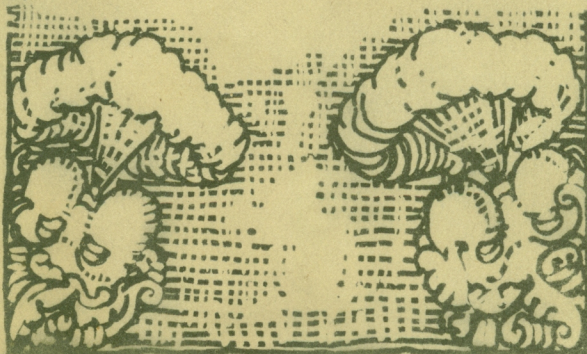


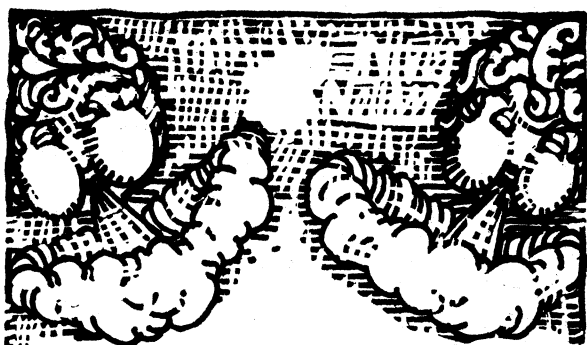
MARK TWAIN'S
DATE . . 1601
CONVERSATION
AS IT WAS BY
THE . SOCIAL
FIRESIDE IN THE
TIME *of the* TUDORS



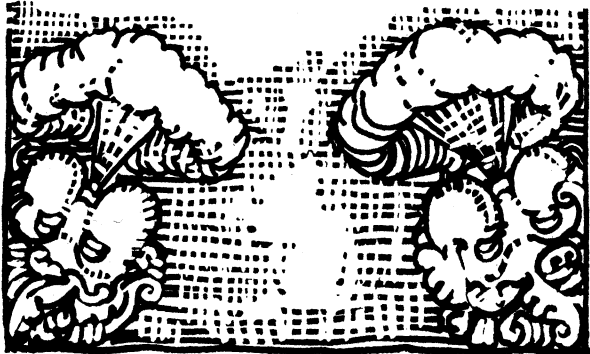
CONVERSATION AS IT WAS
BY THE SOCIAL FIRESIDE IN
THE TIME OF THE TUDORS



Ye Social Fireside . . .



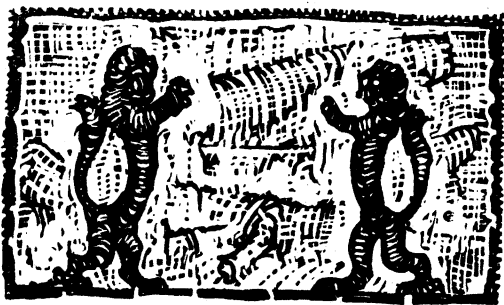
MARK TWAIN'S
DATE . . 1601
CONVERSATION
AS IT WAS BY
THE . SOCIAL
FIRESIDE IN THE
TIME *of the* TUDORS



The following is supposed to be an extract from the diary of the Pepys of that day, the same being Queen Elizabeth's cup-bearer. It is supposed that he is of ancient and noble lineage; that he despises literary canaille, that his soul consumes with wrath to see the Queen stooping to talk with such, and that the old man feels that his nobility is defiled by contact with Shakespeare & Co., and yet he has got to stay there until Her Majesty chooses to dismiss him.



