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## TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF AMERICAN VICTORIANISM

LITERARY PERIODIZATION is replete with contradictions. Chronological dates are acceptable because they are neutral. Critical terms such as Romanticism cause strong disagreement on their application and content. "Victorianism" is even more confusing because on the one hand the term has a chronological reference indicating the term of Victoria's reign, and on the other hand a critical reference indicating a set of attitudes.

English historians are not even certain of the limits of the Victorian period, and they are much less certain of its meaning. Certainly the aging lady on the throne would not have wished to have her name linked with that of Oscar Wilde; yet he died one year before the Empress of India. During the middle of her reign, Dickens presented the wretched, starving crossing sweeper, Poor Joe, who symbolized a huge segment of her empire. If such confusion muddles an understanding of Victorianism during Victoria's reign in England, can the term have any meaning when applied to America?<sup>1</sup>

Certainly "Victorian" is applied loosely to American civilization of the nineteenth century, often with the assumption that it is equally predicable to America and England. If so, then social conditions should be similar in both countries. If the civilizations are different, as this paper will endeavour to show, then it is necessary to indicate why the English definition of the concept cannot be applied, in its larger connotation, to America. By eliminating the connotations of the term that do not apply to America, the critic might be able to isolate it for study as an American phenomenon only. Then it would be possible to give the concept a specific American definition drawn from specifically American characteristics.

The English themselves did not think that America and England were very similar in the nineteenth century. Matthew Arnold in *Civilization in the United States* differentiates the two societies:

I have said somewhere or other that, whereas our society in England distributes itself into Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, America is just ourselves, with the Barbarian quite left out, and the Populace nearly. This would leave the Philistines for the great bulk of the nation; a livelier sort of Philistines than our Philistine middle class which made and peopled the United States—a livelier sort of Philistine than ours, and with the pressure and the false ideal of our

Barbarians taken away, but left all the more to himself, and to have his full swing. That this should be the case seemed to me natural, and that it actually was the case, everything which I could hear and read about America tended to convince me.<sup>2</sup>

To Arnold the United States was a huge mass of Philistines, doing what they liked, without sweetness and light, and rejecting Hellenism for a narrow Hebraism. His criticism also implied that the American societal structure lacked the balance of English society. Mrs. Trollope also found the Americans unlike the English:

I will not pretend to decide whether man is better or worse off for requiring refinement in the manners and customs of the society that surrounds him, and for being incapable of enjoyment without them; but in America that polish which removes the coarser and rougher parts of our nature is unknown and undreamed of.<sup>3</sup>

While Arnold criticized the American essentially, Mrs. Trollope stripped away his pretensions to be called "Victorian" in England. Many other English travellers found America different: they did not come to observe themselves in a mirror, but to observe for good or evil the strange new society on the other side of the Atlantic.

Most historians of English civilization use "Victorian" as a grab-bag term to designate an entire society. To them the study of Victorian society means the study of the intellectual, political, and cultural history of the period from about 1830 to somewhere between 1870 and 1890.<sup>4</sup> "Victorianism" applied to England might be given two ascriptions. The first application assays the tone of society. The historian always uses the term to imply an undue emphasis on prescriptive and proscriptive morals, a formality in speech and deportment verging on the ludicrous, a fastidiousness in society and literature which would not tolerate sensual references, and a sentimentalism which was an emotional outlet for the effluence of passions. In its wider application the term includes all the ideas, disciplines, and personalities of the period between 1830 and 1890 in England. Peel, Dickens, Mill, Prince Albert, and George Eliot are all Victorians.<sup>5</sup>

The term "Victorian" as applied to American society does not carry the wider meaning that it does in England. Certainly to call Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Poe, Henry James, Dickinson, John Brown, and Henry Adams "Victorian" would be to break the word on a wheel of chronology. Politically and economically, conditions were very different in America, where life was based on different social, religious, and literary assumptions.

The American democratic faith cast a golden nimbus around middle-

class society which led to a mystique of democracy that did not exist in England. Gabriel clearly stated the faith of this mystique: "The mission of American democracy to save the world from the oppression of autocrats was a secular version of the destiny of Christianity to save the world from the governance of Satan."<sup>6</sup> It was this very faith in the middle class that was regarded with suspicion by some segments of English society.

