



The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg: And Other Short Works (Prometheus's Literary Classics Series)

Mark Twain

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This collection of lesser-known little gems by Mark Twain begins with a witty account of a fictional town called Hadleyburg, which prides itself on its long untarnished tradition of incorruptible citizens. One day someone in the town offends a stranger passing through and he vows to take revenge by plotting an elaborate scheme to show the whole nation just how corruptible this sanctimonious bastion of virtue really is. Through a series of cleverly placed letters promising a fortune, the insidious outsider lays a trap for each of Hadleyburg's leading citizens. Twain is at his best here poking fun at small-town hypocrisy as the self-satisfied pillars of the community are done in by their own greed.

Also included are fourteen other short pieces of fiction and nonfiction, including Twain's account of his literary debut as a reporter, in which he described the harrowing journey and rescue of some ship-wrecked sailors; an essay on the famous author's "first lie," which begins humorously but quickly turns into a serious commentary on the silent lies society tolerates to perpetuate such injustices as slavery and prejudice; an amusing, tongue-in-cheek petition to Queen Victoria regarding a tax bill sent to Twain by the British revenue office for an amount due on sales of his books in England; an "Esquimaux Maiden's Romance"; a detective story; and many other intriguing, scarcely known pieces.

These interesting and entertaining short works will be a welcome discovery to all those who have enjoyed Twain's popular novels and stories.

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