

Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World Study Guide

**Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World
by Mark Twain**

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Plot Summary

Following the Equator, *A Journey Around the World* by Mark Twain, describes the author's experience as he travels around the world. The author, whose real name is Samuel Clemens, is accompanied by his wife and daughter on the thirteen-month trip. Their travels occur in the late eighteen hundreds and they traveled by various means of transportation.

Beginning in Paris, where the family is living at the time, they begin by sailing to New York, crossing the American continent, and boarding a ship in Victoria, British Columbia. This is where the story really begins, since Twain has little to say about their experiences on the North American continent. The thirteen-month journey takes them to Hawaii, the Fijis, Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, Mauritius, Mozambique, and South Africa before they sail to England. The return journey to England takes two weeks.

Twain has a variety of experiences as he travels, just as most people do. He describes these experiences in his own rich way with his own brand of wit. He relates the experiences of the various accommodations on ship and shore, complaining about the bedding on the ships and the noise in the hotel halls in India. There are the servants that are constantly in and out of their quarters, the experience of riding in a jinricksha, trains in India and handcarts in the Himalayas. He describes his experiences at the betrothal party of an Indian girl, riding an elephant for the first time, and visiting Molokai, the leper colony in Hawaii. There was shark fishing in Australia and tiger hunting in India, plus diamond mining in South Africa. Like all travelers, Twain enjoyed these experiences.

In addition to relating his experiences as a traveler, Twain presents various facts about the history and culture of each of the places he visits. He presents economic and demographic data about the countries and often makes comparisons between the places he visits and America and England. He also relates a variety of other stories about places in the world he has visited as the places along the equator are associated with other experiences. He also examines the mistreatment of various groups of people in these countries.

There are charts and illustrations throughout the book showing places, things and people from the various places and experiences that the Twains' had. These allow the reader to associate a picture with the things and places that Twain is describing. The reader will enjoy reading this book. It is extremely fast reading with only the numerous illustrations and charts to slow the reader down.

Chapters I - IV

Chapters I - IV Summary and Analysis

The lecturing trips around the world began in Paris with two members of Clemens family deciding to go with him. They sailed to New York in midsummer. They crossed the continent to Victoria and boarded the ship to sail on the Pacific. They had to bring their own deck chairs.

The Captain was a pleasant man who didn't smoke. He didn't allow smoking in the smoking room after eleven because his cabin adjoined the smoking room. He had piloted a ship into the rocks, and even though he was acquitted of charges, there was still a cloud of suspicion. The purser was a young Scotchman who drank too much. To Twain, the root of all vices is the desire. He used to take pledges to break a bad habit, but couldn't break them because he couldn't control the desire.

In Chapter II, they are four days out of Victoria. The weather was hotter and the crew and passengers switched to white clothing. The Maharajah of Mysore provides the entertainment with a memory game. He is a Brahmin and memory expert.

In Chapter III, the ship is out on the Pacific in the seventh day of the voyage. They are near Honolulu and can see Diamond Head. It is not the first time that Clemens has been there and he is happy to see the islands again. He relates some of the history of the island. Since there was a cholera outbreak, the passengers were not allowed to leave the ship unless Honolulu was their final destination. New passengers could not board for the journey to Australia. All the passengers could do was sit on deck and look at the shore. They talk about the leper colony at Molokai.

In Chapter IV, it is September 2 and the ship sails from Honolulu. The passengers play shovel-board and entertain themselves. Twain describes the game also known as horse billiards. He wins a Waterbury watch in another tournament. They cross the 180th meridian on September 10. The temperature increases as they near the equator.



Chapters V-IX

Chapters V-IX Summary and Analysis

Twain relates a dinnertime discussion about the pronunciation of various Scottish words. The ship is still sailing to the south and the passengers view the constellations in the sky. Twain describes several of them.

Many slaves were recruited from the islands in the area until a law was passed saying the person had to consent. He tells the story of Captain Wawn, a recruiting shipmaster in this chapter and in Chapter VI. Twain relates how the missionaries opposed the slave trade.

Chapter VII finds the ship traveling among the islands. They are approaching the islands of the Fijis by mid-September. They dock at Suva. Twain relates the history of Fiji and how it was ceded to England in 1858.

In Chapter VII, Twain explains how the passengers cannot know everything about the places they visit. He likes talking to the Englishman from New Zealand about the fauna and animals of Australasia.