American society, being democratic, was in general classless in the Old World sense. The difference between the intellectual, political, and austere world of the young Henry Adams and the pious, devoted, hard-working world of Lucy Larcom (the author of the illuminating autobiography, *A New England Girlhood*), is really very small, just as the difference between Fisk and his employee was merely a matter of genius and lack of conscience and not of social position. This matter of a fluid society is essential to an understanding of the basic difference between America and England. The middle class in England is defined by an aristocratic class whose taste and manners acted as a check on the excrescences of the middle class, and a lower class whose aspirations were blocked by linguistic, educational, and social barricades which placed in relief the advantages of a middle-class society. To speak then of the Victorianism of the middle class is to speak of a segment of English society clearly defined within a scale of values. To transfer this social structure to America would differentiate nothing, for the entire society tended to be middle class. Social mobility, except for a few withered pockets of resistance in Charleston and Philadelphia, was the norm of American society rather than the exception.

Another essential difference between English and American societies is in church affiliation. The Anglican Church stabilized the moral balance of English society by its traditional emphasis on a gentlemanly religion which kept a check on the dissenting sects.<sup>8</sup> American Protestantism, derived from Puritan and dissenting backgrounds, carried to an excess the zeal of dissenting Hebraism, giving a frantic tone to American religion, or—influenced by later Arminianism—preached an accommodation to the depredations of the robber barons.

In the careers and reactions of the literary community, there is also a startling difference. The second-raters on both sides of the Atlantic made a mass popular appeal. But the great artists reacted very differently. Most of the English Victorians were actively engaged with their society. Tennyson, Arnold, Dickens, George Eliot all wished to achieve some kind of rapprochement.<sup>9</sup> The American genius at its best was most often disengaged: Thoreau

in his cherished loneliness skimming rocks off Walden Pond; Hawthorne coolly looking for an answer in the dreams of his Puritan ancestors; Whitman holing up in Camden like a neglected but undefeated citadel caught in the backwash of a dirty war; and James deploring the thinness of American life. One great note of English Victorianism was an active engagement by the greatest minds in contemporary problems, but in America there was little such engagement.

Because of the democratic faith, a fluid society, the Puritan ethic, the disengagement of its artists, and many other differences, American society of the nineteenth century cannot essentially be called "Victorian" in the wider English sense. To apply to American society in general the term "Victorian" would seem to encourage an intellectual confusion. If such a general historical context does not seem applicable to American Victorianism, the term might still have some significance if it could be applied to beliefs and behaviour in morals, the family, and literature. To find what is Victorian in these areas, the critic might look to those scathing denunciations from the 1920s, for the detractors certainly had a clear idea of what they meant.

To the rebels of the twenties, the period before 1900 was a cultural wasteland inhabited by puritans. Their heroes were those rebels who had fought the first battles against the common enemy: Crane peddling *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* on the subways; Dreiser battling the infamous suppression of *Sister Carrie*; Sullivan insisting on functionalism as opposed to nineteenth-century eclectic vulgarity; and the Claflin sisters advocating complete feminine rights in love and marriage as well as in politics. These attacks were isolated because they were carried on single issues. The twenties swept their atrabilious eyes over the entire culture of the nineteenth century and found a sahara of the spirit.

The strident voice of Mencken led the attack:

All this may be called the Puritan impulse from within. It is, indeed, but a single manifestation of one of the deepest prejudices of a religious and half-cultured people—the prejudice against beauty as a form of debauchery and corruption—the distrust of all ideas that do not fit readily into certain accepted axioms—the belief in the eternal validity of moral concepts—in brief, the whole mental sluggishness of the lower orders of men.<sup>10</sup>

Mencken not only attacked the century on aesthetic grounds; he also found its notions on sex dangerous and ridiculous:

One of the favorite notions of the Puritan mullahs who specialize in pornography is that the sex instinct, if suitably repressed, may be "sublimated" as they say, into idealism, and especially into esthetic idealism. That notion is to be found in all their books; upon it they ground the theory that the enforcement of chastity

by a huge force of spies, stool pigeons and police would convert the Republic into a nation of moral esthetes. All this, of course, is pious fudge.<sup>11</sup>

Mencken's barbs were motivated by oppressive and ridiculous Puritan assumptions.

