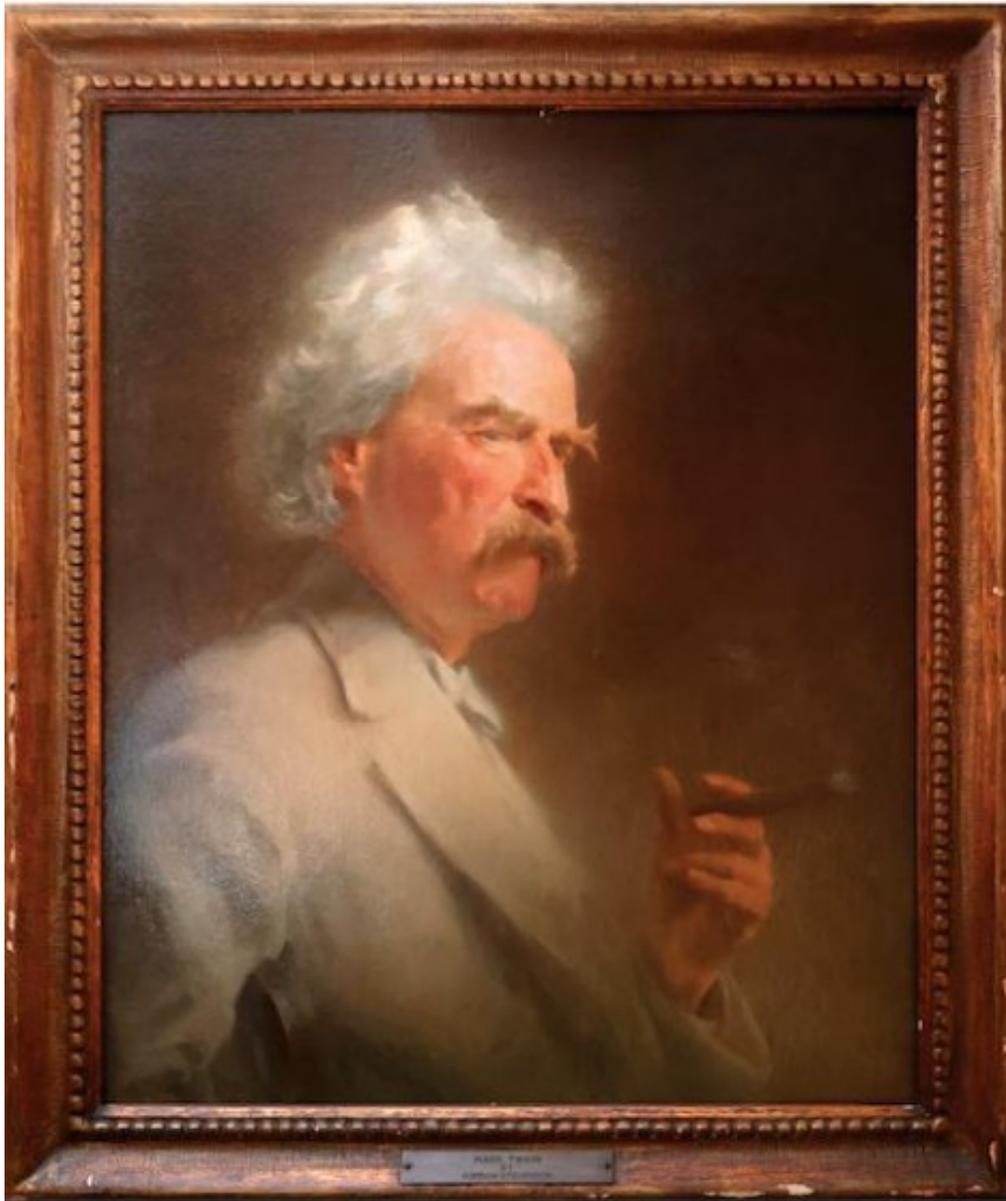


Mark Twain and A Certain Club



Mark Twain by Gordon Stevenson

Mark Twain, a founding member of The Players

B. Scott Holmes

The Players, a private social club in New York City, founded in 1888 is located in a mansion at 16 Gramercy Park. Built in 1847, Edwin Booth bought the house in 1888, reserved an upper floor for his residence, and turned the rest into the clubhouse.

The Players, often mistakenly called The Players Club, was a name suggested by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, originating from a line in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.



On **January 2nd of 1888** Augustin Daly sent Sam Clemens an invitation:

“Mr. Augustin Daly will be very much pleased to have Mr. S. L. Clemens meet Mr. Booth, Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Palmer and a few friends at lunch on Friday next, January 6th (at one o’clock in Delmonico’s), to discuss the formation of a new club which it is thought will claim your interest. R.S.V.P.

“It was the only club I took any interest in or cared to belong to..” Sam Clemens’ involvement with The Players and with members of the club had greater significance in his life than I’ve found mentioned in biographies. The club was there for him in moments of great fame and achievement and in times of great personal tragedy. It provided him with a home when he was separated from his wife and family, during times of financial worries.

What is known about his membership is seen only through anecdotes and publications of his speeches to the club. John Tebbel has written a book about the first 100 years of the club and devoted an entire chapter to Mark Twain: *A Certain Club, One Hundred Years of The Players*, published in 1989. David

Fears' *Mark Twain Day By Day* has more than 200 references to "The Players". Perhaps only his wife and family, his long time friendship with Joseph Twichell, and his short but important friendship with Henry Huttleston Rogers were of greater import.

On Friday, **January the 6th** *The Players*, said to have been inspired by the *Garrick Club* of London, was founded in the Red Room at *Delmonico's*, New York City. Edwin Booth, a highly acclaimed Shakespearean actor, and Augustin Daly, a drama critic, theatre manager, playwright, and adapter, gathered with those soon to be charter members: Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain); Albert Marshall (A.M.) Palmer, an American theatrical manager; James Lewis, the leading comedian in Augustin Daly's company; Harry Edwards, an American periodical illustrator and a painter noted for historical compositions; Thomas Bailey Aldrich, an American writer, poet, critic, and editor; Joseph F. Daly, brother of Augustin Daly and frequent collaborator; William Bispham, long-time friend of Booth's; Lawrence Barrett, an American stage actor who frequently collaborated with Edwin Booth; John Drew, an American stage actor noted for his roles in Shakespearean comedy, society drama, and light comedies, and the uncle of John, Ethel, and Lionel Barrymore; Laurence Hutton, an American essayist and critic; Brander Matthews, an American academic, writer and literary critic; Stephen H. Olin, a lawyer; and General William Tecumseh Sherman, an American soldier, businessman, educator, and author.