In Chapter IX, it is September 15 and the ship is fifty miles from Sydney, Australia. The passengers viewed porpoises playing in the water. Twain relates the story of the Duncan Dunbar and how it was wrecked approaching Sydney at night. Only one of two hundred passengers survived. Twain describes how Sydney appears from the ship. He compares the climate of Sydney to Little Rock, Arkansas and discusses how much of Australia is unsettled. Twain mentions the dust storms even though he has never seen one.



Chapter X-XIV

Chapter X-XIV Summary and Analysis

Australia was founded in 1770 by Captain Cook and became a colony for British prisoners. Penalties were harsh in those days, including physical torture of lashes with cat-'o-nine tails. All supplies were brought in from England and the officers began to trade. Rum was used as a currency. Eventually, sheep farming began, followed by mining.

Chapter XI describes the first impressions of Sydney. It appears to be an English city with American embellishments. The Australians appeared more American than British to Twain.

In Chapter XII, Twain talks with a missionary from India. They discuss the customs of the Indian people and why Christianity is so slow to spread there. Twain discusses some of the Indian legends.

Chapter XII discusses expenditures on public works. The expenditures are higher in Australia than in America. Electric lighting was being installed to light the streets. The country basically governs itself so there is little for the governor to do. Visitors see the Admiralty House and the harbor and go shark hunting. The government pays a bounty for the sharks that are caught.

In Chapter XIV, Twain has health problems and can't travel to Queensland. They visited Victoria and Melbourne. Victoria has large sheep farmers. Wheat and wine are also important products of the region. The group traveled to Melbourne and Adelaide by train. They are impressed with the view of the Blue Mountains at Albury, where they change trains. That afternoon, they see villages but little wildlife.



Chapters XV-XIX

Chapters XV-XIX Summary and Analysis

They visit the town of Wagga-Wagga where they are told the story of Sir Roger Tichborne and the butcher who claimed to be him. He was convicted of perjury and imprisoned. It wasn't until he was on his deathbed that he admitted the hoax. Twain was in London in 1873 when the trial was held. When he arrived in Australia he found that nobody remembered the the story.

The group visits Melbourne in Chapter XVI. It is a large city whose specialty is horse racing. The big race is on November 5, Guy Fawkes Day, and the festivities begin two weeks before. The race is for the Melbourne Cup. Twain compares Melbourne to America and thinks that Melbourne is more American than Sydney. He feels that Melbourne is the top novelty that Australia has to offer and gives the impression of liking the city.

In Chapter XVII, Twain considers the size of the British Empire. Australasia is a part of this empire. He presents some of the demographic and economic statistics. Their party leaves for Adelaide via train, a seventeen-hour trip.

In Chapter XVIII, the train ride continues through beautiful country. Twain discusses the copper mines in the area and how the towns grew up around them. When they debarked from the train, they traveled by carriage to Adelaide, which is described as a prosperous city. South Australia is known for its religious freedom and Twain presents the figures on the variety of religions in the province. Anyone from any religion can fit in in South Australia.

In Chapter XIX, Twain talks about the Botanical Gardens and the animal called the dingo. He discusses the characteristics of the province and how they had telegraphed communications before they had roads.



Chapter XX-XXIV

Chapter XX-XXIV Summary and Analysis

The chapter begins by discussing fox hunting. Twain went by dog cart to see a fox hunt. He was relating a story that happened years ago in Europe.

Chapter XXI begins with a discussion of the weet-weet, a fat wooden cigar that is used in a game. Twain then goes on to talk about the aboriginals that were in South Australia when the white man arrived. There were different tribes.

In Chapter XXII, Twain discusses how rich Australia is in writers and discusses some of the material available. There is information available on the aboriginals from the Victoria government. He also discusses the art.

Chapter XXIII discusses a visit to Horsham on October 17. Sheep and cattle were raised in the area and there were many birds that they saw. There were many fruit trees in the area. There were about fourth farmers from an agricultural college in the area. They spend three days a week in the fields and the rest of the time with school work.

After Horsham the group traveled to Stawell. This is the gold-mining area of Victoria colony. The area also produced wine.

In Chapter XXIV, the group sees the City of Ballarat where a big gold strike occurred in 1851. This and other gold discoveries attracted an influx of immigrants.



