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The Life and Work of Mark Twain

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Samuel Clemens, the man known to history as Mark Twain, was more than one of America's greatest writers. He was our first true celebrity, one of the most photographed faces of the 19th and 20th centuries. This series of 24 lectures by an acclaimed teacher and scholar explores Twain's dual identities - as one of our classical authors and as an almost mythical presence in our nation's cultural life. The lectures are a gateway to both appreciating Twain's literary achievements and to understanding his life, highlighting seven of his major works - *Innocents Abroad*, *Roughing It*, "Old Times on the Mississippi," *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* - each replete with the issues that most interested and concerned Twain over the course of that life.

But you also learn that there are even deeper depths to explore. Although Twain may have died a widely beloved figure, he himself once wrote: "Everyone is a moon and has a dark side that he never shows to anybody."

Professor Railton shows you that in his private life, Samuel Clemens struggled with doubt, disappointment, despair, and an increasing misanthropy that was greater than any contained in his most sarcastic satires. Even his closest friends almost lost patience with his rantings on how to exterminate what he called "the damned human race."

Dr. Railton also explores in some detail the unpublished manuscripts, discovered after his death, that reveal this dark and despairing side of Mark Twain. They include such partly completed works as *The Enchanted Sea Wilderness*, *The Great Dark*, and *Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes.*

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