Van Wyck Brooks, asking himself why such an obvious genius as Mark Twain produced so little of outstanding value, was led to a condemnation of the period. His conclusions branched out into an indictment of an entire society:

Less than ever then, after the Civil War, can America be said to have offered a career open to all talents. It offered only one career, that of sharing in the material development of the continent. Into this one channel passed all the religious fervour of the race.<sup>12</sup>

This emphasis on the material, a characteristic of American society, especially after the Civil War, turned Mark Twain away from his true genius to write books which would sell, and yoked his talents to the fastidious ideals of a genteel public:

New England had retained by default its cultural hegemony, and the New England spinster, with her restricted experience, her complicated repressions, and all her glacial taboos of good form, had become the pacemaker in the arts.<sup>13</sup>

Brooks believed that Mark Twain was first of all inhibited by his Puritan background and the vulgarity and practicality of the civilization of his childhood; then when he came East, the genteel standards of Howells and his wife further inhibited the natural bent of his genius, which was Swiftian and Rabelaisian. But this indictment applied not only to the warped career of Mark Twain, but also to the entire society. The American artist financially, emotionally, and morally persecuted by the Victorians had only one choice: to run to Europe. Brooks saw the Victorian attitudes of society in America—puritanism, vulgarity, materialism, and effeminate gentility—as basically hostile to the free expression of the artist and to the intelligent, virile mind.

These compressions of a period into a few generalized impressions should be given more content by an analysis of specific charges which might lead to a more meaningful definition of Victorianism. The most violent charge was against religion. The iconoclasts of the twenties distinguished between real religion and what they conceived to be phony religion. Real religion was the religion of our Puritan forefathers. They didn't like this restrictive religion, nor did they think its effect on American life good, but they respected it as a religion with the fire of the spirit. Phony religion was the religion of the

nineteenth century, especially the latter part of the century.<sup>14</sup> It was religion devoid of spirit, reduced to organization in which the clever man with business ability advanced to impose out of some perverse pleasure his standards of conduct on everyone else. The effect of such organized religion is that, as Mencken stated,

The serious work of a Forel is brought into court as pornography, and the books of Havelock Ellis are barred from the mails; the innumerable volumes of "sex hygiene" by tawdry clergymen and smutty old maids are circulated by the million without challenge.<sup>15</sup>

The critics of the twenties in their own religious zeal believed that the religion of the nineteenth century turned into personal egotism bolstered by God:

But thought was not the relentless pursuit of her own beliefs to Miss Willard. She accepted a formula and called on God to make it sacred. Her eventual vice was an enlargement of the weak clause, "Lead us not into temptation", and the civilization that she foresaw was a sterile meadow, dangerless, sprinkled with folk wearing white ribbons. She was, however, a pleasant person who excited devotion. One of her disciples used to get herself through crises of propaganda by pausing to say: "Help me, God or Frances E. Willard!" Help came from somewhere on the prayer and she resumed her work.<sup>16</sup>

Most objectionable in this religion was the growth of watch-and-ward societies and the descent of religion into social manners. The two outstanding exponents of organized religious pressure in the late nineteenth century were Frances Willard and Anthony Comstock. Comstock worked his way up through the YMCA to emerge as guardian of morals in America. That much of his work was necessary and valuable cannot be denied. A mere glance at his *Frauds Exposed*<sup>17</sup> proves that his work was necessary to unearth fraudulent practices in business, advertising, and other areas. But his greatest successes were the result of moral exposures. In his *Morals vs Art* he proudly proclaims that art should be completely at the service of morals, whether the artist likes it or not. He was relentless in the pursuit of those whom he suspected of evil-doing or of defending evil-doing. Let him speak for himself on the attempt to repeal the obscene mail laws by liberal forces:

It was really a conspiracy of "smut-dealers"; but as it was operated by a leading so-called "liberal" and as one hundred and forty out of one hundred and sixty-four Liberal Leagues have arrayed themselves against this work, espousing the cause of the smut-dealer and abortionist, we propose to gratify them by calling the whole movement a Liberal Fraud and explaining how the liberals manage, when opposing the legal enforcement of righteous laws, and how they endeavored by lying conspiracies, deceit, and Fraud, to repeal these laws. At the same time it will illustrate the absolute worthlessness as legislators, of those who advocate

no God, no law, no restraining of the libertine and renegade, but a licensing of each individual to follow out his own base designs and purposes.<sup>18</sup>

Comstock thrived because many of the organized forces of the churches, and people who supported these churches, approved of his work.