Y^c Queen's Cup-bearer



CONVERSATION, *as it*
was by THE SOCIAL
FIRESIDE, *in the*
TIME *of the* TUDORS

*(From y^e Diary of y^e Cup-bearer
to Her Maiste Queene Elizabeth)*

YESTERNIGHT toke Her Maiste
y^e Quee^{ne} a fantasie such as
she sometimes hath, and had
to her closet certain y^t doe
write playes, bokes, and such
like, these being my lord
Bacon, his worship Sir Walter
Raleigh, Mr. Ben Jonson and
y^e childe Francis Beaumonte,
[which]

which being but sixteen, hath yet turned his hand to y^e doing of y^e Lattin masters into owr Englishe tonge, with grete discretion and much applaus. Also came with these y^e famous Shaxpur. A righte straunge mixing trully of mighty blode with mean, y^e more in especial since Y^e Quee^{ne}'s Grace was present, as likewise these following, to wit: Y^e Dutchess of Bilgewater, twenty-six yeres of age; Y^e Countesse of Granby, thirty; her doter, Y^e Ladye Helen, fifteen; as also these two maides of honour, to wit, Y^e Ladye Margery Boothby sixty-five, and Y^e Ladye Alice Dilberry, turned seventy, she
[being]



Her Maiste y^e Quee^{ne}

being two yeres Y^e Queene^s
Grace's elder.

I being Her Maiste's cup-
bearer had no choice but to
remaine and beholde rank for-
got, and y^e high holde con-
verse w^h y^e low as uppon equal
termes, a grete scandal did
y^e worlde heare thereof.

In y^e heat of y^e talk it befel
y^t one did breake wind, yield-
ing an exceding mightie and
distresful stink, whereat all did
laugh full sore, and then—

Y^e Queene^s: Verily in
mine eight and sixty yeres
have I not heard the fellow
to this fart. Meseemeth, by
y^e grete sound and clamour
[of]



Y^e famous Shaxpur

of it, 'twas male; yet y^e belly
it did lurk behinde shoulde
now fall lean and flat against
y^e spine of him y^t hath bene
delivered of so stately and so
vaste a bulk, whereas y^e guts
of them y^t doe quiff-splitters
beare, stand comely still and
rounde. Prithee, let y^e author
confess y^e offspring. Will my
Ladye Alice testify?

Ladye Alice: Good Your
Grace, an I had room for such
a thunderbust within mine
auncient bowels, 'tis not in
reason I coulde discharge y^e
same and live to thank God
for y^t He did choose hand-
maid so humble whereby to
shew His power. Nay, 'tis
[not]



Y^e Ladye Alice

not I y^t have broughte forth
y^s rich o'ermastering fog, y^s
fragrant gloom, so pray you
seeke you further.

Y^e Queen^{ne}: Mahap y^e Ladye
Margery hath done y^e com-
panie y^s favour?

Lady Margery: So please
you Madam, my limbs are
feeble w^h y^e weighte and
drouth of five and sixty win-
ters, and it behoveth y^t I be
tender unto them. In y^e good
providence of God, an' I had
contained this wonder, for-
soothe wolde I have gi'en
y^e whole evening of my sink-
ing life to y^e dribbling of it
forth, w^h trembling and un-
easy soul, not launched it
sudden in its matchless might,
[taking]



Y^e Ladye Helen

taking mine own life with
violence, rending my weak
frame like rotten rags. 'Twas
not I, Your Maiste.

Y^e Queen^e: O' God's
name, who hath favoured us?
Hath it come to pass y^t a fart
shall fart *itself*? Not such a
one as y^s, I trow. Young
Master Beaumonte—but no;
'twould have waisted him to
heaven like down o' goose's
boddy. 'Twas not y^e little
Ladye Helen—nay, ne'er
blush, my childe; thou'lt
tickle thy tender maidenhedde
with many a mousie-squeak
before thou learneft to blow
a harricane like this. Was't
thou, my learned and ingeni-
ous Jonson?

[*Ben*]



Mr Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson: So fell a
blast hath ne'er mine ears sa-
luted, nor yet a stench so
all-pervading and immortal.
'Twas not a novice did it,
good Your Maiste, but one
of veteran experience—else
hadde he failed of confidence.
In sooth it was not I.

Ye Queen^e: My Lord
Bacon?

Lord Bacon: Not from
my lean entrailes hath this
prodigy burst forth, so please
Your Grace. Naught doth so
befit ye grete as grete per-
formance; and haply shall y^e
finde yⁱ 'tis not from medi-
ocrity y^s miracle hath issued.

