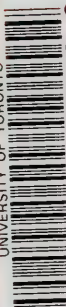


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STEAMBOAT TIME



# LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

BY  
MARK TWAIN

ILLUSTRATED



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## THE "BODY OF THE NATION"

BUT *the basin of the Mississippi is the* BODY OF THE NATION. All the other parts are but members, important in themselves, yet more important in their relations to this. Exclusive of the Lake basin and of 300,000 square miles in Texas and New Mexico, which in many aspects form a part of it, this basin contains about 1,250,000 square miles. In extent it is the second great valley of the world, being exceeded only by that of the Amazon. The valley of the frozen Obi approaches it in extent; that of the La Plata comes next in space, and probably in habitable capacity, having about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its area; then comes that of the Yenisei, with about  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; the Lena, Amoor, Hoang-ho, Yang-tse-kiang, and Nile,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; the Ganges, less than  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; the Indus, less than  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; the Euphrates,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; the Rhine,  $\frac{1}{15}$ . It exceeds in extent the whole of Europe, exclusive of Russia, Norway, and Sweden. *It would contain Austria four times, Germany or Spain five times, France six times, the British Islands or Italy ten times.* Conceptions formed from the river-basins of Western Europe are rudely shocked when we consider the extent of the valley of the Mississippi; nor are those formed from the sterile basins of the great rivers of Siberia, the lofty plateaus of Central Asia, or the mighty sweep of the swampy Amazon more adequate. Latitude, elevation, and rainfall all combine to render every part of the Mississippi Valley capable of supporting a dense population. *As a dwelling-place for civilized man it is by far the first upon our globe.*—EDITOR'S TABLE, *Harper's Magazine*, February, 1863.



# CONTENTS

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## CHAPTER I

The Mississippi is Well worth Reading about—It is Remarkable—Instead of Widening towards its Mouth, it grows Narrower—It Empties four hundred and six million Tons of Mud—It was First Seen in 1542—It is Older than some Pages in European History—De Soto has the Pull—Older than the Atlantic Coast—Some Half-breeds chip in—La Salle Thinks he will Take a Hand . . . . . Page 1

## CHAPTER II

La Salle again appears, and so does a Cat-fish—Buffaloes also—Some Indian Paintings are Seen on the Rocks—"The Father of Waters" does not Flow into the Pacific—More History and Indians—Some Curious Performances—not Early English—Natchez, or the Site of it, is Approached . . . . . 8

## CHAPTER III

A little History—Early Commerce—Coal Fleets and Timber Rafts—We start on a voyage—I seek Information—Some Music—The Trouble begins—Tall Talk—The Child of Calamity—Ground and lofty Tumbling—The Wash-up—Business and Statistics—Mysterious Band—Thunder and Lightning—The Captain speaks—Allbright weeps—The Mystery settled—Chaff—I am Discovered—Some Art-work proposed—I give an Account of Myself—Released . . . 15

## CHAPTER IV

The Boys' Ambition—Village Scenes—Steamboat Pictures—A Heavy Swell—A Runaway . . . . . 30

## CHAPTER V

A Traveller—A Lively Talker—A Wild-cat Victim . . . . . 35

## CHAPTER VI

Besieging the Pilot—Taken along—Spoiling a Nap—Fishing for a Plantation—"Points" on the River—A Gorgeous Pilot-house . Page 40

## CHAPTER VII

River Inspectors—Cottonwoods and Plum Point—Hat-Island Crossing—Touch and Go—It is a Go—A Lightning Plot . . . . . 49

## CHAPTER VIII

A Heavy-loaded Big Gun—Sharp Sights in Darkness—Abandoned to his Fate—Scraping the Banks—Learn him or Kill him . . . . . 57

## CHAPTER IX

Shake the Reef—Reason Dethroned—The Face of the Water—A Bewitching Scene—Romance and Beauty . . . . . 65

## CHAPTER X

Putting on Airs—Taken down a bit—Learn it as it is—The River Rising . . . . . 73

## CHAPTER XI

In the Tract Business—Effects of the Rise—Plantations gone—A Measureless Sea—A Somnambulist Pilot—Supernatural Piloting—Nobody there—All Saved . . . . . 80

## CHAPTER XII

Low Water—Yawl sounding—Buoys and Lanterns—Cubs and Soundings—The Boat Sunk—Seeking the Wrecked . . . . . 88

## CHAPTER XIII

A Pilot's Memory—Wages soaring—A Universal Grasp—Skill and Nerve—Testing a "Cub"—"Back her for Life"—A Good Lesson . 95

## CHAPTER XIV

Pilots and Captains—High-priced Pilots—Pilots in Demand—A Whistler—A cheap Trade—Two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar Speed . . 105

## CHAPTER XV

New Pilots undermining the Pilots' Association—Crutches and Wages—Putting on Airs—The Captains Weaken—The Association Laughs

—The Secret Sign—An Admirable System—Rough on Outsiders—A  
Tight Monopoly—No Loophole—The Railroads and the War  
Page 113

## CHAPTER XVI

All Aboard—A Glorious Start—Loaded to Win—Bands and Bugles—  
Boats and Boats—Racers and Racing . . . . . 126

