

ROYALTY ON THE MISSISSIPPI: AS CHRONICLED BY HUCKLEBERRY FINN.

BY MARK TWAIN.

(CONTINUED.)

Those rascallions wanted to try the money it, but they judged it wouldn't be safe, because may be the news might 'a' worked along down by this time. They couldn't hit no project that suited, exactly; so at last the duke said he reckoned he'd lay off and work his brains an hour or two and see if he couldn't put up something on the Arkansas village; and the king he allowed he would drop over to t'other village, with-
on any plan, but just trust in Providence to lead him the profitable way—meaning the devil, I reckon. We had all bought store clothes where we stopped last; and now the king put his'n on, and he told me to put mine on. I done it, of course. The king's dud's was all black, and he did look real well and starchily. I never knowed how clothes could change a body before. Why, before, he looked like the ornery old rip that ever was; but now, when he'd take off his new white beaver and make a bow and do a smile, he looked that grand and good and pious that you'd say he had walked right out of the ark, and may be was old Leviticus himself. Jim cleaned up the canoe, and I got my paddle ready. There was a big steamboat laying at the shore away up under the point, about three mile above town—been there a couple of hours, taking on freight. Says the king:

"Seem' how I'm dressed, I reckon may be I better farrive down from St. Louis or Cincinnati, or some other big place. Go for the steamboat, Huckleberry; we'll come down to the village on her."

I didn't have to be ordered twice, to go and take a steamboat ride. I fetched the shore a half-mile above the village, and then went scooting along the bluff bank in the easy water. Pretty soon we come to a nice innocent-looking country jake setting on a log swabbing the sweat off his face, for it was powerful warm weather; and he had a couple of big carpet-bags by him.

"Run her nose in shore," says the king. I done it. "Wher' you bound for, young man?"

"For the steamboat; going to New Orleans."

"Git aboard," says the king. "Hold on a minute, my servant'll he'p you with them bags. Jump out and he'p the gentleman, Adolphus"—meaning me, I see.

I done so, and then we all three started on again. The young chap was mighty thankful; said it was tough work toting his baggage such weather. He asked the king wher he was going, and the king told him he'd come down the river and landed at the other village this morning, and now he was going up a few mile to see an old friend on a farm up there. The young fellow says:

"When I first see you, I says to myself, 'It's Mr. Wilks, sure, and he come mighty near getting here in time.' But then I says again, 'No, I reckon it ain't him, or else he wouldn't be paddling up the river.' You ain't him, are you?"

"No, my namo's Blodgett—Alexander Blodgett—Reverend Alexander Blodgett, I s'pose I must say, as I'm one o' the Lord's poor servants. But still I'm jist as able to be sorry for Mr. Wilks for not arriving in time, all the same, if he's missed anything by it—which I hope he hasn't."

"Well, he don't miss any property by it, because he'll get that all right; but he's missed seeing his brother Pete die—which he mayn't mind, nobody can tell as to that—but his brother would 'a' give anything in this world to see him before he died; never talked about nothing else all these three weeks; hadn't seen him since they was boys together—and hadn't ever seen his brother William at all—that's the deaf and dumb one—William ain't more than thirty or thirty-five. Peter and George was the only ones that come out here; George was the married brother; him and his wife both died last year. Harvey and William's the only ones that's left now; and, as I was saying, they haven't got here in time."

"Did anybody send 'em word?"

"Oh, yes—a month or two ago, when Peter was first took; because Peter said then that he sorter felt like he warn't going to get well this time. You, see, he was pretty old, and George's g'irls was too young to be much company for him, except

Mary Jane, the red-headed one; and so he was kinder lonesome after George and his wife died, and didn't seem to care much to live. He most desperately wanted to see Harvey—and William, too, for that matter—because he was one of them kind that can't bear to make a will. He left a letter behind for Harvey, and said he'd told in it wher his money was hid, and how he wanted the rest of the property divided up so George's g'irls would be all right—for George didn't leave nothing. And that letter was all they could get him to put a pen to."

"Why do you reckon Harvey don't come? Wher' does he live?"

"Oh, he lives in England—Sheffield—preaches there—hasn't ever been in this country. He hasn't had any too much time—and besides he mightn't 'a' got the letter at all, you know."

"Too bad, too bad he co' in't 'a' lived to see his brothers, poor sou. You going to Orleans, you say?"

"Yes, but that ain't only a part of it. I'm going in a ship, next Wednesday, for Rio Janeiro, wher my uncle lives."

"It's a pretty long journey. But it'll be lovely; I wisht I was a-going. Is Mary Jane the oldest? How old is the others?"