Frances Willard, a sweeter personality, was a great advocate of education for women, but it is as the president of the WCTU that she is most remembered. Her pinched face with the miniature pince-nez perched on a narrow pointed nose almost symbolized the insistence of the "drys" on moral rectitude.

Victorianism demanded outward conformity to the established code of morals, especially to those prohibitions on the flesh. The puritan Victorian worked diligently to remove not only the sin but also the cause of sin. In his zeal he carried all before him in his intolerance of any aesthetic, legal, or philosophic objections.

Religion became more comfortable in the latter part of the century. It then emphasized exterior behaviour. It was necessary to go to church and to take part in religious meetings. This comfortable religion became a defence of the Gospel of Wealth. To the twenties, Victorianism in religion also smacked of a comfortable, social religion which insisted on outward conformity to religious manners, but actually had no true religious spirit.

After religion, the critics of the twenties attacked the Victorian family. Armed with Freud, the Lost Generation shuddered in horror when they surveyed the repressive family relationships in the past century. The child had to bow in submission before his parents, especially his father. Emily Dickinson's home life seemed a very good specimen of such a family relationship. Papa took very good care of the family, but his daughters never married. The poems gave expression to the repressions imposed by a father-dominated household that warped any normal expression of individuality and led to morbid sexual inhibitions.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike the English woman, the American female became a predominant force in American society. She carried the banner of temperance into the saloons, singing hymns, urging the wicked inn-keeper to break his casks of liquor, and if he did not comply, breaking them herself. Through her clubs, she demanded moral literature for edification. In her home, she demanded that the male beast be civilized. As an organized force she was indomitable. In *The Mauve Decade*, Beer characterized her as a Titaness who brought overwhelming force on morals and manners.<sup>20</sup>

More difficult to assess was her influence in the home. The reverence

for mother became a shibboleth of the American male. Mark Twain in the earlier sections of his *Autobiography* unconsciously presents a portrait of the capable, dominating mother. Yet Huckleberry Finn was the realization of all the dreams of escape from this mother figure:

In Huckleberry Finn I have drawn Tom Blankenship exactly as he was. He was ignorant, unwashed, insufficiently fed; but he had as good a heart as ever any boy had. His liberties were totally unrestricted. He was the only really independent person—boy or man—in the community, and by consequence he was tranquilly and continuously happy and was envied by all the rest of us.<sup>21</sup>

The unconscious assumption that Tom was the only free man or boy comments on the repression of this society, and substantiates the charge of Brooks:

We are told that the Aunt Polly of Tom Sawyer is a speaking portrait of Jane Clemens, and Aunt Polly, as we know, was a symbol of all the taboos. The stronger her will was, the more comprehensive were her repressions, the more certainly she became the inflexible guardian of tradition in a social regime where tradition was inalterably opposed to every sort of personal deviation from the accepted types . . . Jane Clemens, in short, was the embodiment of that old fashioned, cast-iron Calvinism which had proved so favourable to the life of enterprising action but which perceived the scent of the devil in any least expression of what is now known as the creative impulse.<sup>22</sup>

This charge applied not only to Jane Clemens, but to all the mothers like her across the nation. Mother worship led to sexual repressions and inhibitions of creativity and spontaneity which marked the society of the nineteenth century. This nineteenth-century mother, unlike her counterpart in the twentieth century, imposed a formalized religion, code of ethics, and behaviour which were beyond the capabilities of the normal child.

The imposition of female standards on the home increased so much that, in the latter part of the century, the American woman sought to outdo the English in elegance and development. New etiquette books for adults came from the press at the rate of five or six a year. A complicated structure of etiquette moulded the free American according to the aristocratic usages of Europe—not, however, the carefree usages of European gentry, but what the Americans believed these usages to be. Form and elegance were added to Calvinistic custom at the expense even of the democratic faith. Where courting in America had been free but moral, now it was restricted by regulations. (Some etiquette books went so far as to suggest that a duenna really was necessary for a courting couple, but even the most docile American girls and boys could not go so far as that.) The emphasis on elegance in contrast to the simplicity of family life before the Civil War clearly indicated a movement to



the manners of the Mauve Decade. The middle class of the twenties reacted most violently against the formality and elegance of Victorian manners.<sup>23</sup>

The family life of the nineteenth century was a favourite target of the reformers. What was Victorian about the family was the repression forced on all the members by morals and manners. The Victorian family was sexually inhibited and left little room for flexible, creative activity; either the mother dominated it by her standards of behaviour or the father tyrannized over it actually or subconsciously; and social ostracism would follow any deviation from the excessively fine standards of manners. Looked at in a less serious perspective, all the evils listed above could appear rather fussy and ridiculous if their application to concrete situations were taken lightly enough.