[['Tho]]



My Lord Bacon

[Tho' y^e subiect be but a
fart, yet will this tedious sink
of learning pondrously phil-
osophize. Meantime did y^e
foul and deadly stink pervade
all places to that degree, y^e
never smelt I y^e like, yet dare
I not to leave y^e presence,
albeit I was like to suffocate].

Y^e Queen^{ne}: What saith y^e
worshipful Master Shaxpur?

Shaxpur: In y^e grete hand
of God I stand and so pro-
claim mine innocence.
Though y^e sinlesse hosts of
Heaven had foretold y^e com-
ing of y^s most desolating
breath, proclaiming it a work
of uninspired man, its quak-
ing thunders, its firmament-
[clogging]



“Y^e foul and deadly stink”

clogging rottenness his own
achievement in due course
of nature, yet had not I be-
lieved it; but had said y^e pit
itself hath furnished forth y^e
stink, and Heaven's artillery
hath shooke y^e globe in ad-
miration of it.

{Then there was a silence,
and each did turn him toward
y^e worshipful Sr Walter
Raleigh, that brownd, embat-
tled, bloody swashbuckler,
who rising up did smile, and
simpering say}:

Sr Walter: Most Gracious
Maiste, 'twas I y^t did it, but
indeed 'twas so poor and frail
a note, compared with such
as I am wont to furnish, y^t
[in]

in sooth I was ashamed to
call y^e weakling mine in
so august a presence. 'Twas
naught—and less than naught,
Madam—I did it but to clear
my nether throat; but had I
come prepared, then had I
delivered something worthy.
Bear with me, please Your
Grace, till I can make amends.

[Then delivered he himself
of such a godless and rock-
shivering blast y^t all were fain
to stop their ears, and follow-
ing it did come so dense and
foul a stink y^t y^t which went
before did seem a poor and
trifling thing beside it. Then
saith he, feigning that he
blushed and was confused,

[I]

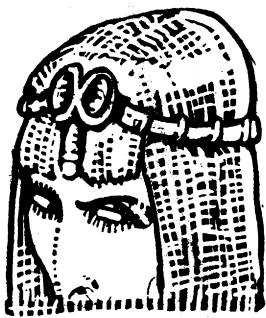


Y^e Worshipful
Sr Walter

·I perceive that I am weak
to-day and cannot justice do
unto my powers;' and sat him
down as who should say,
·There, it is not much; yet he
that hath an arse to spare, let
him follow that, an' he think
he can.' By God, an' I were
y^e Quee^{ne}, I would e'en tip
y^s swaggering braggart out
o' y^e court, and let him
air his grandeurs and break
his intolerable wind before
y^e deaf and such as suffocation
pleaseth.]

Then fell they to talk
about y^e manners and customs
of many peoples, and Master
Shaxpur spake of y^e boke of
y^e Sieur Michael de Mon-
[taine]

taine, wherein was mention
of y^e customs of widows of
Perigord to wear upon y^e
head-dress, in sign of widow-
hood, a jewel in y^e similitude
of a man's member wilted and
limber, whereat y^e Quee^{ne} did
laugh and say widows in
England doe wear prickes too,
but betwixt y^e thighs, and not
wilted neither, till coition
hath done y^t office for them.
Master Shaxpur did likewise
observe how y^t y^e Sieur de
Montaine hath also spoken of
a certain Emperour of such
mighty prowess y^t he did
take ten maidenheddes in y^e
compass of a single night, y^e
while his Empress did enter-
tain two and twenty lusty
[knights]



Y^e Sign of Widowhood

knights between her sheetes,
yet was not satisfied; whereat
y^e merrie Countess Granby
saith a ram is yet y^e Emper-
our's superior, sith he will
tup a hundred yewes 'twixt
sun and sun; and after, if he
can have none more to shag,
will masturbate until he hath
enrich'd whole acres with
his seed.

Then spake y^e damned
windmill, Sr Walter, of a
people in y^e utermost parts of
America y^t copulate not until
they be five and thirty yeres
of age, y^e women being eight
and twenty, and do it then
but once in seven yeres.

Y^e Queene: How doth y^e
like my little Ladye Helen?
[Shall]

Shall we send thee thither and
preserve thy belly?