Chapter XXV-XXX

Chapter XXV-XXX Summary and Analysis

On October 25, they made a rail trip to Bendigo, a gold and quartz mining city. Bendigo produced more gold than Ballarat did. A Mr. Blank made his stay enjoyable as the city gave him a tour and allowed him to take part in specials. They talk about a Mark Twain Cub at Corrigan Castle in Ireland. Mr. Blank had been its first president and they had corresponded by mail, although they had never met. The club had made so many demands on Twain that he had stopped opening their mail. Mr. Bland confesses that he was the only member.

In Chapter XXVI, Twain's group visits several more Australian towns and then goes to New Zealand, which is twelve to thirteen hundred miles away. He relates what he learned about New Zealand from talking to a professor years ago.

It is November 1 in Chapter XXVII and they are sailing between Tasmania and some islands. Tasmania is the land from which the blacks were eliminated from in the 1800s.

In Chapter XXVIII, Twain relates the story about the post Civil War period and a young man from Memphis named Ed. Ed went to see Commodore Vanderbilt about working for him in the tobacco business. He got the job.

Twain discusses Tasmania in Chapter XXIX. It had been a place where convicts were sent. They arrive at the Tasmanian capital of Hobart. Twain feels that Hobart is a clean town. The steamer only docked for a short time so Twain didn't get to see much of the city.

In Chapter XXX, the steamer arrives in New Zealand at a town called Bluff. This is where the rabbit was introduced to New Zealand. From Bluff they traveled to an area referred to as the New Zealand Switzerland and then on to Dunedin.



Chapter XXXL-XXXVI

Chapter XXXL-XXXVI Summary and Analysis

Twain relates a story about a November 11 train trip in Australia where he met two men in the smoking car. They discuss the hotels in Australia and then the government. They tell him he will like Maryborough.

In Chapter XXXII, Twain travels to Christchurch, which he describes as a very English town. They visited a museum and saw many artifacts and learned about the Maori culture. He also discusses the women suffrage movement and how much it achieved. After four days in Christchurch, the group sails on the Flora from Lyttelton on November 17. The Flora was an overly crowded cattle-scow and Twain spend most of the night on deck. Twain found passage on another boat, the Mahinapua, at the first port. They traveled through the French Pass the next day.

They arrive at the town of Nelson in Chapter XXXIII. They spend the day there. Twain tells the story of some murders that occurred there thirty years earlier. From Nelson, they go to Auckland.

In Chapter XXXIV, they reach Gisborne and on December 2 they sail from Napier. In Chapter XXXV, they arrive in Wanganu. They view war monuments then go on to Wellington on December 9, which ended their visit to New Zealand.

Chapter XXXVI opens with Twain sailing for Australia on the Mararoa on December 13 and reaching Sydney on December 17. They take a few side trips from Sydney. Twain formulates a list of the names of Australasian towns and writes a poem using the names.



Chapter XXXVII-XLI

Chapter XXXVII-XLI Summary and Analysis

Twain sails for Ceylon on the Oceana on December 23, 1895. They spend Christmas in Melbourne and New Year's Day in Adelaide. They arrive in Ceylon on January 13 and stay at the Hotel Bristol. Twain travel around the city of Columbo in a jinriksha. He describes Ceylon as being Oriental and tropical. Twain described the different in clothing and goes to the king's ball.

In Chapter XXXVIII, they sail on the Rosetta on January 14 and sail to Bombay where they arrive on January 20. Twain is impressed with the rich colors of the city. They drive through the wealthy part of the city. Twain describes the people walking around at Scandal Point and how the women wear so much jewelry. Twain is very impressed with India. The hotel is very noisy and Twain discusses various Indian customs.

In Chapter XXXIX, Twain discusses some of the history of India. He also discusses some of the legends. Twain is ill with a bronchial cough and stays in his quarters. He talks with a man named Manuel about how he came to have a Spanish name. Twain had hired him as a servant but had to dismiss him.

In Chapter XL, Twain visits Government House on Malabar Point. He describes it as very European and English and representative of the power and culture of England. Twain and his family are interested in the clothing and jewels of India. He explains the custom of keeping the dinner silverware locked up in the households of Indian princes. They visit the Towers of Silence and see a funeral procession.

The Twain family visits a Jain temple in Chapter XLI.



Chapter XLII-XLVL

Chapter XLII-XLVL Summary and Analysis

That evening they view a Hindu betrothal ceremony. They drive through the native quarters and see the festivities at the house of the bride. He discusses the plaque which occurred one year after his visit and how fatal it was.

