



MARK TWAIN AND GEORGE W. CABLE  
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## THE TWINS OF GENIUS: PUBLIC READINGS BY GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE AND MARK TWAIN IN PENNSYLVANIA

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**I**N THE winter of 1884-1885 George Washington Cable and Mark Twain gave public readings from their own works. This form of entertainment was in its heyday. Actors and elocutionists had for decades been reading on the platforms of American cities, among them Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. In 1867-1868 Charles Dickens showed that a famous author could read from his own works with public acclaim and financial success around the country, including four stops in Philadelphia. Others followed, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, who read in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in 1873. As popular attractions, readers held their own against other forms of entertainment. To hear George Washington Cable and Mark Twain, audiences crowded into churches, halls, opera houses, and theaters for 100 performances in eighty-five cities in the United States and Canada. The Cable-Twain tour was the most ambitious, best received, and most celebrated in American history.<sup>1</sup>

In Pennsylvania, there were four readings in Philadelphia and one in Pittsburgh,<sup>2</sup> more than in any other state except New York and Massachusetts. The houses were packed and enthusiastic; and the press teemed with reports, criticism, and interviews. Though as a rule the eastern press, especially that of New York City, praised Cable and lambasted Mark Twain, the press of Pennsylvania saw good and bad in both but deemed Mark Twain the better reader. When "the intelligent public" of New York City was offered "the twins of genius," a "combination of genius and versatility," the *New York Times* of November 19 complained that no one could tell which had the genius and which the versatility. If anything, Cable

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<sup>1</sup> For studies of the tour as a national phenomenon see Paul Fatout, *Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit* (Bloomington, Ind., 1960), 204-231; and Fred W. Lorch, *The Trouble Begins at Eight: Mark Twain's Lecture Tours* (Ames, Iowa, 1968), 161-182.

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia, November 21, 26, 1884, February 26, 1885; Pittsburgh, December 29, 1884.

had both and Mark Twain neither. The New York press counted Cable's polite excerpts from *Dr. Sevier*, and his exotic but proper Creole songs, as superior to disreputable Huck Finn and the likes of "King Sollermun." By contrast, the Pittsburgh *Commercial Gazette* of December 30 thought both readers impressed the audience but added: "Of course Mark Twain carried off the lion's share of the honors."

Schemes for joint-reading tours had been hatching and dying in Mark Twain's mind since 1881. A successful solo lecturer and after-dinner speaker since 1866, he thought now of public readings and in company with others. His most elaborate scheme would have put him, Joel Chandler Harris, Cable, William Dean Howells, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich on the road in a chartered Pullman. But only Cable, the group's sole experienced reader and its most congenial member, would agree to join the menagerie. The others had not only stage fright but also trepidations about weeks of close, continual contact with Mark Twain's volatile temper. By 1884 Mark Twain's costly enterprise, the Charles L. Webster publishing house, was to bring out *Huckleberry Finn*. The entrepreneur and author, at once wanting money to back his venture and publicity to sell his book, decided to take a reading tour—by himself if necessary, with Cable if Cable would accept the terms: \$450 a week and expenses. Cable accepted. On November 5 in New Haven, Connecticut, the Twins of Genius began what they called their "highway robbery business." Sixteen days later they were in Philadelphia.

Before they arrived, ads in the papers announced "MARK TWAIN, as a reader of his own superb fun, and Mr. GEORGE W. CABLE, the distinguished Southern Novelist, presenting the matchless scenes from his own romances." Mark Twain's world famous wit and Cable's exquisite humor and pathos were "a combination of genius and versatility that appeals freshly to the intelligent public."<sup>3</sup> In Philadelphia the readings were presented in Association Hall in November and the Academy of Music in February, and in Pittsburgh in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Seats were \$1.00 (reserved) and \$.75 (general admission). The February reading was a number on the "Star Course."