Joseph Jefferson (sent a telegram), a famous 19th century American comedian (Rip Van Winkle); Eugene Tompkins (sent a letter), a theatre manager; and John A. Lane ("unable to attend but sent approval of all that was done").

The objects of the club, as described at length in *New York Times*, are "the promotion of social intercourse between the representative members of the dramatic profession and of the kindred professions, literature, painting, sculpture, and music and their patrons, the creation of a library relating especially to the history of the American stage, and the preservation of pictures, bills of plays, photographs, and curiosities connected with such history."

Between the time of the formal creation of The Players and the Clemenses relocation to Europe, June 5, 1891, Sam made more than 30 trips to New York City from Hartford, Connecticut. Two of these visits involved a noted Players event: The formation of the club on January 6, 1888 at Delmonico's Restaurant and a formal dinner honoring Edwin Booth March 30, 1889. Although Sam did not take advantage of a room at the clubhouse, it is quite likely that he frequently stopped by to socialize, play billiards and/or cards and just hobnob with his friends. David Fears' entries indicated that Sam generally checked in at the Murray Hill Hotel, 1.25 miles from the clubhouse, walking distance for Sam.

Sam received formal notification of his membership in the club on **January the 9th** along with a bill for initiation fees of \$100 and semiannual dues of \$20. He wrote on the envelope "Won't pay it."

He received a second bill on June 9th from William Bispham, club secretary and treasurer. But apparently he successfully negotiated a reduction in fees. According to Article XI Section 3 of the clubs constitution initiation fees and dues for non-residential members are one-half that billed residential members. A non-residential member is one who resides more than 20 miles from the New York City Hall. Sam lived in Hartford, CT.

November 13, 1888 Tuesday – Sam was receipted \$60 total for fees and dues connected with The Players. \$20 crossed out and \$10 written; signed by William Bispham; one hundred crossed out — so total was \$60, or half of the normal dues.

December 31, 1888: The first Founders' Night of The Players in New York was held on this date, and evidently Sam elected not to go. At the meeting, Edwin Booth transferred ownership of the clubhouse to The Players. He had hired Stanford White to remodel the house for the club's use, then filled it with books and pictures and rarities, and took on the entire cost. Booth would die in the house June 7, 1893 at 59 years of age.

March 30, 1889 Saturday – A supper party for Edwin Booth, held at Delmonico's in New York, Sam gave a speech called "The Long Clam." The New York Times, p.4 reported the event on Apr. 1. Many of Sam's friends, associates and acquaintances attended.

THE BOOTH SUPPER

The table set in the great hall at Delmonico's on Saturday night for the supper party given by Augustin Daly and Albert M. Palmer in honor of Edwin Booth was in the form of a star. At each of the five arms were seats for 15 gentlemen. At the apex of the northern arm sat Mr. Booth, between Mr. Daly and Mr. Palmer. Near them were Gen. Sherman, Lawrence Barrett, Gen. Horace Porter, W.J. Florence, Constant Coquelin, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Horace Howard Furness, wisest and most amiable of Shakespearean scholars; George H. Boker, the Philadelphia poet; L. Clark Davis, ex-Judge Charles P. Daly, Parke Godwin, and S. L. Clemens. Among the actors present, besides those already named, were John Gilbert, John A. Lane, Ben G. Rogers, George Clarke, John Drew, Louis Massen, James Lewis, Herbert Kelcey, E.M. Holland, Alexander Salvini, Jean Coquelin, Edward Harrigan, Walden Ramsey, and Harry Edwards. Chauncey M. Depew, Edmund Charles Stedman, Frank Millet, J.S. Hartley, Augustus Saint Gaudens, Laurence Hutton, George Parsons Lathrop, Brander Matthews, John Foord, Dr. A. Ruppener, Stephen H. Olin, Richard Watson Gilder, Daniel Frohman, Edgar Fawcett, Edmund C. Stanton, Arthur F. Bowers, Judge Joseph F. Daly, Marshall P. Wilder, P.T. Barlow, and A. Durand were also numbered in the 75.

The arms of the star radiated from a circular mass of roses, and flowers in rich profusion were banked in the middle of each of the five branches of the table. A band was stationed in the balcony. The supper began at midnight.

"Next morning," Twain recalled later in one of his platform speeches, "the *Times* said that toward the end of the affair, which went on till dawn, 'General Porter dropped gracefully into poetry and W. W. Winter fell into it with a dull thud, and afterward shed tears on Edward Harrigan's neck.'"

In an autobiographical dictation dated December 28, 1906, Clemens claims the Long Clam "... speech was given to Susy, and never used or printed, for the [Long Clam] had bedridden me. M.T." John Tebbel in "*A Certain Club*" considers this discrepancy with "The contradiction is easily resolved. Twain was absent, but he did write a speech which someone else delivered for him." Mark Twain Project notes on this speech disagree:

Clemens's claim that this speech was "never used" conceals one of his rare failures as an after-dinner speaker. He had delivered this speech at a Players club dinner honoring Edwin Booth...

Brander Matthews, who was present, recalled: “he did not say a word about the distinguished guest; he actually took for his topic the long clam of New England—and what was worse, this inappropriate offering was read from manuscript!” “We hung our heads,” wrote another guest, “hoping that it would soon be over”.

There was a later notable event that illustrates the distinction Sam made between his profession and socializing. On **January 20, 1890** Monday – The Clemens family went to New York for the opening of the “*Prince and the Pauper*” play at the Broadway Theatre. This was Abby Sage Richardson’s version, produced by Daniel Frohman and staged by David Belasco, both club members.

The play did well for several weeks in New York and later on the road. The family likely stayed in the city at least one day after.

In his 1911 “*Memoirs, Memory of a Manager*”, Daniel Frohman wrote of the evening and of subsequent events:

Mr. Clemens made a humorous speech on the first night, highly commending the work; but later he sent me a new manuscript of the play, rewritten in his own way, though following Mrs. Richardson’s construction. Though Mr. Clemens’s work was admirable, it was not so suited to acting requirements as the adaptation I was using; so I returned it to the author with my very adequate but, to him, unconvincing reasons for its rejection. After that I became embroiled in a lawsuit, because it transpired in court that Mr. Clemens had yielded the rights of adaptation some time before to Edward H. House, the predecessor of William Winter as dramatic critic of the Tribune. Though we wrangled in court on the subject and upon the issue that I should be compelled to pay double royalties — to both Mr. Clemens and Mr. House — Mr. Clemens and I played our nightly games of pool at The Players with unruffled amity. I lost the case, though Judge Joseph Daly, brother of Augustin, tendered me the doubtful consolation that I was morally right, though enmeshed legally. The suit was continued; but, on the breaking up of Mr. Clemens’s publishing firm [in 1894], I withdrew it.