In Chapter XLIII, Twain discusses a murder trial. A girl was killed for her jewelry and presents, says excerpts from the official transcripts of the trial. He also discusses the custom of Suttee, where a widowed woman is burned alive on the funeral pyre of her husband.

In Chapter XLVI, the Twains are preparing to travel. They need to buy bedding for the traveling. Twain describes the crowded scene at the train station. Their train car is spartanly furnished. The group is traveling to Baroda, since Twain received an invitation to lecture to the prince.

They arrive in Baroda and are taken to their quarters. Twain is impressed with the city.

Chapter XLV has the family visiting the countryside. They went on an elephant ride, which Twain was reluctant to do. He was disappointed in not being able to see the crown jewels when he lectured at the palace. They did see the gold and silver canons that are used for ceremonial purposes.

Chapter XLVI finds the family on a train. Twain discusses the sect of the Thuggee, a group of thieves and robbers and murders. They had a ten year war with the government, which tried to eliminate them. Twain had obtained a copy of the Thug book, which described the actions of the Thuggee.



Chapter XLVIL-LI

Chapter XLVIL-LI Summary and Analysis

The Thuggee enjoyed killing. Twain views the white men as modified Thurs when viewed over the course of history. The exploits of a Thuggee named Ramzam are described and how he worked for a powerful Rajah who didn't know he was a Thuggee. He was finally captured by the British.

In Chapter XLVIII, the family travels to Allahabad by night train. Twain explains how servants must secure and hold the sleeping quarters on a train. Twain again explains the custom of Suttee and tells the story of a woman who was widowed.

In Chapter XLIX, the family is still on the train journeying to Allahabad. Twain discusses the difficulty of sleeping on the train. He describes the Indian villages and how they are made of mud.

In Chapter L, they are traveling to Benares. They spend a two hour layover, mixing with the people in the train station. In Benares, there is a long ride across the city to the hotel. Twain presents some of the history of Benares and discusses some aspects of the Hindu religion. There are both Hindu temples and Mohammedan mosques in the city.

In Chapter LI, Twain describes the itinerary for a pilgrim to Benares. This includes many of the palaces they visited in the area. He describes the temples and the various gods.



Chapter LII-LV

Chapter LII-LV Summary and Analysis

The Ganges River runs through Benares. This is described as the show place of Benares, and the family enjoyed a trip on the river. There are people swimming in the water which is very polluted. They believe it is pure and holy. The family visits various temples and sees the Mosque of Aurangzeb. Twain sees a god called the Taj in Chapter LIII.

In Chapter LIV, they travel to Calcutta, known as the City of Palaces. The monument known as Ochterlony can be seen for miles. He also discusses the Black Hole prison and how prisoners had to fight for survival. Twain explains how they couldn't see all that Calcutta had to offer because of lack of time and so many sites.

In Chapter LV, the family is traveling through the countryside in mid-February. They see people working the fields along the way. It reminds Twain of traveling through Europe as they head for the mountains. Arriving in Darjeeling, they find a hotel. The next day they view Kinchinjunga and Mount Everest in the Himalayas.



Chapter LVI-LIX

Chapter LVI-LIX Summary and Analysis

They spend two days traveling in the mountains. They view Gladstone Cliff and see many Thebetans. He also describes the train loop that they rode through. On the way down the mountain, they stop at the house of a Mr. Barnard. They have refreshments and view the scenery from the veranda. There are a variety of birds that Twain describes. They then returned to Calcutta.

In Chapter LVII, Twain calls India the most extraordinary country. There are many deaths from Bengal tiger attacks and the British government is trying to do something about the tigers and snakes.

In Chapter LVIII, Twain describes the Great Mutiny that took place in the East India Company in 1857. The Mutiny occurred at May 10, 1857. There was a long bloody battle led by Sir Colin Campbell. In Chapter LIX, Twain drives over the route taken by Campbell. Most of the building involved in the Mutiny are now in ruins. Twain describes the Taj Mahal and his feelings and impressions of it. He describes the workmanship and cites a guidebook. He also compares the experience of visiting the Taj Mahal to visiting Niagara Falls.

Chapter LX-LXII

Chapter LX-LXII Summary and Analysis

The Twain family wandered around India. He used an elephant for transportation. They stayed for a while at Jeypore. Twain describes Jeypore as Indian with some European features. They see schools, gardens, and good sanitation. The city is surrounded by a turreted wall.