Besides carrying ads for the readings, the papers observed and

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the *Philadelphia Press*, November 20, 1884. Major James B. Pond, the tour's manager, wrote: "Twain and Cable, a colossal attraction, a happy combination!" *Eccentricities of Genius* (London, 1901), 231.

commented in their columns of local news and amusements. On November 21 the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* said: "Mr. Cable gave much pleasure at his readings last season, and there is, of course, much curiosity to hear 'Mark Twain.' " The same day's *Philadelphia Inquirer* predicted "an entertainment that is sure to be interesting." The papers anticipated with delight this unusual reading by coperformers. It was even seen as representing the renewed union between North and South. Forgetting that Mark Twain, a Missourian by birth, had served in the Confederate army, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* asserted on November 21 that he would "clasp hands across the bloody chasm [of the Civil War] with Mr. George W. Cable."

Pennsylvanians turned out in numbers. On November 21 Association Hall was overcrowded with an audience that "filled every seat in the parquet and both galleries, and crowded the aisles."<sup>4</sup> Again, on November 26, the hall was filled. "People began pouring into the building as soon as the doors were opened," and at eight o'clock a jam in the lobby extended to the sidewalk.<sup>5</sup> On December 30 the audience was large to the point of overflowing.<sup>6</sup> On February 26 the 3000 spectators in the Academy of Music were a vast audience that filled all seats and the aisles; many stood throughout the evening.<sup>7</sup>

Pennsylvanians liked the readers and appreciated the readings. On November 21 people "were moved intermittently to tears and to laughter."<sup>8</sup> In response to Mark Twain "the tears ran down his listeners' cheeks."<sup>9</sup> Humor dominated that evening, as always. Cable wrote from backstage: "Mark is on the platform, there goes a roar of applause . . . . There goes another round . . . . There they go again . . . . There they go again!" The "laughter is almost continual, & even my milder humor is interrupted with laughter and

<sup>4</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, November 22, 1884. See also, the *Philadelphia Press*, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 22, 1884. The hall was "full to the ceiling," Cable wrote, "men standing thick in the back of the house." Arlin Turner, ed., *Mark Twain and George W. Cable: The Record of a Literary Friendship* (East Lansing, Mich., 1960), 60.

<sup>5</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 27, 1884. See also the *Philadelphia Press*, November 27, 1884.

<sup>6</sup> *Pittsburgh Times*, December 30, 1884. See also the *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1884; Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 77.

<sup>7</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 27, 1885. See also the *Philadelphia Press*, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, and *Philadelphia Record*, February 27, 1885.

<sup>8</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, November 22, 1884.

<sup>9</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 22, 1884. See also the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, November 22, 1884.

applause."<sup>10</sup> The audience of November 26, which burst into applause when Mark Twain entered, was very appreciative of his dry humor, which kept them "rollicking with laughter."<sup>11</sup> The peals of laughter over his "Desperate Encounter With an Interviewer," Cable said, fell "as regularly as a surf."<sup>12</sup> In Pittsburgh the twins "met with unrestrained levity,"<sup>13</sup> and Cable's songs were enthusiastically received.<sup>14</sup> "We pleased our audience thoroughly," Cable said.<sup>15</sup> On February 26, after "frequent manifestations of approbation" throughout the program, "both [readers] were repeatedly and heartily encored."<sup>16</sup>

The response was a compliment, for, as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* observed on November 22, the audiences were not only large but also very select and "among the most cultivated and intelligent people of the city." Cable praised the numbers and quality of spectators in Pennsylvania.<sup>17</sup> The audience of February 26 was the finest sight Cable "ever looked at from the platform."<sup>18</sup> When, according to the *Philadelphia Press* of February 27, he exclaimed: "It's a beautiful audience," Mark Twain replied: "You are right, old man. We have not seen a handsomer audience in this country or Canada."

Pennsylvanians were applauding several works by each reader. Every evening Cable read three selections from his novel *Dr. Sevier*: sketches of the main characters—Mary and John Richling, Kate Reilly, and the Negro named Narcisse—and renditions of the most moving scenes. Cable also sang Creole songs, usually three. Every audience liked best "Mary's Night Ride," in which Mary Richling and her child rode through Civil War battle lines to meet the wounded John. "Mary's Night Ride" was always Cable's last on the program, after he had made audiences laugh over scenes in which characters spoke dialects and referred to "Eyetalian Dagos." But "Mary's Night Ride" was not funny. "The [frightful] portrait of the mother and child riding past the guards, whose muskets belched

<sup>10</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 60. See also Guy A. Cardwell, *Twins of Genius* (East Lansing, Mich., 1953), 22.