Most of all, the Victorian attitude to literature appalled the twenties. When the Puritan hold on literature had been somewhat loosened after World War I, an aesthetic ideal, based on continental models rather than native British and American, replaced Puritan ethics as the touchstone of literature. The Victorian attitude toward literature had strangled depth of perception and physical passion, and demanded moral lessons, if it ever considered literature seriously at all. Two assumptions in American culture led to the Victorian attitude toward literature: the American pragmatic tradition which assessed the artist as an incompetent who could not make a decent living in any other profession and the genteel assumptions of the American girl who emasculated most effectively the creative freedom of the American artist.

To belabour the American pragmatic tradition would be to outline the obvious. Hawthorne had to submit to the drudgery of the Custom House. Emerson had to submit to the drudgery of two rich wives. Mark Twain was constrained to make money from literature in order to prove himself. Strether in Henry James's *The Ambassadors* had wasted his life in Wollett, Massachusetts, making money, only to be given a final vision of grace and adornment in Paris. And in James's short story "The Jolly Corner" the vision of the hero, that he could have been spiritually wounded by remaining in the United States, demonstrates very well the financial pressure on the American artist, the pressure to prove his worth on a cash basis.

Howells and James had to face critically the problem of the American girl and her sentimental ideals, but Mark Twain has given the most concrete portrait of this type of popular literature in the United States:

If Emmeline Grangerford could make poetry like that before she was fourteen, there ain't no telling what she could'a' done by and by. Buck said she could rattle off poetry like nothing. She didn't ever have to stop to think. He said

she would slap down a line, and if she couldn't find anything to rhyme with it would just scratch it out and slap down another one, and go ahead. She warn't particular; she could write about anything you choose to give her to write about just so it was sadful.<sup>24</sup>

Howells made a capitulation to the moral scruples of the American girl when he stated in *Criticism and Fiction* that the American artist did not have the freedom of the European artist and that he for one was very content to pay the price for her approval.<sup>25</sup> Henry James, too, in the *Art of Fiction* sardonically revealed the influence of the young girl on American fiction:

In the English novel (by which of course I mean the American as well), more than in any other, there is a traditional difference between that which people know and that which they agree to admit that they know, that which they see and that which they speak of, that which they feel to be part of life and that which they allow to enter into literature.<sup>26</sup>

The Victorian, obsessed by moral and financial standards, gave the artist in America little respect. A business ethic pre-empted a serious consideration of the profession of writer and made it appear rather second-rate. The Victorian demanded a moral literature which should deal with certain subjects and a literature which would appeal to the sentiments. He expected the writer to be genteel and to conform to the standards of society. He should not break new ground in morals and sensibility. These areas of religion, family, and literature seem to be the most fruitful for an investigation leading to a concept of Victorianism in America.

If the definition of American Victorianism is to have any content, it has to be distinguished first from English Victorianism. It makes sense to speak of the period in England during the heart of Victoria's reign as Victorian and to speak of Victorian attitudes, no matter how contradictory they may appear to be, just as it makes sense to speak of the Elizabethan period which also includes many contradictory concepts. They are historical terms with some relevance. But the general application of the term would have no meaning for America. The word has to be given substantive rather than historical relevance when applied to American civilization. Victorian, then, had to be the way the twenties conceived an entire era in American history, for it was in that decade that a group of critics crystallized a set of attitudes which they called "Victorian" or "puritan", synonymous words for them.

In religion and morals, "Victorian" meant a restrictive moral control of behaviour on all members of society, a formalized religion that emphasized exterior accommodation, and a gospel of wealth which justified a wealthy lais-

sez-faire society. In family life, "Victorian" meant a repressive control by the parents which led to strange sexual repressions and a female dominance over social manners which led to excessive decorum and elegance. In literature, "Victorian" meant the inhibition of free creativity by genteel and moral standards and a minor position in the community for the artist. We know, of course, that these characteristics are not applicable to the whole of the nineteenth century, but they do define a segment of the social attitudes of its society. American Victorianism is synonymous with repressive control and extreme decorum.