Interestingly, it was Judge Joseph Daly who found for Edward House. As has been mentioned, both Judge Joseph Daly and Daniel Frohman were members of The Players. With “*The Prince and the Pauper*” about to open in Detroit, Frohman was forced to reach an agreement with House. They settled on a deal that would allow Frohman to continue to produce the play for five years in exchange for giving House a percentage of the proceeds, with the remainder held in escrow until the Twain-House litigation had concluded. Further legal proceedings continued over the next few years, including a side-battle between Frohman and House after House staged his competing version of the play. But ultimately, House ended up moving to Japan, and the whole matter eventually fizzled out, dismissed in January of 1894 by one Judge Bischoff (not listed as a club member).

February 2, 1890: In New York at the Murray Hill Hotel, Sam wrote a long letter to Daniel Frohman about his reactions to seeing P&P on stage on opening night.

Do not make any foreign contracts. I cannot consent to have this amazing burlesque played in England. The very cattle would laugh at it. When I sat in the theatre that first night, I was bewitched by Elsie’s acting, & carried out of myself by the pretty stage-pictures & the rich colors of the

dresses, & so the infinite repulsivenesses of the piece (as to language,) got no sufficient attentions from me. I really thought I was seeing a dramatization of the book. It was a vast mistake....I should have perceived that Mrs. Richardson's contract to dramatize the book had not been fulfilled; that she carefully & deliberately got as far away from the book as she could; that she merely transferred names from the book, & often left the characters that belonged to them behind...

Is the contract fulfilled? Is this mess of idiotic rubbish & vapid twaddle a "dramatization" of the book? It resembles it about as a riot in a sailor boarding-house resembles a Sunday school.

No, if you had allowed me to see the manuscript in time, this stuff would not have gone on the stage. I could not have endured it.

As for a dramatization of *The Prince and the Pauper*, April 14, 1907 Sunday – With William Dean Howells and Daniel Frohman and 800 children, Sam attended a matinee performance of P&P by The Educational Alliance, Children's Theatre, N.Y.C..

It is likely that most of Sam's interactions with The Players were social in nature, such as:

December 9, 1890: Dunham Wheeler wrote from N.Y. to Sam:

"Whenever you come to New York will you bear in mind that the men who were at Onteora last summer are trying to make a practice of lunching very simply together ala Dutch treat every Saturday at one o'clock in the private Dining Room of the "Players Club". Should you ever be able to join us you will be hailed with acclamations of delight."

Sam wrote, "Brer, tell him I will remember, & am much obliged to him for telling me" on the envelope.

David Fears, throughout "Mark Twain Day By Day" notes Sam's use of The Players letterhead. He also notes a number of letters from The Players regarding non-payment of dues. To be fair, Sam left much of his day to day financial responsibilities in the hands of his friend and acting secretary Franklin G. Whitmore. But then much of this trouble may have been due to larcenous behavior by some of the club's officers.

The Clemens family resided in Europe: **June-05-1891 to May-17-1895.** Sam returned briefly to the US from June 13 to July 5 of 1892 but there is no mention of The Players during this brief interval.

While the Clemenses were at Bad Nauhem in September of 1892, The Players wrote to Sam that a panel had been marked with his name in the grill room, but as yet Sam had not filled the space with a mug. Sam must forward a mug marked with his name or surrender the space. The notice had been forwarded to Florence where the Clemenses were residing by September 15. Sam wrote on the envelope, "Notified about the beer-mug at the Players.". At this time Sam had concerns but remained confident of his business interests, Charles L. Webster and Company, his publishing firm, and the Paige Typesetter.

In February of 1893, the Panic of 1893 hit. Money became scarce, few people had money to spend on books; Paige continued to tinker with the type setter, demanding more money, and running up debts.

March 8, 1893: Sam also wrote to Franklin G. Whitmore advising him to pay his Players Club dues regularly. He wanted to maintain his membership, though he wrote he "*would quit those other N.Y.*

clubs if I could do it with decency.” “It [The Players] was the only club I took any interest in or cared to belong to.” The family was staying at the Villa Viviani in Florence, Italy.

March 16, 1893 Thursday – In Florence Sam wrote to Laurence Hutton, who was to arrive in the city shortly after Sam left for New York. Hutton had been in Egypt.

I hope you are having a good time & that it is not exasperated by correspondence with the business-department of the Players, the rudest-mannered gang that ever got translated out of the sty they were probably born & reared in.

Sam soon found it necessary to return alone to the United States from March 21 to May 13 of 1893. While in New York City Fears reports Sam staying at the Glenham Hotel, at the Murray Hill Hotel and also for a time at the home of Clarence Rice.

June 7, 1893, Edwin Booth dies. The Clemenses were at the Villa Viviani in Florence, Italy.

The Clemens family moved from Florence to Munich in June of 1893, then to Franzensbad in August.

August 29, 1893 Tuesday– Sam and daughter Clara sailed for New York in the *Spre*, Captain Meissel in command.

September 7, 1893: In the evening Sam dined with Robert Underwood Johnson and Dr. Clarence C. Rice at The Players. Paine writes “Clemens took a room at The Players — ‘a cheap room,’ he wrote, ‘at \$1.50 per day’”.

September 9 Saturday– Sam sent Clara to Elmira. He had written Livy he’d take board and lodging at the *Lotos Club*, “for economy’s sake,” but first actually moved into “temporary bachelor quarters with his physician and friend Dr. Clarence C. Rice, on East 19th Street. By the end of the month Sam took “a cheap room” at *The Players*. Fears notes that Livy was “probably” in Paris in October.

Sam remained in the United States until March of 1894. It was during this period that he met Henry H. Rogers. By the end of this period Sam had given power of attorney to Rogers and assigned all of his property — including typesetter rights and copyright on his books — to Livy.

Sam made several trips, seeking financing, to various cities during this period in the United States including Hartford, Connecticut, Madison, New Jersey, Elmira, New York, Chicago, Illinois, Boston, Massachusetts, and Fairhaven, Massachusetts. David Fears notes many letters and notes written by Sam used The Players letterhead. Where he stayed is not certain but it would seem that he spent time at The Players. The only evidence available seems to be his use of Players letterhead.

September 29, 1893 Friday – In New York, Clarence C. Rice left for Chicago, leaving Sam alone in his “bachelor quarters.” Sam wrote daughter Clara September 30 that he was finding it too lonesome so he took a room at The Players.

