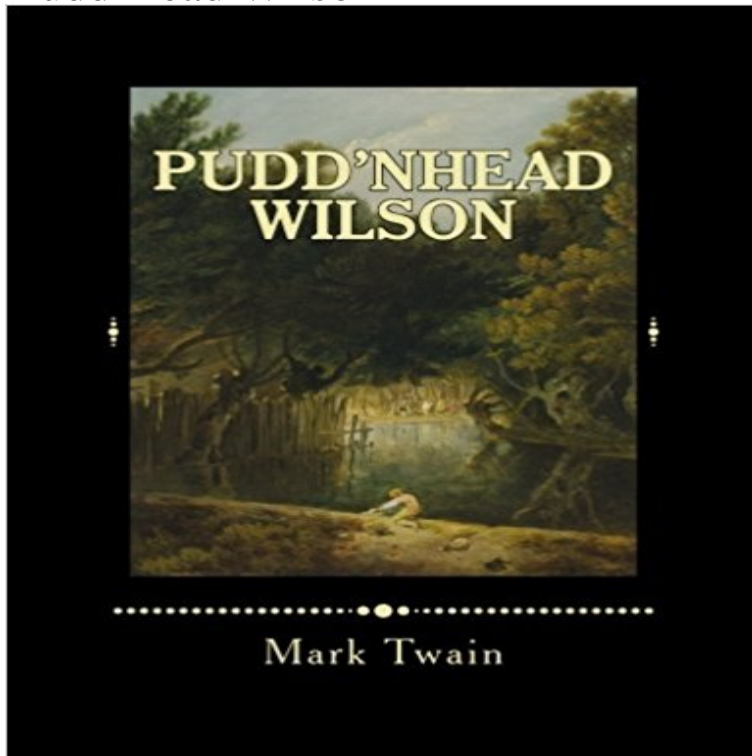


Puddnhead Wilson



Puddnhead Wilson is a novel by American humorist and writer Mark Twain. Twain wrote the novel with the help of phonographic dictation, the first author (according to Twain himself) to do so. This was also (according to Twain) an attempt to write a book without mention of the weather, the first of its kind in fictitious literature. Indeed, all the weather is contained in an appendix, at the back of the book, which the reader is encouraged to turn to from time to time. Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835–April 21, 1910), better known by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American author and humorist. He wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), the latter often called *The Great American Novel*. Twain grew up in Hannibal, Missouri, which provided the setting for *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*. After an apprenticeship with a printer, he worked as a typesetter and contributed articles to the newspaper of his older brother, Orion Clemens. He later became a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River before heading west to join Orion in Nevada. He referred humorously to his singular lack of success at mining, turning to journalism for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*. In 1865, his humorous story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, was published, based on a story he heard at Angels Hotel in Angels Camp, California, where he had spent some time as a miner. The short story brought international attention, and was even translated into classic Greek. His wit and satire, in prose and in speech, earned praise from critics and peers, and he was a friend to presidents, artists, industrialists, and European royalty. Though Twain earned a great deal of money from his writings and lectures, he invested in ventures that lost a great deal of money, notably the Paige Compositor, a

mechanical typesetter, which failed because of its complexity and imprecision. In the wake of these financial setbacks, he filed for protection from his creditors via bankruptcy, and with the help of Henry Huttleston Rogers eventually overcame his financial troubles. Twain chose to pay all his pre-bankruptcy creditors in full, though he had no legal responsibility to do so. Twain was born shortly after a visit by Halleys Comet, and he predicted that he would go out with it, too. He died the day after the comet returned. He was lauded as the greatest American humorist of his age, and William Faulkner called Twain the father of American literature. Twain began his career writing light, humorous verse, but evolved into a chronicler of the vanities, hypocrisies and murderous acts of mankind. At mid-career, with Huckleberry Finn, he combined rich humor, sturdy narrative and social criticism. Twain was a master at rendering colloquial speech and helped to create and popularize a distinctive American literature built on American themes and language. Many of Twains works have been suppressed at times for various reasons. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn has been repeatedly restricted in American high schools, not least for its frequent use of the word nigger, which was in common usage in the pre-Civil War period in which the novel was set. A complete bibliography of his works is nearly impossible to compile because of the vast number of pieces written by Twain (often in obscure newspapers) and his use of several different pen names. Additionally, a large portion of his speeches and lectures have been lost or were not written down; thus, the collection of Twains works is an ongoing process. Researchers rediscovered published material by Twain as recently as 1995 and 2015.

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