In Chapter LXI, Twain discusses Indian education. Many people speak English. Most of the Indian children work. They have little time for play. He compares the education of an Indian boy and an American boy and states that obviously the American boy has the better education.

In Chapter LXII, the Twains leave Calcutta at the end of March. They spend a day at Madras and a few days in Ceylon and then begin the long journey to Mauritius sailing on the Indian Ocean. There are many pets on board and Twain discusses the routine on board. On April 15 they arrive at Port Louis in Mauritius. There are more nationalities in Port Louis than any place else they have visited. The island is controlled by the French, and there is a great deal of variety in the style of clothing and color.

They take a train to Curepipe the next day. It is a two hour ride and sixteen miles in distance.



Chapter LXIII-LXXI

Chapter LXIII-LXXI Summary and Analysis

Twain describes Port Louis as having good roads. Law is basically by custom. The town was damaged by a cyclone in 1892 and is described by Twain as being a combination of park and garden. Mauritius is pleasant, but he considers the Sandwich Islands to be the best tropical location.

In Chapter LXIV, Twain describes the Arundel Castle as a good ship but complains about the beds. They sail past the Isle de Bourbon on May 2. There are fifteen or twenty Afrianders on board. They all pass the time by telling stories. The ship arrives in Delagoa Bay, Mozambique on May 4. They go on shore but there are only three rickshas and they were private and not available to rent. They resume their journey and arrive in Durban, South Africa on May 6.

In Chapter LXV, Twain is staying at the Royal Hotel. He describes Durban as being a clean town. On May 9, they drive to the Berea and Twain mentions the beautiful views. They visit a Trappist monastery two hours from Durban, and Twain talks a little of the beliefs of La Trappe.

In Chapter LXVI, Twain discusses some of the politics of South Africa. He discusses the problems with the Boers. Jameson had led six hundred men to attempt to rescue the women and children of Johannesburg. The Boers defeated him and many of the Reformers were imprisoned in Pretoria. The Reformers wanted to establish a Republic. He was captured again when he tried a second invasion.

Chapter LXVII - Conclusion

Chapter LXVII - Conclusion Summary and Analysis

The story of Jameson and the Boers continues. There was a proclamation from the British High Commissioner stating what was required of the involved parties. The trouble continued for several years. The next time Jameson engaged the Boers, he surrendered. When Jameson surrendered at Bronkhorst, the British forces were removed from the battle. Twain goes on to analyze the casualty and loss figures from the battles.

In Chapter LXVIII, Twain talks about Mr. Rhodes and the Reformers. South Africa is rich in gold and diamond mines. The capital is from England while the mining engineers came from America. Twain is interested in the cyanide process used in the gold mining process. The miners were protesting the high taxes.

In Chapter LXIX, Twain discusses diamond mining. The Kimberly diamond deposits were the first to be discovered around 1869. There are other craters located by the Kimberly crater. The mines were owned by the DeBeers and Rothschilds and they paid no taxes. Twain visits the mines and views the process.

The Twains arrive in Cape Town in Mid-July.

In the Conclusion, Twain talks about what places he has visited, like Table Rock and St. Simon's Bay. He looked at the governments and the residences of the poor and wealthy. They sail to England on July 15 on the Norman, making one stop at Madeira. Their round the world trip lasted a total of thirteen months.



Characters

Mark Twain

Mark Twain is the pseudonym of Samuel Clemens, the author of the book and the main character. He is living in Paris and decides to go on a round the world lecture tour. Two members of his family decide to travel with him. He is married and has a daughter and is widely traveled and has lived in a variety of places. Twain is known in some places in Australia for his books and this sometimes allows him special treatment, such as in Bendigo. Twain wanted to see a lot of these countries that he had always heard and read about, like India. He tells of his impressions of the people and places he visits and presents economic, historic, political and other information about each country. He is an experienced traveler and realizes his experiences in the various countries. Beginning in Paris, they travel to New York and then across the United States to Victoria, British Columbia. They board a ship there and travel to Hawaii, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, Mauritius, Mozambique and South Africa, and then sail for England. Along the way, Twain describes the history and culture of the countries he visits as well as presenting various economic, political and demographic facts and data. He does give a lecture to an Indian prince and participates in a discussion in Australia. Aside from that, he doesn't mention the lectures which he said were the purpose of the trip.