<sup>11</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 27, 1884. See also the *Philadelphia North American*, November 27, 1884.

<sup>12</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 62.

<sup>13</sup> *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1884.

<sup>14</sup> *Pittsburgh Times*, December 30, 1884.

<sup>15</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 77.

<sup>16</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, February 27, 1885. See also the *Philadelphia Record* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 27, 1884.

<sup>17</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 60, 62, 77.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

forth a hail of lead, was described with such vividness that the audience hung on every word."<sup>19</sup> Of all Cable's pieces, "Mary's Night Ride" drew the most applause and often encores. For encores in Philadelphia, Cable sang a Creole song of "a mother calling her child 'Salangadon,' and being answered by the wind."<sup>20</sup>

The press liked what Cable presented and how he presented it. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* of November 27 called his selections "inimitable stories of Southern life and thrilling romances of the war." Of the songs the *Philadelphia Press* said "very sweetly rendered" and with "perfect effect" on November 27, and on February 27 it praised their happy effect. On December 30 the *Pittsburgh Times* judged the songs excellently sung. The press of Philadelphia praised Cable's manner as humorous, vigorous, graphic, and interesting; "a remarkable style of delivery," said the *Record* of February 27. To the *Pittsburgh Times* of December 30, Cable's delightful manner gave color and life to his pieces. The most successful, the press believed, was "Mary's Night Ride," a "fine elocutionary display"<sup>21</sup> of strong dramatic power.<sup>22</sup>

Mark Twain's repertory was larger. On November 21 he read the King Sollermun episode from *Huckleberry Finn*, "A Trying Situation," "A Ghost Story," and "A Tragic Tale of a Fishwife." On November 26 he substituted "Mechanical Swearing" for "Fishwife." On December 29 the program was the same as on November 21, except that the selection from *Huckleberry Finn* was not "King Sollermun" but something unidentified. For the matinee on February 26 he chose "The Blue Jay's Mistake," "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," another unidentified story, and, from *Huckleberry Finn*, "Tom and Huck Help Jim Escape." In the evening "An Encounter With an Interviewer" and "Why I Lost the Editorship" replaced "Jumping Frog" and the unidentified story.

Mark Twain had chosen some of his funniest works and Pennsylvanians laughed. "Mechanical Swearing," a fantasy of how the phonograph could end profanity, was "too much for the most serious audience in the world, and there was a continuous burst of

<sup>19</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, November 22, 1884.

<sup>20</sup> He had never sung the song in public before because "he had waited to see a lady in Philadelphia . . . by whom he could verify the words." *Philadelphia Press*, November 27, 1884.

<sup>21</sup> *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1884.

<sup>22</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, February 27, 1884. See also the *Philadelphia Press* and *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, February 27, 1885.

laughter.”<sup>23</sup> “A Tragic Tale of a Fishwife,” a satire on the German language, brought down every house.<sup>24</sup> “A Ghost Story” and “An Encounter With an Interviewer” left the audience “convulsed.”<sup>25</sup> “King Sollermun,” similarly, “set everybody in roars.”<sup>26</sup>

Mark Twain himself was most pleased with “Tom and Huck Help Jim Escape.” He read it in public for the first time in Pittsburgh. In it Jim was set free after his cabin was stocked with snakes, and then the three were chased through the night by farmers with guns. Since it lasted forty-five minutes, a break was taken in the middle, and Cable sang, for variety. Mark Twain, in a letter to his wife, Livy, called this piece the “biggest card I’ve got in my whole repertoire”; it went “a-booming” without “a doubtful place in it, or a silent spot.”<sup>27</sup> He added that Cable, boisterous in praise, very correctly called the literary quality “high & fine—& great,” the truth to the nature of boys unchallengeable, the humor constant and delightful, and the dramatic ending “full of stir, & boom, & go.”