September 30, 1893: I had mighty pleasant times here with Uncle Charley & Ida & the Sleses. I came near taking up quarters in that beautiful hotel the Waldorf, but I got nervously afraid I should meet too many people. I had a room engaged there, but gave it up & concluded to stay at Dr. Rice’s so as to have his company. However, the minute he left for Chicago I got lonesome; so lonesome that toward bedtime last night I couldn’t stand it; so I moved straight over here to the players club & took a room. It

is in the top of the house & deliciously quiet, & I've an electric light right over my pillow. I like it exceedingly.

November 6, 1893 Monday – In New York Sam spent the afternoon talking to the actor Joe Jefferson, who dropped into The Players to see him.

November 13, 1893 Monday – In New York City in the afternoon, a memorial service was held for the late Edwin Booth. Sam was in attendance. Reported in the N.Y. *Times* of Nov. 12 and 14, p.3 and 8, “The Booth Memorial” and “In Memory of Edwin Booth”:

November 14, 1893 Tuesday – In New York at The Players, Sam wrote to Livy.

The Booth Memorial Service at the Madison Square Garden yesterday was impressive & beautiful. All the distinction of New York was massed in that place. I seemed to be personally acquainted with half of the people there. There is no church congregation in Hartford where I would recognize any where near such a huge proportion of the faces. It was like being in a family gathering.

From Tebbel: Twain especially enjoyed eating at the Club, whether the occasion was formal or casual. One of his happiest times was the dinner given by the Club on December 1, 1893, honoring John William Mackay, one of the four bonanza kings who had made fortunes from the Comstock lode in the 1870s, along with George Hearst, William Randolph's father. Mackay was the epitome of a Player—affable, unpretentious, generous, fond of music and the theater. For him, the Club kitchen had produced a menu it seemed to think was typical of miners' fare—soup, raw oysters, corned beef and cabbage. Twain arrived about midnight and was delighted to find so many old friends from his *Roughing It* days with whom he could swap stories.

The table decorations and favors that night were stuffed frogs, a salute to the renowned Jumping Frog of Calaveras County. Brander Matthews presided and Paine was there, a young writer who had had several books published but still was without a large success. Charles Genung, another guest, saw Paine at the Club next day and said, “Albert, I have a hunch you should be Mark Twain's biographer. And if you propose the idea to him, I'm sure it will come to pass.” Paine was doubtful, but his fellow Players persuaded him to make an appointment with Twain, and the result was the four-volume autobiography, dictated to Paine, who edited and arranged it.

Last night [Dec. 1, 1893] at John Mackay's [The Players] the dinner consisted of soup, raw oysters, corned beef and cabbage, & something like a custard. I ate without fear or stint, & yet have escaped all suggestion of indigestion. The men present were old gray Pacific-coasters whom I knew when I & they were young & not gray. The talk was of the days when we went gipsying a long time ago — thirty years. Indeed it was a talk of the dead. Mainly that. And of how they looked, & the harum-scarum things they did & said. For there were no cares in that life, no aches & pains, & not time enough in the day (& three-fourths of the night) to work off one's surplus vigor & energy. Of the mid-night highway-robbery-joke played upon me with revolvers at my head on the windswept & desolate Gold Hill Divide, no witness is left but me, the victim. All the friendly robbers are gone. These old fools last night laughed till they cried over the particulars of that old forgotten crime.

December 16, 1893 Saturday – In New York Sam moved to a better room at the Players Club.

My new room is large & nicely carpeted & be-rugged. It has a couple of pieces of elegant furniture in it, & two handsome mirrors, together with a round centre-table, and open fireplace, 6 electric light, 7 gas burners, 24 pictures on the walls, 7 easy-chairs & a sofa; also a large bath room with gas & electrics in it. I hope to be able to do some work in it — at least during the three or four days I must wait before Mr. Rogers is ready to go to Chicago. It costs \$3 a day, & my food costs about 80 cents when I eat in the house — which is not often the case, excepting breakfast.

Tebbel wrote of one particular breakfast:

During the two years he lived at the Club, Twain ate most of his meals there, sitting at a round table by the bay window in the dining room. He had the same breakfast every morning: coffee, rolls, and three softboiled eggs, served to him broken in a water tumbler because the regular egg glasses would not hold three at a time.

One morning his regular waiter, John, was late getting to work, and without even stopping for his own breakfast, hurried to prepare Twain's usual order. In his haste, he broke two eggs into a regular egg glass and kept the third for himself. Mark put down his morning paper as John served him, but before the waiter left the room, he heard Twain pounding his call bell furiously. John returned to the table.

“Just how many eggs are in this cup?” Twain wanted to know.

“Three, sir,” John said, looking embarrassed.

“Hm.” Twain looked straight at the waiter, “Is Walter about?”

Walter was summoned. “I want to congratulate you on your waiter,” Mark said. “He really is a wonder. I've been staying in this house for several months, and I've tried over and over to get three eggs into one of these egg glasses. This young man comes along and does with ease what I have failed to do after countless efforts. I say he's a wonder.”

In this case, as in others, it was difficult to know when Twain was just being Twain, or when he was really angry.

December 21, 1893: At 2 p.m. Sam left with Henry H. Rogers in the Pennsylvania Railroad's vice president's private car. The trip to Chicago took 25 hours.

December 23, 1893: The two men left Chicago at 5 p.m. for a 30-hour return trip.

December 24, 1893: Sam was “deposited” at The Players “close upon midnight”

January 10, 1894 Wednesday – Sam went to Hartford and returned the next day on the train with Laurence Hutton and Rudyard Kipling

February 3, 1894 Saturday – In New York on The Players stationery, Sam wrote a response to Edwina Booth Grossman, whose request (not extant) concerned Sam's communication with her late father, Edwin Booth .

If I had a line from his honored hand it would be at your command at any moment; but it happened that your father & I corresponded only with the tongue.

Fears notes that on April 7, 1877, Sam had, in fact, written to Edwin Booth to apologize for calling backstage uninvited to pay his respects the night before. He notes that evidently, Booth did not appreciate such spontaneous unannounced contacts.

The Century Co. was soon to publish: *Edwin Booth: Recollections by His Daughter, Edwina Booth* (1894). Sam is mentioned once in the book, in a Nov. 18, 1883 letter from Booth to William Bispham about the luncheon that day at Thomas Bailey Aldrich's, where Sam, Matthew Arnold, Charles Dudley Warner, and Oliver Wendell Holmes enjoyed a "feast."

