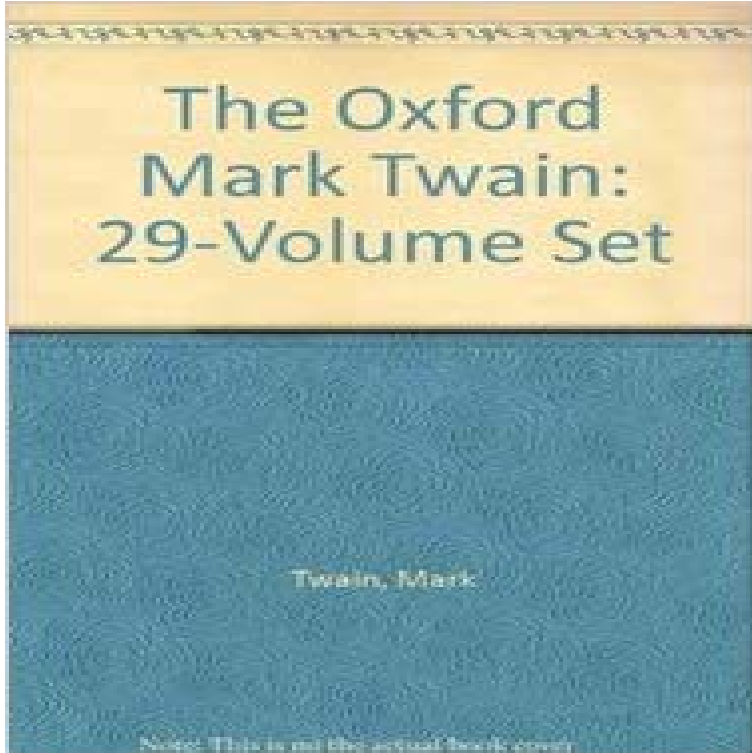


The Oxford Mark Twain: 29-volume set



If any one writer stands at the heart of American literature it is Mark Twain. With his wild head of hair, thick mustache, and brilliant white suit, he is more recognizable than any living writer, and in his time he was, as he himself put it, the most conspicuous person on the planet. He is certainly Americas most popular writer--arguably the most popular American writer the world over--and the greatest humorist we have ever known, a marvelous teller of tall tales, a genial entertainer, a consistently quotable sage. He is also one of our finest satirists, who penned withering attacks on hypocrisy and corruption (he once said he wrote with a pen warmed up in hell) and in his most serious works, such as *Huckleberry Finn* and *Puddnhead Wilson*, he cast a profound light on the darkest recesses of the nations psyche. The twenty-nine-volume Oxford Mark Twain is a major literary event. In addition to gathering together a superb collection of Twains works, editor Shelley Fisher Fishkin has commissioned some of our most eminent living writers to introduce each volume with their personal insights and experiences of Twain. Readers will find, for instance, Toni Morrison reflecting on *Huckleberry Finn*, Kurt Vonnegut on *Connecticut Yankee*, Arthur Miller on *Twains Autobiography*, Roy Blount Jr. on *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, E.L. Doctorow on *Tom Sawyer*, Willie Morris on *Life on the Mississippi*, Garry Wills on *Christian Science*, and Cynthia Ozick on *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg and Other Stories and Essays*. Other writers include Gore Vidal, Ursula K. Le Guin, George Plimpton, Ward Just, Russell Banks, Bobbie Ann Mason, Malcolm Bradbury, Nat Hentoff, Sherley Anne Williams, Justin Kaplan, Walter Mosley, Erica Jong, Judith Martin (*Miss Manners*), David Bradley, Frederick Pohl, Mordecai Richler, Lee Smith, Anne Bernays, Charles

Johnson, Fred Busch, and actor Hal Holbrook (who introduces Twains collected speeches). And each volume includes an afterword by a noted scholar--such as Louis J. Budd, Victor A. Doyno, Leslie A. Fiedler, James A. Miller, Linda Wagner-Martin, Forrest Robinson, M. Thomas Inge, Fred Kaplan, Susan Harris, and David L. Smith--who place the work in the context of Twains career and the literary and social climate of the time. In effect, the set gathers together an American literary whos who, all of whom reflect on what Mark Twains work means to them as writers and scholars, and what he means to our literary history and to our culture as a whole. Taken together, these introductions and afterwords provide a major reevaluation of Twain, allowing readers to see his work in fresh ways. But of course the most important thing is the work itself. Here is the full range of Twains remarkably prolific career, including *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, *The Innocents Abroad*, *Roughing It*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *A Tramp Abroad*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthurs Court*, *The Tragedy of Puddnhead Wilson*, *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*, *The Million Pound Banknote*, *Following the Equator*, and *Extracts from Captain Stormfields Visit to Heaven*. Readers will find freewheeling parodies and burlesques, Twains inimitable travel pieces, rich and complex portraits of childhood along the Mississippi, ghost stories and detective stories, irreverent lampoons of corrupt politicians, dark ruminations on the nature of humanity, and sharp-tongued editorials on the events of his day (such as Belgian imperialism in Africa or anti-Semitism in Vienna). Many of the works included here--such as *Sketches, New and Old*, *A Tramp Abroad*, *The American Claimant*, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* and *Joan of Arc*--have not been readily available for decades. Equally important, *The Oxford Mark Twain* is a facsimile of the first American

editions of Twain's work, and includes all the original illustrations, some of which were drawn by Twain himself, and many of which have not been seen since these editions went out of print. Moreover, in each volume containing art, Fishkin has commissioned an essay on that volume's illustrations and the artists responsible. Captivating in themselves, these illustrations add an extra dimension to the narratives that has been missing for a hundred years. Each volume also includes, as its frontispiece, a specially selected photo of Twain around the age he was when he wrote the book at hand. The Oxford Mark Twain is an unprecedented undertaking and a cause for celebration. Colorful, irreverent, romantic, skeptical, a master of comic asides, a bittersweet humorist, and an unflinching critic of human pretensions, Mark Twain speaks to us across time with verve and wisdom. Combining the works themselves, reflections on Twain by some of our leading writers and scholars, and the original illustrations--all at a very affordable price--this superb twenty-nine-volume set will be treasured by everyone.

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