"Mary Jane's nineteen, Susan's fifteen, and Joanna's about fourteen—that's the one that gives herself to good works and has a hare-lip."

"Poor things! to be left alone in the cold world so."

"Well, they could be worse off. Old Peter had friends, and they ain't going to let them come to no harm. There's Hobson, the Baptist preacher; and Deacon Lot Hovey, and Ben Rucker, and Abner Shackelford, and Levi Bell, the lawyer, and Dr. Robinson, and their wives, and the widow Bartley, and—well, there's a lot of them; but these are the ones that Peter was thick with, and used to write about sometimes, when he wrote home; so Harvey'll know wher to look for friends when he gets here."

Well, the old man he went on asking questions till he just fairly emptied that young fellow. Blamed if he didn't inquire about everybody and everything in that blessed town, and all about all the Wilkses; and about Peter's business—which was a tanner; and about George's—which was a carpenter; and about Harvey's—which was a dis-
ing minister; and so on. Then he says:

"What did you want to walk all the way up to the steamboat for?"

"Because she's a big Orleans boat, and I was afeard she mightn't stop there. When they're deep they won't stop for a hail. A Cincinnati boat will, but this is a St. Louis one."

"Was Peter Wilks well off?"

"Oh, yes, pretty well off. He had houses and land, and it's reckoned he left three or four thousand in cash hid up som'ers."

"When did you say he died?"

"I didn't say, but it was last night."

"Funeral to-morrow, likely?"

"Yes, 'bout the middle of the day."

"Well, it's all terrible sad; but we're all got to go, one time or another. So what we want to do is to be prepared; then we're all right."

"Yes, sir, it's the best way. Ma used to always say that."

When we struck the boat, she was about done loading, and pretty soon she got off. The king never said nothing about going aboard, so I lost my ride, after all. When the boat was gone, the king made me paddle up another mile to a lonesome place, and then he got ashore, and says:

"Now hustle back, right off, and fetch the duke up here, and the new carpet-bags. And if he's gone over to t'other side, go over there and get him. And tell him to git himself up regardless. Shove along, now."

I see what he was up to; but I never said nothing of course. When I got back with the duke, we hid the canoe and then set down on a log, and the king told him everything, jist like the young fellow had said it—every last word of it. And all the time he was a-doing it, he tried to talk like an Englishman; and he done it pretty well, too, for a slouch. I can't imitate him, and

so I ain't a-going to try to; but he really done it pretty good. Then he says:

"How are you on the deaf and dumb, Bilgewater?"

The duke said, leave him alone for that; said he had played a deaf and dumb person on the histrionic boards. So then they waited for a steamboat.

About the middle of the afternoon a couple of little boats come along, but they didn't come from high enough up the river; but at last there was a big one, and they hailed her. She sent out her yawl, and we went aboard, and she was from Cincinnati; and when they found we only wanted to go four or five mile, they was booming mad, and gave us a causing, and said they wouldn't land us. But the king was calm. He says:

"If gentlemen kin afford to pay a dollar a mile apiece, to be took on and put off in a yawl, a steamboat kin afford to carry 'em, can't it?"

So they softened down and said it was all right; and when we got to the village, they yawled us ashore. About two dozen men flocked down, when they see the yawl a-coming; and when the king says: "Kin any of you gentlemen tell me wher Mr. Peter Wilks lives?" they give a glance at one another, and nodded their heads, as much as to say, "What d' I tell you?" Then one of them says, kind of soft and gentle:

"I'm sorry, sir, but the best we can do is to tell you wher he did live yesterday evening."

Sudden as winking, the ornery old cretur went all to smash, and fell up against the man, and put his chin on his shoulder, and cried down his back, and said:

"Alas, alas, our poor brother—gone, and we never got to see him; oh, it's too, too hard!"

Then he turns around, blubbering, and make a lot of idiotic signs to the duke on his hands, and blamed if he didn't drop a carpet bag and bust out a-crying. If they warn't the bestestest lot, them two frauds, that I ever struck.

Well, the men gathered around, and sympathized with them, and said all sorts of kind things to them, and carried their carpet-bags up the hill for them, and let them lean on them and cry, and told the king all about his brother's last moments, and the king he told it all over again on his hands to the duke. It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race.

The news was all over town in two minutes and you could see the people tearing down on the run, from every way, some of them putting on their coats as they come. Pretty soon we was in the middle of a crowd, and the noise of the tramping was like a soldier march. The windows and door-yards was full; and every minute somebody would say, over a fence:

"Is it them?"