## NOTES

1. Jerome Buckley says that the term is impossible to define and cites such contradictory ascriptions as a material age on the one hand and a religious idealistic age on the other to demonstrate the confusion. Then he goes on to list six qualities as "Victorian" with qualifications: (a) the idea of progress; (b) Evangelical Religion and Benthamite Philosophy; (c) moral concern of all commentators; (d) concern for manners and morals; (e) Elizabethan exuberance; (f) tensions prohibiting a singleness of purpose (but they sought harmony). See Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951). Other commentators define Victorianism, among other things, as prosperity: see Edith Batho and Bonamy Dobrée, *The Victorians and After*, (London, 1950). The confusion as to what is Victorian in England is evident to anyone investigating the literature.
2. Matthew Arnold, *Civilization in the United States* (Boston, 1888), pp. 79-80.
3. Mrs. Frances Trollope, *The Domestic Manners of the Americans*, ed. Donald Smalley, Vintage Book K-103 (New York, 1960), p. 46.
4. Even the limits of the period are not fixed. Parrot and Martin set it between 1832 and 1892: see Thomas Marc Parrot and Robert Bernard Martin, *A Companion to Victorian Studies* (New York, 1955). Batho and Dobrée set the period as far ahead as 1914. George Young, although treating the late period, finds Victorian England characteristic of a special age up to about 1867: "But, fundamentally, what failed in the late Victorian age, and its flash Edwardian epilogue, was the Victorian public, once so alert, so masculine, and so responsible. Compared with their fathers, the men of that time were ceasing to be a ruling or a reasoning stock" (George Malcolm Young, *Victorian England*, Doubleday Anchor Book A35 [Garden City, 1954], p. 277). Each commentator selects a terminal date which best substantiates his particular thesis.
5. For their opinion see especially Buckley, *The Victorian Temper*.
6. Ralph Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (New York, 1940), p. 37.
7. Lucy Larcom, *A New England Girlhood*, Intro. Charles T. Davis (New York, 1961).
8. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (New York, 1929), in which he discusses how the High Church acts as a check on Evangelical enthusiasm.

9. Johnson says that the urge to engage with society often violated the talents of the best Victorian poets. See E. I. H. Johnson, *The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry* (Princeton, 1952).
10. Henry L. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces*, p. 225.
11. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York, 1953), p. 61.
12. Van Wyck Brooks, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, Meridian Books #M14 (New York, 1955), p. 65.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
14. Contemporary students of religion have tended to substantiate this charge. See Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1960). He says, "At denominational conventions there was a tendency to treat the communication of the Gospel much as a corporation might treat the promotion of its product and to devote considerable time to the discussion of Church efficiency. An aura of professionalism and machine-like perfectionism settled over the churches, leading to the charge from many quarters that organized religion was becoming more concerned with goals than souls" (p. 479).
15. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces*, p. 273.
16. Thomas Beer, *The Mauve Decade* (Garden City, 1926), p. 115.
17. Anthony Comstock, *Frauds Exposed* (New York, 1880).
18. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
19. See Genevieve Taggard, *The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson* (New York, 1930) for the best example of their attitude. She says, "this man, in his black gentleman's attire, walked high above Emily in her infancy, large because she was small, but large also because Edward willed to be large in the minds of his children. At home he eased his formality a trifle; with his children he was stern, shy, and consistent. Edward undoubtedly held up the sky over little Amherst; mother treated him as if he did; everybody looked to him; he was just—a quiet tyrant—and while she was little, Emily beheld big brother Austin always punished when he showed signs of becoming more human than Dickinson" (p. 35).
20. Chapter I, "The Titaness."
21. Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (New York, 1959), p. 68.
22. Brooks, *The Ordeal*, p. 45.
23. For a general discussion of etiquette see Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Learning How to Behave* (New York, 1946). For much of my discussion on this subject, I am indebted to this work.
24. Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, Intro. Lionel Trilling, Rinehart edition #11 (New York, 1948), pp. 103-104.
25. William Dean Howells, *Criticism and Fiction* (New York, 1891), pp. 147-157.
26. Henry James, "The Art of Fiction", in *The Art of Fiction and Other Essays*, Intro. Morris Roberts (New York, 1948), p. 21.