The newspapers of Pennsylvania were on the whole evenhanded in comparing and judging the twins, and mostly favorable toward both. But adversity was fierce when it occurred. In Philadelphia, only the *Evening Bulletin* joined other eastern newspapers and lambasted Mark Twain. On November 22 Cable’s manner was praiseworthy but Mark Twain’s material nonsense. On February 27 Mark Twain’s nasal twang was intolerable, his trying to appear unconscious of his own humor awkward, and the audience, for gullibly laughing whenever he wanted, indiscriminate. Conversely, the *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette* of December 30 poked fun at Cable’s drooping mustache and leveled malice at Cable’s ability as a reader: “Two ropes hung down [from Cable’s face] to give encouragement to his feet to jump up and catch the ends, and thus rid themselves of the dreary necessity of wading through the endless mire of mediocrity which the owner of the nag-tailed mustache has chosen as their road.”

Whereas the treatment of the readers balanced itself between the

<sup>23</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 27, 1884.

<sup>24</sup> “A young lady has no sex; a turnip has. ‘Where is the young English girl? It is at the opera. Where is the turnip? She is in the kitchen.’” *Philadelphia Press*, November 22, 1884. The *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1884, called it “laughable” and “exceedingly funny.”

<sup>25</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 22, 1884; *Philadelphia Press*, November 27, 1884.

<sup>26</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, November 22, 1884.

<sup>27</sup> Dixon Wecter, ed., *The Love Letters of Mark Twain* (New York, 1949), 223.

Pennsylvania cities, unfavorable criticism of the readings was most heavy in Pittsburgh. The *Dispatch's* critic, out for blood, hit them hard.<sup>28</sup> The December 30 *Commercial Gazette* attacked the departure from the program in utter contempt toward it. Mark Twain, down for "King Sollermun," made not the slightest mention of him or any other king. The program "was one of the jokes of the evening." The Pittsburgh papers "must have taken some grudge against us," Cable said, "for they made offensive reports of the affair."<sup>29</sup>

Still, despite the complaints about a few aspects, the press by and large evaluated every program favorably, calling them humorous, delightful, and brilliant. According to the *Pittsburgh Times* of December 30, the Twins "gave their audience something entirely new and as thoroughly enjoyable as it was completely different."

Typically, a program began with tomfoolery. Cable would appear onstage and say: "I'm not Mark Twain." In Pittsburgh Cable made appropriate nonsense of the world *bloom*, a metallurgical term for a type of iron and steel. He told the audience he had to introduce himself because Mark Twain refused on the grounds that Cable had gotten too much of the Pittsburgh bloom. In truth, Cable said, Mark Twain had gotten so much of it as not to be reputable and Cable was glad to introduce himself. *He* was Mr. Cable; the one who would follow was the other man.<sup>30</sup> During the opening shenanigans on November 21 Mark Twain mused that he had retired from the platform forever, here in Philadelphia, nine years ago. Never had he lied before and never would he again, he vowed. He had not slept a wink in nine years, out of guilt. "'There now,' he added dolefully, 'I suppose I've done it again and have another era of wakefulness to look forward to.'"<sup>31</sup>

Cable introduced the evening, but Mark Twain ended it. His favorite ending: "I will now close these solemnities." On February 26 a few people left before the end. He stopped, looked at them, and told them to go ahead and catch their trains. Anyone else wanting to go should go too, he said; but no one went. They preferred staying for his "Jumping Frog." Still, the twins were less hard on Pennsylvania's early departers than on Ohio's. In Hamilton, Ohio, by prearrangement "to give," in Cable's words, "any such person a shot

<sup>28</sup> Reported in the *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, December 30, 1884.

<sup>29</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 77.

<sup>30</sup> *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1884.