The Captain

The captain of the ship is described as a young man who is very polite. He is not named but is described as having good intentions and no vices. He was not a smoker and was sensitive to smoke. Since the smoking room was next to his cabin, he ordered the lights in the smoking room to be put out at eleven so people could not smoke there. Twain did not understand how the smoke could reach the cabin since it was on an upper deck where the winds blew. The captain never used foul language and was never rude to anyone. He gave orders as a request instead of being forceful. He would play whist with the passengers in the evening until the bedtime of the ladies. Twain felt that his personality was out of place in the maritime world. The captain had some career problems because of running his ship up on the rocks near Vancouver. There were forest fires and the air was filled with smoke, which made visibility very difficult. Even though there was a very plausible explanation, many steamship companies viewed this kind of act as a crime. The captain had faced a trial by a Vancouver Admiralty Court and was found innocent. He was allowed to make the voyage to Australia where he would face the Court of Directors of the steamship company. The voyage on which Clemens was in the Captain's first voyage as a captain.



Mr. Blank

Mr. Blank met Twain in Bendigo and arranged for a city tour. Mr. Black was very knowledgeable about Twain and his works. He was an educated Irish bachelor in his forties and had been the first President of the Mark Twain Club at Corrigan Castle in Ireland. He had corresponded with Twain by mail more than twenty years earlier, but this was the first time they met.

Manuel

Manuel is the servant the Twains had hired in Bombay. When Twain tried to talk to him and find out why he had a Spanish name, Twain found Manuel couldn't speak English well enough to communicate. They eventually discharge him.

Englishman from New Zealand

An Englishman from New Zealand is among the ship's passengers. He is a naturalist and described as the most cultivated of the passengers. Twain likes speaking to him because of knowledge of science.

Canadian Passenger

The Canadian passenger is described as coming from a rich and powerful family. He was a heavy drinker but an interesting talker.

American Passenger

The American passenger was on a business trip to purchase the kangaroo-skin crop. The skins were used to make shoes in America.

The Purser

The Purser, also unnamed, is a young Scotchman who drank too much alcohol. He had frequent spells of heart pain.

Mrs. Clemens

Mrs. Clemens is the wife of Mark Twain. She is never named but accompanies him on the trip and is referred to at various times in the book.

Daughter

The daughter is not named but is the daughter of Mark Twain and accompanies her parents on the trip.



Objects/Places

Paris

Paris is the capitol of France where Clemens had lived for several years and began his journey from.

Victoria

Victoria is a city in British Columbia where Clemens boarded the ship that would sail the Pacific.

Honolulu

Honolulu is the capital of Hawaii in the Sandwich Islands in the Pacific.

Molokai

Molokai is an island near Honolulu where a leper colony was located.

The Fijis

The Fijis are a group of islands in the South Pacific.

Sydney

Sydney is a city on the eastern coast of Australia in the province of New South Wales.

Melbourne

Melbourne is a city in Southern Australia in the province of Victoria.

Adelaide

Adelaide is in Southern Australia in the province of South Australia.

Horsham

Horsham is a small country town in the Victoria colony.



Stawell

Stawell is a town in the gold mining area of Victoria colony.

Bendigo

Bendigo is a mining town in the Victoria Colony.

Dunedin

Dunedin is a major city on the east coast of New Zealand.

Christchurch

Christchurch is a major city on the east coast of New Zealand.

Auckland

Auckland is a major city on the west coast of New Zealand.

Ceylon

Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, is an island nation off the coast of India.

Mauritius

Mauritius is an island nation off the southeast coast of Africa.

Mozambique

Mozambique is a country in southern Africa.

South Africa

South Africa is a country in southern Africa.



Themes

Curiosity

One of the dominant themes of the book is curiosity. This is one of the big reasons why people travel and a big reason for Twain's travels. Twain, like others, wanted to see the places and things that he had read and heard about. He wanted to meet other people and learn their customs and how they lived. Twain talked to the people wherever he went, such as the hired servant Manuel in Bombay. He wanted to know how the Indian had a Spanish name. Twain's curiosity led him to learn about the local customs and culture, like attending the betrothal party of an Indian girl and putting up with the variety of servants that were always in and out of their quarters in Bombay. Everywhere he went, he experienced the entire cultural experiences and continually made comparisons between America and England and the different countries and cities that were visited. His curiosity led him to look at how situations and cultures developed, such as the situation with the Boer's in South Africa and the practices of Suttee in India, and this leads him to make social comments in various places. Twain's curiosity led him to visit the places he visited and to try some of the things he did. The curiosity cannot be satisfied without the experience of the place or thing.

