

WRITTEN ON HOTEL STATIONARY WHILE IN EUROPE ON THE RUN FROM AMERICAN CREDITORS, SOON AFTER THE DEATH OF A DAUGHTER, *THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG* IS OFTEN CITED AS A WORK OF BITTER CYNICISM—A STATEMENT ON AMERICA, TO SOME, ON THE DREYFUS CASE, TO OTHERS—CREATED BY A WEARY AUTHOR AT THE END OF HIS CAREER.

ANOTHER APPRECIATION, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT IS, SIMPLY, MARK TWAIN AT HIS BEST. THE STORY OF A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER WHO ORCHESTRATES A FRAUD EMBARRASSING THE HYPOCRITICAL CITIZENS OF "INCORRUPTIBLE" HADLEYBURG, THE NOVELLA IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY CRAFTED WORK INTERTWINING A DEVIOS AND SUSPENSEFUL PLOT WITH SOME OF THE WITTIEST DIALOGUE TWAIN EVER WROTE. AND LIKE THE MOST MASTERFUL LITERATURE, IT SUBVERTS ANY NOTION OF EASY CONCLUSION: IS HADLEYBURG RUINED, OR LIBERATED? IS THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER SATAN, OR A HERO? IS THIS A BOOK OF REVENGE, OR REDEMPTION? ONE THING IS CLEAR: THIS BRILLIANT NOVELLA IS A COMPLEX AND COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION OF THE HUMAN CHARACTER BY A MASTER AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FORM.