<sup>31</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, November 22, 1884.



across his bows," Mark Twain called "in the most benevolent and persuasive tone" to an early departer with squeaky shoe: "'Take your shoes off, please; take your shoes off—to the great delight of the applauding audience.'"<sup>32</sup>

In appearance, platform manner, and temperament, the "Twins of Genius" were anything but twins; the appellation was intentionally ironic. Cable was short, younger, mousy, abstemious, clerical, steady, lean, slight, dark, sleek, dapper, and intense—a Bible reader and Sabbatarian. Mark Twain was a head taller, convivial, garrulous, older, generous, stocky, graying, bushy, rumpled, volatile, careless, and casual—a fun-loving freethinker. Cable wore double-breasted coats buttoned to the chin, Mark Twain swallow-tails that showed an abundance of shirt front. Mark Twain's mustache bristled like a brush over a clean-shaven chin, but Cable's swirled to points and drooped to a Van Dyke beard. Even their names contrasted: Mark Twain's was a pseudonym from river boat life, Cable's a punctilious cognomen after the father of his country. "Two more divergent types" Hamlin Garland "never saw side by side."<sup>33</sup> They were "a unique literary combination."<sup>34</sup> A team that drew powerfully but were not matched, said the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* of November 22.

The twins capitalized on their mismatch, using it to get laughs, especially by walking onstage together, to delighted roars from the audience. The *Philadelphia Press* of November 22 liked the marriage between "the husky drawl of Mark Twain, the humorist, and the lighter notes of George W. Cable, the novelist."

On the platform, Cable ignored himself and concentrated on his presentation and the effect it produced. Already short, he diminished himself even more by sitting, drawing attention from himself to his text. The *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette* of December 30 noticed how he forgot everything else while he mimicked Mary Richling's voice. Indeed, his "voice, patois and general manner were made to suit the several figures represented with such grace and nicety that the reader himself seemed to become in turn the living characters."<sup>35</sup> For Cable, not manner but matter counted.

Mark Twain was the opposite—a ham, less interested in putting

<sup>32</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 82.

<sup>33</sup> *Roadside Meetings* (New York, 1930), 352-353.

<sup>34</sup> *Pittsburgh Times*, December 30, 1884.

<sup>35</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, February 27, 1885.

his text across than in cutting a figure. His drawl was studied, his twang cultivated, his nasality considered, and his seriousness mock, and all neared affectation. Whereas Cable stepped quickly and lightly, and his eyes sparkled, Mark Twain would slouch round-shouldered and stooping onto the stage, bleary-eyed, and try to balance on one foot, or drag himself on with an energetic laziness, or shamble on "as if he had just been awakened," grope around "in an aimless sort of way," and "not wake up until the entertainment was over."<sup>36</sup> He sometimes read with his right hand to his chin and his right elbow resting in the palm to his left hand. He kept his drowsy look even when getting off his wittiest things. Solemn when delivering absurdities, he was most solemn during the most absurd. When the audience laughed, he acted abused. For Mark Twain, manner counted more than matter.

His manner succeeded. Beneath the drowsy facade a trouper labored. His voice "has great carrying force when he has measured the house."<sup>37</sup> In "that dreamy, drawling fashion of his he told some very funny stories."<sup>38</sup> At such times he was "very wide awake, as his sallies show."<sup>39</sup> The *Pittsburgh Times* of December 30, calling him "as always, drollery itself," said you "might as well attempt to catch the lightning's flash across a mirror as to describe the irresistible fun that bubbles out of him."

On the platform, the twins were alike only in their use of texts. A reading "usually means a more or less mechanical, not to say monotonous, adherence to text with voice and eye," the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* declared on February 27, "but nothing could be more animated than the delineations of Messrs. Cable and Clemens," who invested their readings with a peculiar life. Mark Twain, dead set against attachment to a book or manuscript, believed the reader should speak from memory.<sup>40</sup> Each twin paid little heed to his text but spoke directly to the audience instead. Often the press called the readings recitations.

In temperament, the twins shared only two qualities. They were egoists on tour and prima donnas in rivalry. These few similarities sharpened many differences. Behind the scenes, aggravated by

<sup>36</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, November 22, 1884.

<sup>37</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, February 27, 1885.

<sup>38</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, November 22, 1884.