Ladye Helen: Please
Your Highness' Grace, mine
old nurse hath told me there
are more ways of serving God
than by locking y^e thighs to-
gether; yet am I willing to
serve him y^e way too, sith
Your Highness' Grace hath
set y^e ensample.

Ye Queen^e: God's woun-
des, a good answer, childe.

Ladye Alice: Mahap'twill
weaken when y^e hair sprouts
below y^e navel.

Ladye Helen: Nay, it
sprouted two yeres syne. I
can scarce more than cover
it with my hand now.

[Y^e]

Y^e Queen^e: Hear ye that,
my little Beaumonte? Have
ye not a little birde about ye
that stirs at hearing tell of
so sweet a nest?

Beaumonte: 'Tis not in-
sensible, Illustrious Madam,
but mousing owls and bats of
low degree may not aspire to
blifs so whelming and ec-
static as is found in y^e downy
nests of birds of Paradise.

Y^e Queen^e: By y^e gullet
o' God, 'tis a neat-turned
compliment. With such a
tonge as thine, lad, thou'lt
spread y^e ivory thighs of many
a willing maide in thy good
time, an thy cod-piece be as
handy as thy speeche.

[Then]

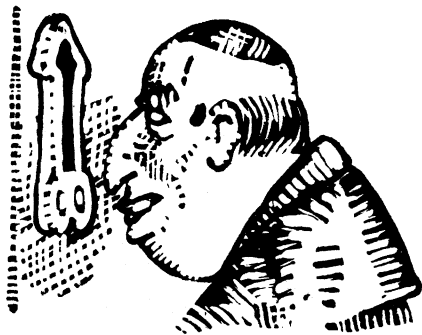


„Y^e Childe Francis Beaumonte”

Then spake Y^e Quee^{ne} of
how she met old Rabelais
when she was turned of fifteen,
and he did tell her of a man
his father knew y^t had a dou-
ble pair of bollocks, whereon
a controversy followed as
concerning the most just way
to spell y^e word, y^e conten-
tion running high betwixt y^e
learned Bacon and y^e ingen-
ious Jonson, until at last y^e
old Ladye Margery, wearying
of it all, saith, 'Gentles, what
mattereth it how ye shall
spell y^e word? I warrant ye
when ye use your bollocks ye
shall not think o' it; and my
Ladye Granby, be ye content;
let y^e spelling be, ye shall
enjoy y^e beating of them on
[your]

your buttocks just the same,
I trow. Before I had gained
my fourteenth year I had
learned y^t them that wolde
explore a coynte stop't not to
consider y^e spelling o't.

Sr Walter: In sooth, when
a shift's turned up, delay is
meet for naught but dalliance.
Boccaccio hath a story of a
priest y^t did beguile a maide
into his cell, then knelt him
in a corner to pray for grace
to be rightly thankful for y^r
tender maidenhedde y^e Lord
hath sent him; but y^e Abbot,
spying through y^e key-hole,
did see a tuft of brownish
hair with fair white flesh
about it, wherefore when y^e
[priest's]



Y^e Abbot, spying through y^e
key-hole—more shame to him!

priest's prayer was done, his chance was gone, forasmuch as y^e little maide had but y^e one coynte, and y^t was already occupied to her content.

Then conversed they of religion, and y^e mightie work y^e old dead Luther did doe by y^e grace of God. Then next about poetry, and Master Shaxpur did rede a part of his *King Henry IV.*, y^e which, it seemeth unto me, is not of y^e value of an arseful of ashes, yet they praised it bravely, one and all.

Ye same did rede a portion of his *Venus and Adonis*, to their prodigious admiration, whereas I, being sleepy
[and]



Shaxpur reding

and fatigued withal, did deme
it but paltry stuff, and was y^e
more discomforted in that y^e
bloody buccanier hath got his
wind again, and did turn his
mind to farting with such a
villain zeal that presently I
was like to choak once more.
God damn y^s windy ruffian
and all his breed. I wolde
y^t hell mighte get him.