Adventure

Closely related to the theme of curiosity is the theme of adventure. Travel to new places is always an adventure, just as new experiences always are. The quest for adventure led Twain to try things he had never tried before. There was his first ride on an elephant that he describes. He didn't want to ride the elephant but was pressured into it since his family wanted to try. Twain didn't like the experience but soon became accustomed to traveling by elephant. Twain also tried shark hunting in Australia. He couldn't understand how the Australians don't take the danger of sharks more seriously. In India, he experienced tiger hunting. The Bengal tiger was a big threat in India, with numerous deaths and attacks attributed to the animal. Twain was impressed with the eight hour journey and with the beauty of the vegetation of the jungle. On the journey to the Himalayas, he rode in a hand cart, an experience which he totally enjoyed. He also enjoyed the experience of viewing Kinchinjunga and Mount Everest and the adventure of traveling around the area. In South Africa, he experienced diamond mining and was particularly interested in the new gas process they employed. If Twain didn't have a sense of adventure, he wouldn't have tried these different activities.

Misery of People

Another dominant theme running throughout the book is the misery and mistreatment of groups of people. This is an issue that Twain addresses in each of the countries he visits and oftentimes compares it to the treatment of slaves in the United States. In



Australia and New Zealand, he discusses the British prison colonies and the harsh and inhumane treatment the prisoners received. A small theft by even a child could result in banishment to a prison colony for many years. In New Zealand, he addresses the problems of the aboriginals. He examines the role of women in the society of New Zealand and how they accomplished what the men of the society couldn't. In India, Twain examines the practice of Suttee. This is part of the funeral ceremony where the living widow is forced to burn on the pyre with her dead husband. Many widows are forcibly thrown on the pyre screaming and music is played to cover the screams. Suttee joins the woman with her husband in heaven and the woman that does not submit is ostracized totally from family and society. The practice of Suttee is not comprehensive to Twain and most other people. In South Africa, Twain examines the treatment of the miners under the Boer government and the battle with the Boer government. When discussing the Indian bands of Thuggee and their killing, Twain comments that the joy and exhilaration of killing seems to be a trait of mankind over the ages.



Style

Perspective

Following the Equator, by Mark Twain, is written in the first person point of view. The narrator is the author, who relates the experiences of his thirteen month travels around the world. The first person point of view allows the author to present the events that occurred in his presence and to present any background details and information that are relevant. While the first person point of view is usually considered limiting since the knowledge of the reader is confined to the knowledge of the storyteller, it is limiting in this case. Twain is relating his experiences and impressions as a traveler and the use of the first person point of view is quite appropriate. It allows the author to not only relate his experiences but also to present his views and opinions on various subjects related to the history and culture of the different countries and his travel experiences. It allows the reader to experience the wit and richness of the author and his experiences and adds to the reading experience. Twain is an experienced traveler as well as an experienced writer. The round the world trip is not the first trip he has made, and he is able to relate his experiences of this trip to those of other trips. He is well qualified to write a book of this type. The book can be enjoyed by anyone.

Tone

The book is written in a rather subjective tone in that the author is relating his experiences and impressions. He is giving his opinions of the places he visits and the people he encounters. When he arrives in a city, he describes his impressions and usually how it compares to England and America. He gives his impressions of the local dress and customs, like the Indian train system. People pay a given price of a ticket but there are no assignment of compartments. Whether or not there are sleeping facilities depends on the hired servants being able to claim and hold a compartment. He states that the system would function much better if the train company charged a higher fare and made assignments. He also discusses the issue of hiring servants in India and how they are always in and out of their quarters. Twain also gives his opinion of the miseries that many people suffer. He gives his opinion of the practice of Suttee in India and how it is incomprehensible to him. He gives his opinion of the cruel and inhuman treatment of prisoners that were sent to the prison colonies in Tasmania. The reader has to appreciate the honesty of Twain's opinions and views as he/she reads the book. The reader knows that Twain is not exaggerating or embellishing any of the details.