March 2, 1894: At midnight Sam wrote a note of apology to Nikola Tesla, that he'd be unable to "come down to-morrow afternoon" Sam was sorry, as evidently he'd agreed to the meeting before.

March 4, 1894: At The Players Sam wrote several letters. The first was to H.H. Rogers, asking him to deliver 20 shares of the Paige Compositor stock to Bram Stoker.

Sam also wrote a short note to Nikola Tesla, that if possible he'd be there by 4 p.m. though he was "dreadfully pushed for time," and Tesla shouldn't depend on him.

March 6, 1894 Tuesday – In New York Sam gave power of attorney to H.H. Rogers, including assigning all of Sam's property — including typesetter rights and copyright on his books — to Livy.

March 7, 1894 Wednesday – Sam sailed on the SS *New York* for Europe. On March 15 Sam reached Paris, France and Livy. They had been separated longer than any other previous time in their lives.

He departed Europe, again, for the US on April 7, 1894. April 14, 1894, Sam wrote Livy at 5 p.m. in New York at The Players, that he'd arrived at 10 a.m. and found his old room ready for him at 10:30 a.m.

April 18, 1894 Wednesday – Two copies of *Tom Sawyer Abroad* by Huck Finn were deposited with the U.S. Copyright Office on this day, the same day that Charles L. Webster and Co. declared bankruptcy

William Shakespeare was born on Apr. 23, 1564 and died on the April 23, 1616. The Players held a Shakespeare Day celebration for ladies which drew some 900 to 1500 ladies.

May 3, 1894 Thursday – In the afternoon in New York, Sam and his attorneys met with President William H. Payne of the Mt. Morris Bank and his attorney, Daniel Whitford, who had also been attorney for Webster & Co.

The bank wanted Sam to give them rights to *Pudd'nhead Wilson* — but these were Livy's, as were all his copyrights, thanks to H.H. Rogers, and there was no way she would do so without compensation. Sam related how "confoundedly difficult" it was for him to refer to these as "Mrs. Clemens's books," "Mrs. Clemens's copyrights," etc.

May 8, 1894, Sam departed New York for Europe. Sam rejoined his family in Paris May 19 and they took a cottage in Etretat. June 23rd, they relocated to La Bourboule, where the family stayed until sometime in July when Livy moved to Hotel Brighton in Paris. Suzy and Jean had been to Fontainebleau, Clara had gone to live in Canton of Uri, Switzerland, in what the family thought was a private house but was actually a hotel. Sometime in August they had relocated to Etretat. Sam returned to the US, leaving Paris July 5 and arriving in New York **July 14, 1894.**

Sam apparently had a room at The Players for this period of time in the US. For much of July it seems he spent his evenings with the Rogers family at the Oriental Hotel. They were dealing with the loss of Abbie Gifford Rogers, Rogers' first wife, who died May 21, and his days at The Players. His time was primarily spent on dealing with the Charles Webster and Company's bankruptcy. He also had visits to Fairhaven, Hartford and Long Island Sound, returning to Europe **August 15, 1894.**

The family resided in Etretat, France until October 1, moving to the Hotel d'Angleterre in Rouen, France, then on October 31 to the Brighton Hotel in Paris. November 17, 1894 – At 169 rue de l'Université in Paris,

December 22, 1894 is a decisive day for Sam – Sam wrote to H.H. Rogers, shocked by the final failure of the typesetter: I *seemed* to be entirely expecting your letter [not extant, but probably explaining the failure of the machine] and also prepared and resigned; but Lord, it shows how little we know ourselves and how easily we can deceive ourselves. It hit me like a thunderclap. It knocked every rag of sense out of my head, and I went flying here and there and yonder, not knowing what I was doing, and only one clearly-defined thought standing up visible and substantial out of the crazy storm-drift — that my dream of ten years was in desperate peril, and out of 60,000 or 70,000 projects for its rescue came flocking through my skull, not one would hold still long enough for me to examine it and size it up. Have you ever been like that? Not so much so, I reckon.

Sam had slept six hours and his “pond had clarified,” and he found “the sediment of my 70,000 projects” to be of the character he then listed. Most of the rest of his letter contains specifics of the machine, of using a different kind of type, even of consulting Thomas A. Edison about it, and of strategies to gain some interest in the Mergenthaler Co. But it was too late for that.

Don't say I'm wild. For really I'm sane again this morning.

Note from *Mark Twain's Correspondence with Henry Huttleston Rogers 1893-1909* 111,n2: “The number of parenthetical phrases, phrases written in margins, parentheses within parentheses, and shifts in direction, as well as the pleading tone of much of this letter, all testify to Clemens's extreme agitation while writing it.”

French army officer Alfred Dreyfus was convicted of treason. The conviction caused a European controversy known as the Dreyfus Affair, one in which Sam would take great interest.

March 2, 1895, arrives in New York. In Hartford the week of March 15th

March 24, 1895 – In New York, fourteen year old Helen Keller (1880-1968), the first deafblind person who would graduate from college, met Sam and William Dean Howells at Laurence Hutton's. H.H. Rogers was also present. Keller wrote to her friend, Mary Mapes Dodge on Mar. 29 (using a new script typewriter, a “Remington”) of the meeting on the previous Sunday (Mar. 24).

Mr. Clemens told us many entertaining stories, & made us laugh till we cried. He told us he was going back to Europe this week to bring his wife & daughter back to America because his daughter, who is a schoolgirl in Paris, had learned so much in three years & a half that if he did not bring her home she would soon know more than he did. I think “Mark Twain” is a very appropriate nom de

plume for Mr. Clemens because it has a funny & quaint sound that goes well with his amusing writings, & its nautical significance suggests the deep & beautiful things he has written.

March 25, 1895 – Sam traveled to Philadelphia,

March 27, 1895 – New York to Le Havre: *SS Paris*

May 10, 1895 – The Clemens family, not together in America since 1891, left Paris for Southampton.

May 11, 1895 Saturday – In Southampton, England, the Clemens family sailed for New York on the *S.S. New York*. The voyage would take seven days. Sam later called this the beginning of the world tour. They would complete the tour in Southampton July 31, 1896. They were informed of Suzy's illness August 14, 1896. Livy and Clara boarded the *S.S. Paris* bound for New York August 15.

August 16, 1895: Dr. Porter in Hartford diagnosed Susy with spinal meningitis. The lining of Susy's brain swelled, and high fevers caused delirium and strange behavior. At about noon Susy went blind. Charles Langdon and Katy Leary were with her. In her delirium she touched Katy's face and said, "Mama" — her last word. A short time after she slipped into a coma that she would not recover from.