They talked about y^e won-
derful defense which olde Sr
Nicolas Throgmorton did
make for himself before y^e
judges in y^e time of Mary;
which was an unlucky matter
to broach, sith it fetched out
Y^e Quee^{ne} with a 'Pity y^t he,
having so much wit, had yet
[not]



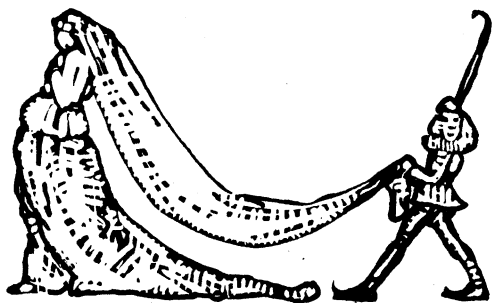
Olde Sr Nicolas
Throgmorton

not enough to save his doter's
maidenhedde sound for her
marriage-bedde.' And Y^e
Quee^{ne} did give y^e damn'd Sr
Walter a looke y^t made hym
wince—for she hath not for-
got he was her own lover in
y^t olde day. There was silent
uncomfortableness now;
'twas not a good turn for talk
to take, sith if Y^e Quee^{ne}
must find offense in a little
harmles debauching when
prickes were stiff and coyntes
not loath to take y^e stiffnes
out of them, who of this
company was sinles? Be-
hold, was not y^e wife of
Master Shaxpur four months
gone with child when she
stood uppe before y^e altar?

[Was]

Was not her Grace of Bilgewater
roger'd by four lords
before she had a husband?
Was not y^e little Ladye Helen
born on her mother's wedding-daye?
And, beholde,
were not y^e Ladye Alice and
y^e Ladye Margery there,
mouthing religion, whores
from y^e cradle?

In time came they to discourse
of Cervantes, and of
y^e new painter, Rubens, y^t is
beginning to be heard of.
Fine words and dainty-wrought
phrases from y^e ladies
now, one or two of them being,
in other days, pupils of
that poor asse, Lille himself;
and I marked how that Jonson
[and]



Y^e Wedding-Daye . . .

and Shaxpur did fidget to discharge some venom of sarcasm, yet dared they not in y^e presence of Y^e Queene's Grace, she being y^e very flowere of y^e Euphuists herself. But, behold, these be they y^t, having a specialty, and admiring it in themselves, be jealous when a neighbour doth essaye it, nor can abide it in them long. Wherefore 'twas observable y^t Y^e Queene waxed discontent; and in time a labor'd grandiose speeche out of y^e mouthe of Ladye Alice, who manifestly did mightily pride herself thereon, did quite exhauste y^e Queene's endurance, who listened till y^e gaudy speeche was
[done.]

done, then lifted up her
brows, and with vast irony,
mincing saith, 'O shittel'
Whereat they all did laffe,
but not y^e Lady Alice, y^t olde
foolish bitche.



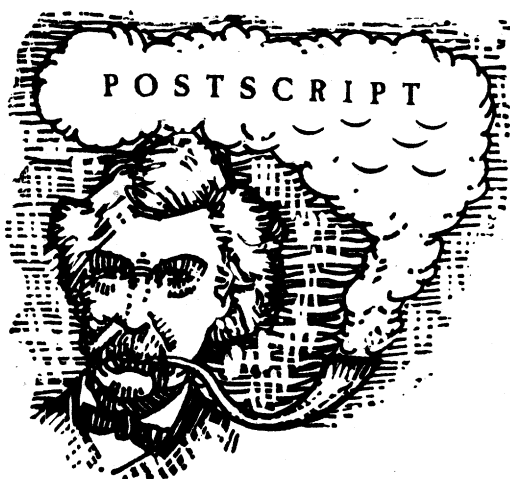
“With vast irony, mincing saith—”

Now was Sr Walter mind-
ed of a tale he once did hear
y^e ingenious Margarete of
Navarre relate, about a maide,
which being like to suffer rape
by an olde Archbishoppe, did
smartly contrive a device to
[save]

save her maidenhedde, and said
to him, 'First, My Lord, I
prithee, take out thy holy tool
and pisse before me;' which
doing, lo! his member felle,
and wolde not rise again.



Finished y^e Sixteenth Day of September
in y^e year of Our Lord
MDCI



Many editions of this Mark Twain classic, "1601," have been printed by his and its admirers. Each purports to be the original, much to the confusion of the collector of first issues.