And somebody trotting along with the gang would answer back and say:

"You bet it is."

When we got to the house, the street in front of it was packed, and the three girls was standing in the door. Mary Jane was red-headed, but that don't make no difference, she was most awful beautiful, and her face and her eyes was all lit up like glory, she was so glad her uncle was come. The king he spread his arms, and Mary Jane she jumped for them, and the hare-lip jumped for the duke, and there they had it! Everybody most, leastways women, cried for joy to see them meet again at last and have such good times.

Then the king he hunched the duke, private—I see him do it—and then he looked around and see the coffin, over in the corner in two chairs; so then, him and the duke, with a hand across each other's shoulder, and t'other hand to their eyes, walked slow and solemn over there, everybody dropping back to give them room, and all the talk and noise stopping, people saying "Sh!" and all the men taking their hats off and drooping their heads, so you could 'a' heard a pin fall. And when they got there, they bent over and looked into the coffin, and took one sight, and then they bust out a-crying so you could a heard them to Orleans, most; and then they put their arms around each other's necks, and hung their chins over each other's shoulders; and then for three minutes, or may be four, I never see two men leak the way they done. And mind you, everybody was doing the same; and the place was that damp I never see anything like it. Then one of them got on one side of the coffin, and t'other on t'other side, and they knecled down and rested

their foreheads on the coffin, and let out pray all to themselves. Well, when it come to that, it worked the crowd like you never see anything like it, and so everybody broke down and went to sobbing right out loud—the poor girls, too; and every woman nearly, went up to the girls, without saying a word, and kissed them, solemn, on the forehead, and then put their hands on the head, and looked up toward the sky, with the tears running down, and then bust out and went off sobbing and swabbing, and give the next woman a show.

Well, by and by the king he gets up and comes forward a little, and works him up and slobbers out a speech, all full of bad and flapdoodle about its being a sore trial for him and his poor brother to lose a diseased, and to miss seeing diseased after the long journey of four thousand mile, but it's a trial that's sweetened and satisfied to us by this dear sympathy and the holy tears; and so he thanks them out heart and out of his brother's heart, because out of their mouths they can't, words be too weak and cold, and all that kind slush, till it was jist sickening; and then he blubbers out a pious goody goody and turns himself loose and goes to cry fit to bust.

And the minute the words was out of his mouth somebody over in the crowd step up the doxolojer, and everybody joined with all their might, and it jist warmed you up and made you feel as good as chattering up. Music is a good thing; after all that soul-butter, I never saw fresher up things so and sound so honest and bully.

Then the king begins to work his again, and says how him and his nie would be glad if a few of the principal friends of the family would supper here with them this evening help set up with the ashes of the disease, and says if his poor brother laying you could speak, he knows who he would name for they was names that was very dear him, and mentioned often in his letters, and so he will name the same, to wit, follows, viz.: Rev. Mr. Hobson, and Deacon Lot Hovey, and Mr. Ben Rucker, Abner Shackelford, and Levi Bell, and Robinson, and their wives, and the widow Bartley.

Rev. Hobson and Dr. Robinson was to the end of the town, a-hunting together that is, I mean the doctor was shipping sick man to t'other world, and the preacher was p'inting him right, Lawyer Bell away up to Louisville on some business. But the rest was on hand, and so they come and shook hands with the king, thanked him and talked to him; and they shook hands with the duke, and they say nothing, but jist kept a-smiling and bobbing their heads like a passel of saplings whilst he made all sorts of signs with hands, and said, "Goo-goo—goo-goo— all the time, like a baby that can't talk."

So the king he blatted along, and asked to inquire about pretty much everybody and dog in town by his name, mentioned all sorts of little things that peeped on; time or another in the town, to George's family, or to Peter; and always let on that Peter wrote him the letter but that was a lie. He got every one of them out of that young fatted head we canood up to the steamboat.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Dangers of Delay.

If we were allowed to look into the future and see the fatal consequences that a neglected cold, how differently our course be; could we realize our duty how speedily we would seek a cure; with many it is only when the monster case has fastened its fangs upon us that we awaken to our folly. What is a neglected cold? Is it not disease of throat and lungs, bronchitis, asthma, consumption, and many other diseases of nature? It is worse than madness to neglect a cold, and it is folly not to have a good remedy available for this first complaint. One of the most efficacious medicines for all diseases of the throat, lungs, is Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. This medicine is composed of several medicinal herbs, which exert a most powerful influence in curing consumption and diseases of the lungs and chest. It moves a free and easy expectoration, irritates and drives the disease from the system.