September 9 1895 Wednesday – Livy, daughters Clara and Jean, and Katy Leary, returning to Europe, arrived in Southampton. It is assumed they went directly to Guildford to be reunited with Sam. Fears does not mention Jean but as she was a member of their exile she must have been with this party. Fears does not mention her until the Clemenses reach Wiggis in July of 1897.

The family remained in self-imposed exile until October of 1900.

November 24, 1896 Tuesday – In London Sam wrote to the Players Club. His note ran in the Dec. 31, 1896 *N.Y. Tribune*.

Oh, thank you, dear boys for remembering me, and for the love that was back of it. These are heavy days and all such helps ease the burden. I glanced at your envelope by accident, and got several chuckles for reward — and chuckles are worth much in this world. And there was a curious thing; that I should get a letter addressed "God-Knows-Where" showed that He did know where I was, although I was hiding from the world, and no one in America knows my address, and the stamped legend "Deficiency of address supplied by the New York P.O.," showed that He had given it away. In the same mail comes a letter from friends in New Zealand addressed, "Mrs. Clemens (care Mark Twain), United States of America," and again He gave us away — this time to the deficiency department of the San Francisco P.O. These things show that our postal service has ramifications which ramify a good deal. / Mark .

The Clemenses return to the United States: From the New York *Herald*, **October 15, 1900**:

I left these shores, at Vancouver, a red-hot imperialist. I wanted the American eagle to go screaming into the Pacific. It seemed tiresome and tame for it to content itself with the Rockies. Why not spread its wings over the Phillippines, I asked myself? And I thought it would be a real good thing to do

I said to myself, here are a people who have suffered for three centuries. We can make them as free as ourselves, give them a government and country of their own, put a miniature of the American

constitution afloat in the Pacific, start a brand new republic to take its place among the free nations of the world. It seemed to me a great task to which had addressed ourselves.

But I have thought some more, since then, and I have read carefully the treaty of Paris, and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem. . .

It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. And so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land.

February 18, 1901: Sam gave a speech at a Players Club dinner honoring David Alexander Munro, general manager, then editor of the *North American Review* and assistant editor after George B. Harvey purchased the journal in 1899.

February 28, 1901 Thursday – Sam’s notebook: “Players—dinner—Riggs & Hutton. 7.30”

March 28, 1901: Fatout lists a Mark Twain speech at the Players Club dinner this evening. He offers no particulars and none were found.

November 10, 1901 Sunday – Sam’s notebook: “Return—11.35—12.30. / Bram Stoker, lunch Irving, dinner, 7, Players—Riggs Last train, 10.45”. *Note*: entry suggests Sam stayed in town after the King’s Birthday celebration at Delmonico’s, had lunch and dinner, and took the last train back to Riverdale.

December 31, 1901 Tuesday – Sam’s notebook: “The Players—Midnight Speech. Joe Jefferson to introduce me & flatter the Club, I to respond & refute”.

February 1, 1902: Henry J. Magonigle for the Players Club sent a form letter asking for Sam to pay his dues. *Note*: Sam wrote on the env. “No attention paid to this idiot. / SLC”

February 2, 1902 Sunday – In Riverdale, N.Y. Sam wrote to ask Franklin G. Whitmore if his Players Club dues had been paid while he was in Europe.

January 6, 1903: Fatout lists a speech by Mark Twain at the David Munro dinner, N.Y.C. undoubtedly has its source as the day’s NB entry: Sam’s notebook: “Players. Dinner. 7.30. Munro”. *Note*: Munro (1844-1910) born in Scotland, emigrated to the US and worked in the literary department of Harper & Brothers. After George Harvey purchased the *NAR*, Munro became asst. editor.

January 12, 1903: Charles E. Carryl for Players Club sent Sam a printed notice that he’d been “dropped from the list of members for non-payment of dues”. Sam wrote at the top: “Expelled! (by the mistake of the idiot Secretary!)”

January 19, 1903: Robert Reid for Players Club wrote to Sam on a 4×6 card. “Dear St. Mark—a thousand pardons for this delay in answering your wonderful letter!—I’ve been waiting to see what could be done, & this is the first moment anything has happened”. *Note*: relates to his being dropped for lack of dues. Reid enclosed his card, address 142 East 33rd street, and “Saturdays afternoon” as his receiving time, a common practice of the day.

Tebbel writes:

Club records show that thirty-eight others, including Jefferson, were dropped at the same time for the same reason. Henry Miller and Wilton Lackaye, who were on the list, paid up, and were reinstated (although Walter asserts Lackaye never came back), but not Jefferson; the records are mysteriously silent about what happened in his case. He must have been reinstated almost at once, Junius Brutus Booth was also on the list, but he paid up only to become delinquent again the following year, was dropped again, and disappears from the written record.

...

Piecing the evidence together, it appears that during the time W. H. Magonigle reigned, some influential members of the board were either ignorant of his actions or condoned them, and all of them were toppled at the same time later.

...

Lackaye's departure from the Club after being expelled (if Walter is correct) was a matter of concern to his friend Twain and other Players because, as Walter put it, he was "a great spirit." He once introduced Childe Hassam to a friend at the Club as "Mr. Worms," adding, "You know, every Childe Hassam."

...

To return to the main event: Twain insisted that when he went abroad in 1891 he left behind a "paymaster" with instructions to pay all his bills while he was gone, and the Club secretary (he meant Magonigle) was instructed that this was being done. When Magonigle sent him a bill in Europe, he sent it back, reminding him of the instructions. Two years later, the same thing occurred, Twain repeated his instructions, and yet the bills kept coming. Mark's ire was rising because he was now getting offensive notes from Magonigle. "These I answered profusely," he tells us.

...

When he returned from Europe in 1901, no bills arrived for a year. Then, as he recalled, "We took a residence at Riverdale-on-the-Hudson and straightway came a Players' bill for dues. I was awary, awary, and I put it in the waste basket. Ten days later the bill came again, and with it a shadowy threat. I waste-basketed it. After another ten days the bill came Once more, and this time the threat was in a concreted condition. It said very peremptorily that if the bill were not paid within a week I would be expelled from the club and posted as a delinquent. This went the way of its predecessors, into the waste basket. On the named day I was posted as expelled." The date was **January 12, 1903.**

...

Stories about the results of Magonigle's highhandedness, bordering on insolence, circulated in the Club from time to time

...

When the news of Twain's departure circulated in the Club, there was a spontaneous wave of sorrow, and renewed affection for him. Robert Reid, the artist, and David Munro, editor of the *North American Review*, two of his special friends, wrote anguished letters, inquiring what had happened.