For the average collector the actual first printing of this item must forever remain unobtainable. Those fortunate individuals who now possess the two or three known copies of the identic first are wealthy booklovers not apt to part with such treasures during their lifetimes.

The inception of the story and its literary position are best given in the words of Mark Twain's able biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine, as follows:

In his reading that year 1876 at the farm he gave more than customary attention to one of his favorite books, Pepys' Diary, that captivating old record

which no one can follow continuously without catching the infection of its manner and the desire of imitation. He had been reading diligently one day, when he determined to try his hand on an imaginary record of conversation and court manners of a bygone day, written in the phrase of the period. The result was *Fireside Conversation in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, or, as he later called it, "1601." The "Conversation," recorded by a supposed Pepys of that period, was written with all the outspoken coarseness and nakedness of that rank day, when fireside sociabilities were limited only by the range of loosened fancy, vocabulary, and physical performance, and not by any bonds of convention. Howells has spoken of Mark Twain's "Elizabethan breadth of parlance," and how he, Howells, was always hiding away in discreet holes and corners the letters in which Clemens had "loosed his bold fancy to stoop to rank suggestion." "I could not bear to burn them," he declares, "and I could not, after the first reading, quite bear to look at them."

In "1601" Mark Twain outdid himself in the Elizabethan field. It was written as a letter to that robust divine, the Rev. Joseph Twitchell, who had no special scruples concerning Shakespearian parlance and customs. Before it was mailed it was shown to David Gray, who was spending a Sunday at Elmira. Gray said: "Print it and put your name to it, Mark. You have never done a greater piece of work than that."

John Hay, whom it also reached in due time (1880), pronounced it a classic—a "most exquisite bit of old English morality." Hay surreptitiously permitted some proofs to be made of it (see note), and it has been circulated privately, though sparingly, ever since. At one time (1882) a special font of antique type was made

for it and one hundred copies were taken on hand-made paper. They would easily bring a hundred dollars each to-day.

"1601" is a genuine classic, as classics of that sort go. It is better than the gross obscenities of Rabelais, and perhaps, in some day to come, the taste that justified *Gargantua* and the *Decameron* will give this literary refugee shelter and setting among the more conventional writings of Mark Twain. Human taste is a curious thing; delicacy is purely a matter of environment and point of view.

In a note-book of a later period Clemens himself wrote: "It depends on who writes a thing whether it is coarse or not. I once wrote a conversation between Elizabeth, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Sir W. Raleigh, Lord Bacon, Sir Nicolas Throckmorton, and a stupid old nobleman—this latter being cup-bearer to the Queen and ostensible reporter of the tale.

"There were four maids-of-honor present and a sweet young girl two years younger than the boy Beaumont. I built a conversation which *could* have happened—I used words such as were used at that time—1601. I sent it anonymously to a magazine, and how the editor abused it and the sender! But that man was a praiser of Rabelais, and had been saying, 'O that we had a Rabelais.' I judged that I could furnish him one."

NOTE.—The following from *The Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia), October, 1903, corroborates Mr. Paine's statement:

An early instance of that fine diplomacy which has made the name of John Hay famous throughout the world has just come to light in Cleveland.

He was on terms of intimate friendship with the late Alexander Cunn—prince of connoisseurs of

literature and art—and had sent him for perusal the manuscript of a little sketch by Mark Twain, unknown to collectors—*Conversations as it was at the Social Fireside in the Time of the Tudors*. This Mr. Hay described as a “serious effort to bring back our literature and philosophy to the chaste and Elizabethan standard.”

Mr. Gunn was pleased with the effort, and wrote to Hay, proposing to print a few copies for private circulation, to which he replied:

“My Dear Gunn:—I have your letter, and the proposition which you make to pull a few proofs of the masterpiece is highly attractive, and, of course, highly immoral. I cannot properly consent to it, and I am afraid the great man would think I was taking an unfair advantage of his confidence. Please send back the document as soon as you can, and if, in spite of my prohibition, you take these proofs, save me one.”

It is needless to say that with this hint the proofs were “pulled”—one for Hay and one for Gunn.

