

TRASHY AND VICIOUS.

From the Springfield Republican.

The Concord public library committee deserve well of the public by their action in banishing Mark Twain's new book, "Huckleberry Finn," on the ground that it is trashy and vicious. It is time that this influential pseudonym should cease to carry into homes and libraries unworthy productions. Mr. Clemens is a genuine and powerful humorist, with a bitter vein of satire on the weaknesses of humanity which is sometimes wholesome, sometimes only grotesque, but in certain of his works degenerates into a gross trifling with every fine feeling. The trouble with Mr. Clemens is that he has no reliable sense of propriety. His notorious speech at an Atlantic dinner, marshaling Longfellow and Emerson and Whittier in vulgar parodies in a Western miner's cabin, illustrated this, but not in much more relief than the "Adventures of Tom Sawyer" did, or than these Huckleberry Finn stories do. The advertising samples of this book, which have disfigured the *Century* magazine, are enough to tell any reader how offensive the whole thing must be. They are no better in tone than the dime novels which flood the blood-and-thunder reading population. Mr. Clemens has made them smarter, for he has an inexhaustible fund of "quips and cranks and wanton wiles," and his literary skill is, of course, superior, but their moral level is low, and their perusal cannot be anything less than harmful.

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Mark Twain on "Huck Finn."

It will be recalled that not long ago the Omaha public library barred out Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" on the ground that its influence upon the youthful mind was pernicious. The Omaha World-Herald sent him a telegram, which called forth the following characteristic letter:

York Beach, Me., Aug. 23.—Dear Sir: Your telegram has arrived, but as I have already said all I want to say concerning Huck Finn's new adventures, there is no need to say it over again. I am making this remark by mail instead of telegram in order to secure speed; your courtesy requires this promptness of me. Lately it has twice taken a telegraphic dispatch four hours and a quarter to reach me here from Boston, a distance of forty or fifty miles; therefore, if I should answer you by that vehicle I estimate that it would be upward of eight days on the wire, whereas I can get it to you by mail in two.

I am tearfully afraid this noise is doing much harm. It has started a number of hitherto spotless people to reading Huck Finn, out of a natural human curiosity to learn what this is all about—people who had not heard of him before; people whose morals will go to wreck and ruin now.

The publishers are glad, but it makes me want to borrow a handkerchief and cry. I should be sorry to think it was the publishers themselves that got up this entire little flutter to enable them to unload a book that was taking too much room in their cellars, but you never can tell what a publisher will do. I have been one myself.

MARK TWAIN.

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