Structure

The structure of the book is rather fussy. There are sixty-nine chapters, each of which has the chapter number given as a Roman numeral. This makes it a little complicated for any reader who is rusty on Roman numerals. Each chapter begins with a quote from



a literary source. The chapters are rather short and could have been combined to reduce the numbers. Some of the breaks are in strange places, such as in chapters fifty-seven and fifty-eight, where a sentence is divided between the two chapters. Chapter fifty-seven ends with a colon and chapter fifty-eight begins with the quote. The structure of the book is also messy in another way, making the book difficult to read. There are many illustrations throughout the book. Some of them are placed in the middle of the page with half of a sentence of each side. This horizontal break makes it difficult for the reader, who has to slow down to follow the sentence. The book has a very detailed Table of Contents with a detailed description of the contents of the chapter. There is also a List of Illustrations at the beginning of the book. There are some footnotes referencing citations and no Index. In spite of jumping around a lot within a chapter, the overall direction of the book is chronological. The book, although lengthy, is rather quick and easy reading and is worth the reader's time.



Quotes

"I used to take pledges - and soon violate them. My will was not strong, and I could not help it. And then, two be tied in any way naturally irks and otherwise free person and makes him chafe in his bonds and want to get him liberty." Chap. I, p. 30

"In this world we often make mistakes of judgment. We do not as a rule get out of them sound and whole, but sometimes we do." Chap. V, p. 77

"When a stranger from America steps ashore there, the first thing that strikes him is that the place is eight or nine times as large as he was expecting it to be; and the next thing that strikes him is that it is an English city with American trimmings." Chap. XL, p. 125

"It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies. And all of a fresh new sort, no moldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises, and adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibility; but they are all true, they all happened." Chap. VI, p. 169

"Horsham sits in a plain which is as level as a floor - one of those famous dead levels which Australian books describe so often; gray, bare, sombre, melancholy, baked, cracked, in the tedious long drouths, but a horizonless ocean of vivid green grass the day after a rain. A country town, peaceful, reposeful, inviting, full of snug homes, with garden plots, and plenty of shrubbery and flowers." Chap. XXIII, p. 223

"Well, in the sociable frankness of that night in Bendigo I brought this all out in full confession. Then Mr. Blank came out in the same frank way, and with a preliminary word, of gentle apology said that he was the Mark Twain Club, and the only member it had ever had!" Chap. XXV, p. 249

"It takes much to convince the average man of anything; and perhaps nothing can ever make him realize that he is the average woman's inferior - yet in several important details the evidences seems to show that that is what he is. Man has ruled the human race from the beginning - but he should remember that up to the middle of the present century it was a dull world, and ignorant and stupid; but it is not such a dull world now, and is growing less and less dull all the time." XXXII, p. 300

"Dear me, it is beautiful! And most sumptuously tropical, as to character of foliage and opulence of it." XXXVII, p. 336

"India has 2,000,000 gods, and worships them all. In religion all other countries are paupers; India is the only millionaire." XLIII, p. 397

"That must really be the secret of the rise and development of Thuggee. The joy of killing! the joy of seeing killing done - these are traits of the human race at large." Chap. XLVII, p. 437



"It was in Benares that I saw another living god. That makes two. I believe I have seen most of the greater and lesser wonders of the world, but I do not remember that any of them interested me so overwhelmingly as did that pair of gods." Chap. LIII, p. 507

"So far as I am able to judge, nothing has been left undone, either by man or Nature, to make India the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on his round. Nothing seems to have been forgotten, nothing over-looked." Chap. LVII, p. 544

"We sailed from Calcutta toward the end of March; stopped a day at Madras; two or three days in Ceylon; then sailed westward on a long flight for Mauritius." Chap. LCII, p. 609

"This is the only place in the world where no breed of matches can stand the damp. Only one match in 16 will light." Chap. LXIII, p. 622

"In seven or eight years they built up, in a desert, a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants, counting white and black together; and not the ordinary mining city of wooden shanties, but a city made out of lasting material. Nowhere in the world is there such a concentration of rich mines as at Johannesburg." Chap. LXVIII, p. 686



Topics for Discussion

Why did Twain decide to make the trip? What was his purpose?

Twain had been in Honolulu before and was looking forward to revisiting. Why couldn't they get off the boat there? What is Molokai?

What were Twain's impressions of Australia and New Zealand? How did they compare to England and America?

Why was Twain so impressed with India?

What does Twain consider to be the perfect tropical paradise? Why?

Twain considers himself to be an experienced traveler. Why? What is his biggest complaint as a traveler?

What are Twain's impressions of South Africa? Who were the Boers and what is the story Twain relates?