When he explained, they urged him to bring the matter to the attention of _ the board and ask for a reconsideration, but Twain declined, He did not say why, nor did he in his autobiography. In that volume he says that his friends thought things would change when Magonigle “retired from the autocracy.” Retirement was not exactly what occurred, however. Magonigle’s departure resulted from one of the few Club scandals in its century of existence.

The Clemens family was again out of the country, from **October 15, 1903 to June 28, 1904**. They had gone to Florence, Italy in hopes of Livy’s return to health. They resided in what, unfortunately was an uncomfortable Villa Reale di Quarto . Livy died June 5, 1904.

What brought down Magonigle was hubris. He did the unthinkable and tried to fire Walter, but contrary to Twain’s recollection, it did not occur before Mark came back to the Club; it was two years later. Howard Kyle tells the story in *Walter’s Sketch Book*, since Walter would not have dreamed of telling it himself.

...

The whole disgraceful affair was hushed up so successfully that the fragmentary records remaining are still riddled with contradictions, and questions that can never be answered.

It took much less horrendous events to lure Twain back into the Club.

November 10, 1904: Robert Reid, et al for the Players Club signed a plea with a few dozen others asking Sam to come back.

“Dear St. Mark / I could get millions more but kept it to some of the old crowd you use to join and cheer & who will cheer again & again like ‘the young lady from Maine’ if you’ll only come back & join us again. We want you—we want you—we want you Mark Twain!” [MTP].

A movement began among some members, mostly among those at the Round Table, to bring him home again. Munro and Reid drafted a simple appeal in verse, with no apologies to Robert Burns:

To
Mark Twain
from
The Clansmen

Will ye no come back again?
Will ye no come back again?
Better lo’ed ye canna be,
Will ye no come back again?

They signed it, along with about thirty others, and sent it off. They knew he had always been moved by those lines. Soon came his reply:

November 11, 1904 Friday – At the Grosvenor Hotel in N.Y.C. Sam wrote to Robert Reid and the Players Club.

To Robert Reid & the others— /well-beloved:

Surely those lovely verses went to Prince Charlie's heart, if he had one, & certainly they have gone to mine. I shall be glad & proud to come back again, after such a moving & beautiful compliment as this from comrades whom I have loved so long. I hope you can poll the necessary vote; I know you will try, at any rate.

It will be many months before I can foregather with you, for this black border is not perfunctory, not a convention; it symbolizes the loss of one whose memory is the only thing I worship.

It is not necessary for me to thank you—& words could not deliver what I feel, anyway. I will put the contents of your envelop in the small casket where I keep things which have become sacred to me.

In the Board's minutes: its record for **December 11, 1905**, says simply: "On motion the action of the Board in declaring Mr. Samuel L. Clemens as no longer a member of the Club at a meeting held Jan. 12, 1903, was reconsidered, and Mr. Clemens was thereupon reinstated as a member in good standing, past indebtedness to be cancelled by the Treas., and his dues to be remitted perpetually, and the Sec'y. was instructed to invite Mr. Clemens, on behalf of the Board, to resume his membership and to tender its congratulations on the occasion of his 70th birthday." In short, Clemens was made, not an honorary, but a life member.

December 13, 1905: Isabel Lyon's journal # 2: "Mr. Robt Reid came to talk about the 'Players,' & later Mr. David Munro telephoned, wishing to tell his delight into Mr. Clemens's own ear".

January 3, 1906: In the evening Twain dined at the Players Club which made him an honorary member. The New York Tribune, p.7 reported the event (as did the Times and other city papers):
PLAYERS WELCOME MARK TWAIN.

A dinner was given for Mark Twain at the Players, No. 16 Gramercy Park South, last night by his friends to welcome him as an honorary member of that club. He has belonged to the Players since its foundation, but now his associates have made him a member for life. Brander Matthews presided. The guest of the evening rose as ever to the occasion, in which his humor and pathos mixed the laughter and tears. The other speakers besides Mr. Clemens were Richard Watson Gilder, Dr. John H. Finley, Frank O. Millet, Daniel Frohman, Evert J. Wendell, Robert Reid, Willard Metcalf, William Bispham and Charles Genung.

Paine writes of the evening and of a suggestion by Charles Harvey Genung (b. ca. 1863), which later would become a reality:

The night of January 5, 1906, remains a memory apart from other dinners. Brander Matthews presided, and Gilder was there, and Frank Millet and Willard Metcalf and Robert Reid, and a score of others; some of them are dead now, David Munro among them. It so happened that my seat was nearly facing the guest of the evening, who, by custom of The Players, is placed at the side and not at the end of the long table. He was no longer frail and thin, as when I had first met him. He had a

robust, rested look; his complexion had the tints of a miniature painting. Lit by the glow of the shaded candles, relieved against the dusk richness of the walls, he made a picture of striking beauty. One could not take his eyes from it, and to one guest at least it stirred the farthest memories. I suddenly saw the interior of a farm-house sitting-room in the Middle West, where I had first heard uttered the name of Mark Twain, and where night after night a group gathered around the evening lamp to hear the tale of the first pilgrimage, which, to a boy of eight, had seemed only a wonderful poem and fairy tale. To Charles Harvey Genung, who sat next to me, I whispered something of this, and how, during the thirty-six years since then, no other human being to me had meant quite what Mark Twain had meant—in literature, in life, in the ineffable thing which means more than either, and which we call “inspiration,” for lack of a truer word. Now here he was, just across the table. It was the fairy tale come true.

Genung said: “You should write his life.”

His remark seemed a pleasant courtesy, and was put aside as such. When he persisted I attributed it to the general bloom of the occasion, and a little to the wine, maybe, for the dinner was in its sweetest stage just then—that happy, early stage when the first glass of champagne, or the second, has proved its quality. He urged, in support of his idea, the word that Munro had brought concerning the *Nast* book, but nothing of what he said kindled any spark of hope. I could not but believe that some one with a larger equipment of experience, personal friendship, and abilities had already been selected for the task. By and by the speaking began—delightful, intimate speaking in that restricted circle—and the matter went out of my mind.

When the dinner had ended, and we were drifting about the table in general talk, I found an opportunity to say a word to the guest of the evening about his *Joan of Arc*, which I had recently re-read. To my happiness, he detained me while he told me the long-ago incident which had led to his interest, not only in the martyred girl, but in all literature. I think we broke up soon after, and descended to the lower rooms. At any rate, I presently found the faithful Charles Genung privately reasserting to me the proposition that I should undertake the biography of Mark Twain. Perhaps it was the brief sympathy established by the name of Joan of Arc, perhaps it was only Genung’s insistent purpose—his faith, if I may be permitted the word. Whatever it was, there came an impulse, in the instant of bidding good-by to our guest of honor, which prompted me to say:

“May I call to see you, Mr. Clemens, some day?”

