
proper enough for any magazine  
I should think, or for a syndicate. I  
don't mean it, but I think so.

written 12,000 words of this narrative  
& find that the humor flows so  
easily on the adventures &  
adventures - so I shall go  
ahead & write a book of  
from 20,000 to 100,000 words.

~~It is a story for boys of course,~~

but I think will interest any  
boy who has ever been a boy  
I don't mean it, but I think so.

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, A. L., 10 August 1892,  
to Fred J. Hall.

Address:

% Drexel Harjes & Co.

Aug. 10/92.

Dear Mr. Hall:

I have dropped that novel I wrote you about, because I saw a more effective way of using the main episode—to-wit, by telling it through the lips of Huck Finn. So I have started Huck Finn & Tom Sawyer (still 15 years old) & their friend the freed slave Jim around the world in a *stray balloon*, with Huck as narrator, & somewhere after the end of that great voyage he will work in the said episode & then nobody will suspect that a whole book has been written & the globe circumnavigated merely to get that [p. 2] episode in an effective (& at the same time apparently *unintentional*) way. I have written 12,000 words of this narrative, & find that the humor flows as easily as the adventures & surprises—so I shall go along & make a book of from 50,000 to 100,000 words. [Here a sentence ending with *chapters* is carefully deleted.]

It is a story for boys, of course, but [deleted] & I think will interest any boy between 8 years & 80. [MS torn laterally here; page 2½ in margin.]

When I was in New York the other day Mrs. Dodge, editor of *St. Nicholas*, wrote & offered me \$5,000 for (serial right) a story for boys 50,000 words long. I wrote back & declined, for I had other matter in my mind, then.

[p. 3] I conceive that the *right* way to write a story for boys is to write it so that it will not only interest boys but will also strongly interest any man *who has ever been a boy*. That immensely enlarges the audience.

Now this story doesn't need to be restricted to a child's magazine—it is proper enough for any magazine I should think, or for a syndicate. I don't swear it, but I think so.

[vertically along left margin of p. 1:] Proposed title of the story, "New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

[unsigned]

AL unsigned, 3 pages. Double sheet, 20 x 12.5 cm.

Laid paper. Watermark: decorated shield. Countermark: HOLY-ROOD.

Provenance: Seven Gables Bookshop, n. d. Inserted in *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, New York, 1894.

Published in *Mark Twain's Letters*, arr. Albert Bigelow Paine (New York, 1917), II, 565–566, with 1 substantive and 8 (excluding abbreviations) accidental variations from the Lewis MS; *Mark Twain's Letters to His Publishers*, ed. Hamlin Hill (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 313–315 (no. 256), with 1 accidental variation in the Paine version corrected—and with the rest of the letter (not in the Lewis Collection but in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library), beginning "(The foregoing can be shown to editors and McClure.)" and signed S L C.

Notes: 1. The earlier letter to Hall mentioning "that novel I wrote you about" has not turned up, but a later one (Hill's no. 258, 4 September 1892) makes it clear that "the howling farce I told you I had begun a while back" (on 5 August) was *Those Extraordinary Twins*, the fairly distant forbear of *Pudd'n-head Wilson*.

2. "New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" went to Mrs. Dodge after all, as *Tom Sawyer Abroad*.

3. The "other matter in my mind" may have had to do with a virtually

lifelong romance with detective stories: see, for example, *Simon Wheeler, Detective*, ed. Franklin R. Rogers (New York, 1963), page xii.

4. Clemens was writing from Bad-Nauheim, Germany, to Fred J. Hall in New York. Hall was his partner in Charles L. Webster & Co. and his literary agent.

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