## CHAPTER XVII

Cut-offs—Ditching and Shooting—Mississippi Changes—A Wild Night  
—Swearing and Guessing—Stephen in Debt—He Confuses his  
Creditors—He makes a New Deal—Will Pay them Alphabeti-  
cally . . . . . 134

## CHAPTER XVIII

Sharp Schooling—Shadows—I am Inspected—Where did you get them  
Shoes?—Pull her Down—I want to kill Brown—I try to run her—I  
am Complimented . . . . . 143

## CHAPTER XIX

A Question of Veracity—A Little Unpleasantness—I have an Audience  
with the Captain—Mr. Brown Retires . . . . . 150

## CHAPTER XX

I become a Passenger—We hear the News—A Thunderous Crash—They  
Stand to their Posts—In the Blazing Sun—A Growsome Spectacle—  
His Hour has Struck . . . . . 155

## CHAPTER XXI

I get my License—The War Begins—I become a Jack-of-all-trades . 162

## CHAPTER XXII

I try the Alias Business—Region of Goatees—Boots begin to Appear—  
The River Man is Missing—The Young Man is Discouraged—Speci-  
men Water—A Fine Quality of Smoke—A Supreme Mistake—We  
Inspect the Town—Desolation Way-traffic—A Wood-yard . . 163

## CHAPTER XXIII

Old French Settlements—We start for Memphis—Young Ladies and  
Russia-leather Bags . . . . . 172

## CHAPTER XXIV

I receive some Information—Alligator Boats—Alligator Talk—She was  
a Rattler to go—I am Found Out . . . . . Page 176

## CHAPTER XXV

The Devil's Oven and Table—A Bombshell falls—No Whitewash—  
Thirty Years on the River—Mississippi Uniforms—Accidents and  
Casualties—Two hundred Wrecks—A Loss to Literature—Sunday-  
Schools and Brick Masons . . . . . 183

## CHAPTER XXVI

War Talk—I Tilt over Backwards—Fifteen Shot-holes—A Plain Story  
—Wars and Feuds—Darnell *versus* Watson—A Gang and a Wood-  
pile—Western Grammar—River Changes—New Madrid—Floods and  
Falls . . . . . 190

## CHAPTER XXVII

Tourists and their Note-books—Captain Hall—Mrs. Trollope's Emo-  
tions—Hon. Charles Augustus Murray's Sentiment—Captain Mar-  
ryat's Sensations—Alexander Mackay's Feelings—Mr. Parkman Re-  
ports . . . . . 198

## CHAPTER XXVIII

Swinging down the River—Named for Me—Plum Point again—Lights  
and Snag Boats—Infinite Changes—A Lawless River—Changes and  
Jetties—Uncle Mumford Testifies—Pegging the River—What the  
Government does—The Commission Men and Theories—"Had  
them Bad"—Jews and Prices . . . . . 204

## CHAPTER XXIX

Murel's Gang—A Consummate Villain—Getting Rid of Witnesses—  
Stewart turns Traitor—I Start a Rebellion—I get a New Suit of  
Clothes—We Cover our Tracks—Pluck and Capacity—A Good  
Samaritan City—The Old and the New . . . . . 214

## CHAPTER XXX

A Melancholy Picture—On the Move—River Gossip—She Went By  
a-Sparklin'—Amenities of Life—A World of Misinformation—Elo-  
quence of Silence—Striking a Snag—Photographically Exact—Plank  
Side-walks . . . . . 223



## CHAPTER XXXI

Mutinous Language—The Dead-house—Cast-iron German and Flexible English—A Dying Man's Confession—I am Bound and Gagged—I get Myself Free—I begin my Search—The Man with one Thumb—Red Paint and White Paper—He Dropped on his Knees—Fright and Gratitude—I Fled through the Woods—A Grisly Spectacle—Shout, Man, Shout—A look of Surprise and Triumph—The Muffled Gurgle of a Mocking Laugh—How strangely Things happen—The Hidden Money . . . . . Page 232

## CHAPTER XXXII

Ritter's Narrative—A Question of Money—Napoleon—Somebody is Serious—Where the Prettiest Girl used to Live . . . . . 248

## CHAPTER XXXIII

A Question of Division—A Place where there was no License—The Calhoun Land Company—A Cotton-planter's Estimate—Halifax and Watermelons—Jewelled-up Bar-keepers . . . . . 253

## CHAPTER XXXIV

An Austere Man—A Mosquito Policy—Facts Dressed in Tights—A swelled Left Ear . . . . . 258

## CHAPTER XXXV

Signs and Scars—Cannon-thunder Rages—Cave-dwellers—A Continual Sunday—A ton of Iron and no Glass—The Ardent is Saved—Mule Meat—A National Cemetery—A Dog and a Shell—Railroads and Wealth—Wharfage Economy—Vicksburg *versus* The "Gold Dust"—A Narrative in Anticipation . . . . . 261

## CHAPTER XXXVI

The Professor Spins a Yarn—An Enthusiast in Cattle—He makes a Proposition—Loading Beeves at Acapulco—He was n't Raised to it—He is Roped In—His Dull Eyes Lit Up—Four Aces, you Ass!—He does n't Care for the Gores . . . . . 269

## CHAPTER XXXVII

A Terrible Disaster—The "Gold Dust" explodes her Boilers—The End of a Good Man . . . . . 276

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