And something—dating from the primal atom, I suppose—prompted him to answer:

This was on Wednesday night, or rather on Thursday morning, for it was past midnight, and a day later I made an appointment with his secretary to call on Saturday

Paine initially misdates this as Jan. 5, even though he correctly identifies it as Wed. night into Thurs. a.m. Later printings of MTB correct this error and makes it Jan. 3.

“Yes, come soon.”

Isabel Lyon’s journal: Mr. Clemens has just come home at midnight from a dinner at “The Players” where he was made an honorary member. It was a great night for all the rest of them, because he had stayed away so long—he came up the stairs in happy mood & a Japanese paper frog hanging from his

coat lapel by its hind leg. This he handed to me as I went down the stairs to greet him. He knew I would be up and waiting to register his safe return.

Mr. Robert Reid had come in a cab and away they went in a gay mood, and Reid brought him home. This was in celebration of his return after his enraged resignation about 3 years back, when an ignorant book-keeper had posted "S.L. Clemens, for non-payment of dues." He has mentioned it to me several times and of his happiness when club members sent him a winsome invitation:

"Will ye no come back again?
Better love ye canna know"
and tonight he went back.

January 13, 1906: Volney Streamer wrote on Players Club letterhead, NYC to advise Sam that the \$200,000 canceled check to Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant was framed and hanging beside the door to Mr. Booths' private library.

January 18, 1906 Thursday – Sam was a pallbearer for John Malone, actor, who died on Jan. 15. The funeral took place at the Church of St. Francis Xavier on W. 16 Street. Requiem mass was celebrated by the Rev. Father Van Rensselaer. A large group from The Players attended. Other pall bearers were: Barton Hill, Daniel Frohman, J.H. Benrimo, Jacob Wendell, Jr., T.J. Hallowell, Charles Harvey Genung, and David A. Munro [NY Times, Jan. 19, 1906, p. 11, "Funeral of Actor John Malone"].

February 8, 1906: The Players Club wrote a short reminder of the St. Valentine's Dinner to David Munro at the Players' on Wed. Feb. 14 at 7 p.m. "Every one is requested to bring a Valentine offering to the guest of honor". Mr. Clemens took a copy of Joan of Arc."

February 14, 1906: Isabel Lyon's journal: Tonight Mr. Clemens went to The Players to a dinner given as a surprise to Mr. David Munro, that canny Scotchman at half past six.

Robert Reid wrote to Sam, sometime before Feb. 14, advising of a surprise dinner for David Munro on Feb. 14 at the Players Club and "WE WANT YOU!".

February 2, 1907: February 2 Saturday – Albert Bigelow Paine gave a private luncheon at the Players Club for Clemens and Eugene Fitch Ware, who wrote poetry under the name "Ironquill." Also at the luncheon were Peter Dunne ("Mr. Dooley"), and Robert J. Collier. Paine notes that Sam had "long been familiar" with Ware's poetry, which had a "distinctly 'Western' feeling...." "There was in his work that same spirit of Americanism and humor and humanity that is found in Mark Twain's writings...."

May 1907:(fromTebbel) .

There was, for example, the great Actors' Fund Fair of 1907, which Walter listed among the Club's "Red Letter Days." In fact, it lasted for ten days, involving not only theater people but such social leaders as Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, Mrs. Herman Oelrichs, and Mrs. Arthur Iselin. There were bazaars, vaudeville, sideshows (an albino girl, a human skeleton, a wild man from Harlem), a polling booth where patrons could vote for the most popular actress at ten cents a vote, and a miniature racetrack where lower-case players could lose as easily as elsewhere. Douglas Fairbanks was in charge of a soap booth, which led to reports that he was leaving the stage to go into the soap business.

Twain had consented to help out with the Century Theatre Club booth, but Mrs. Sidney Rosenfeld, the club's president and a Christian Scientist, would not have him because of his well-known denunciations of that faith. There were indignation meetings and letters exchanged, until Daniel Frohman diplomatically suggested that Twain be transferred to The Players Club booth. He was also a star of the show. On May 6, after President Theodore Roosevelt had pressed a button in the Oval Office lighting up the Metropolitan Opera House for the fair's opening, Frohman, who was president of the Actors' Fund, made the first speech, and he was followed by Twain, who easily eclipsed Mrs. Rosenfeld and left her for dead on the field of battle. After his speech he moved over to The Players booth and sold autographs.

November 20, 1907: Fatout lists a dinner speech for Sam at the Players Club, N.Y.C., but gives no particulars.

December 23, 1908, Thomas J. Hallowell (Patron of the Arts) wrote a small card from The Players.

Ten or fifteen years ago at "The Players" I used to have the pleasure of playing a game of pool with you very often and if luck was my way 'sticking' you for the "Hot scotch" I have some old vouchers to prove it—these with a letter that you wrote dear old John Malone...I have framed it. But I want a copy of "Joan 'd Arc" with the authors name in it, so I send you the book and hope you will not think me "cheeky" in asking the favor of your autograph..." Note: "Ans Jan 19 MLH"

John Tebbel ends his chapter on *Mark Twain: In and Out of the Club* with:

Not much remains of Mark Twain at the Club today in a physical sense—his billiard cue beside the green table, the Gordon Stevenson portrait of him on the wall. There was also a surprising addition in 1939: Dan Beard, chief of the Boy Scouts, sent the Club one of Twain's pipes and a hunk of his tobacco to be added to the collection of Players' memorabilia. In the note accompanying his gift, Beard wrote, to "My dear boys of The Players" (which must have caused some wincing): "After Mark Twain's death, his daughter, Clara, gave me this pipe and tobacco as a souvenir of my dear friend and her father. . . . I know of no fitter place for these to rest than at my former club, The Players, where I myself have had so many enjoyable times when C. D. Gibson, Fred Remington, Charlie Reinhart, Oliver Herford, and Brander Matthews used to gather at the Round Table to cuss and discuss the art, literature, stage, and topics of the day. They were glorious times. I thought that on Mark's birthday, maybe you might want to have a little ceremony, and like the Indians, pass the pipe around and take a puff of his tobacco, To use this tobacco straight would be strong medicine, but, blended with ordinary tobacco, it gives it a pleasant kick."

Mercifully, this ceremony was never undertaken. But Beard was dead right about one thing: They were, indeed, "glorious times," those early days of The Players.