<sup>39</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, February 27, 1885.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard DeVoto, ed., *Mark Twain in Eruption* (New York, 1922), 224.

travel,<sup>41</sup> the differences festered, tensions developed, and hostility smoldered.<sup>42</sup>

The irascible Mark Twain, besides being hard to travel with,<sup>43</sup> hated several of Cable's qualities, especially Sabbatarianism, and they irritated him. In letters to Livy, he fumed over hyperprecise observance of the Sabbath and conscientious paltriness. Cable "is the pitifulest human louse I have ever known."<sup>44</sup>

Fortunately, Cable was amiable. When the twins appeared in Pittsburgh, their program had been changed. Cable would now begin at 8:00 rather than 8:10, even though the still-assembling audience would ruin one-half his first piece. Cable would now answer only one encore, whereas Mark Twain would answer all that were called for. These changes were Mark Twain's idea, and the amiable Cable assented.<sup>45</sup> Probably nothing but his amiability averted an explosion and prevented harm to the readings.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, Cable was more than amiable. Though a seasoned lecturer, Mark Twain knew nothing of public reading before the tour began, nor of what he would read. Needing help, he sent the proof-sheets of *Huckleberry Finn* to the experienced Cable,<sup>47</sup> who suggested "King Sollermun" and recommended that "you can't learn a nigger how to argue" be changed to "how come a Frenchman doan' talk like a man?" The length and organization of the program were also Cable's idea.<sup>48</sup>

Mark Twain performed as much for the public offstage as on. One of the best known personalities and the most famous author in America, he was sought out for interviews. He gave them to the

<sup>41</sup> The aggravations of travel are shown in Cable's letter of November 22 to Mr. Williams, written from the Lafayette Hotel in Philadelphia, declining with regrets the invitation to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's annual dinner. Not only were the twins booked for a tight schedule of readings, unable to spend an evening at dinner, but also Cable must have been forced to write in haste, for his usually legible hand is here a barely decipherable scrawl. Society Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>42</sup> Guy A. Cardwell, "Mark Twain's 'Row' With George Cable," *Modern Language Quarterly*, XIII (December, 1952), 363-371.

<sup>43</sup> Enraged at having to rise to catch the 9:40, Mark Twain once "vented his anger by squaring off with the window shutter and knocking it completely out in one round." Ozias Pond quoted by Arlin Turner, *George W. Cable: A Biography* (Durham, N. C., 1956), 175.

<sup>44</sup> Wecter, *Love Letters of Mark Twain*, 237.

<sup>45</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 118-119.

<sup>46</sup> Fred W. Lorch, "Cable and His Reading Tour With Mark Twain in 1884-1885," *American Literature*, XXIII (January, 1952), 471-486.

<sup>47</sup> Guy A. Cardwell, "George W. Cable Becomes a Professional Reader," *American Literature*, XXIII (January, 1952), 467-470.

<sup>48</sup> Turner, *Mark Twain and George W. Cable*, 47-49.

*Philadelphia Press* of November 27 and the *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, *Evening Penny Press*, and *Daily Post* of December 29. The *Philadelphia Press* reporter approached with trepidation because of "Encounter With an Interviewer," in which a reporter is made a fool of; but Mark Twain reassured him. Asked if he was impressed with the President when reading before him, Mark Twain replied: "I? Him? Why! he must have been impressed with *me*." Striking a pose with his left hand in his trousers' pocket and his right elbow on the mantel, and speaking in a slow nasal drawl, he told the *Daily Post* reporter that he, like all lecturers, couldn't reform: he had announced his retirement but here he was again, on the road, unable to resist. This tour was a success. "There are so many people anxious to hear Mr. Cable's readings that I failed to scare them all away. The result is we have had large audiences." The interviews with the *Penny Press* and the *Chronicle Telegraph* he gave simultaneously, while being shaved. Asked how long it had been since he had visited Pittsburgh, he answered through a faceful of lather: "About fifty years." No, he didn't mind performing in a church; churches were conducive to sleep. If the audience went to sleep also, "we may spend a very pleasant evening together." He commented on the state of magazine literature, which he found good despite harmful editorial policies, and on Henry James's *Daisy Miller*, which he called "true and just." Cable entered. "Here is my partner in crime," Mark Twain said. "Why don't you bore him now?"

The "Twins of Genius" left Philadelphia on February 27, 1885. They had read successfully from their own works to large audiences there and in Pittsburgh and had evoked extensive coverage and an evenhanded assessment by the press of both cities. An important chapter of the most ambitious, best received, and most celebrated reading tour in American history had been written in Pennsylvania.