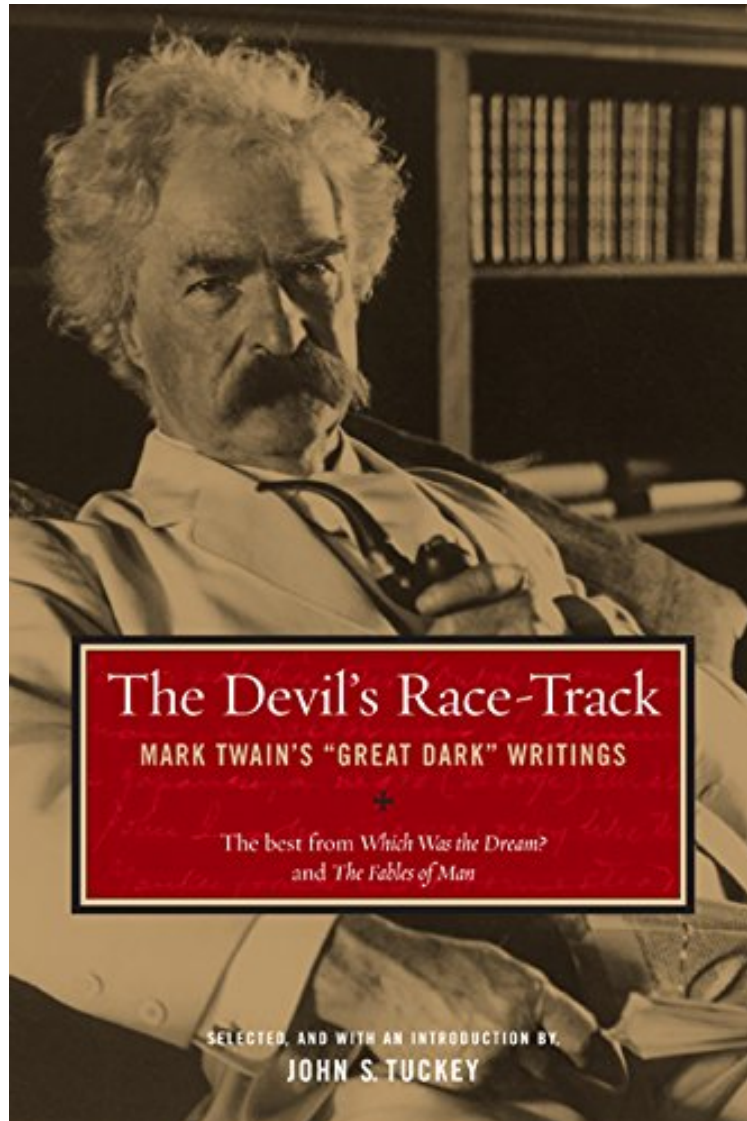


(Free download) The Devil's Race-Track: Mark Twain's "Great Dark" Writings

The Devil's Race-Track: Mark Twain's "Great Dark" Writings

Mark Twain, Richard A. Watson
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Mark Twain, Richard A. Watson : The Devil's Race-Track: Mark Twain's "Great Dark" Writings before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Devil's Race-Track: Mark Twain's "Great Dark" Writings:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CantabridgianBook arrived timely and as described.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Joseph AlvarezTwain's later writings were r=drak but are punctuated occasionally by humor.11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. The Trouble with Twain ...By

Gio... is his confounded OPTIMISM! The man seriously believed, it seems, that by making fun of humankind's dingiest superstitions and foibles he could make us properly reevaluate our place in the cosmos! What a Pollyanna! Every observant thinker from Diogenes to Vonnegut has learned that no amount of mockery can put a dent in humankind's indefensible self-satisfaction. Yet Twain continued to laugh at us well into his seventies, when a true pessimist would have been bawling bitter tears. This is a compilation of Mark Twain's 'fugitive' writings, unfinished and/or unpublished, and much of it unpolished. But even Twain snatched from his wastebasket can be rib-tickling stuff. The two longest pieces are semi-finished verbal riffs on man's absurdity: "Three Thousand Years among the Microbes" "The Refuge of the Derelicts". I don't think either piece is available in any other publication. Obviously, if you are not already a reader and fan of Mark Twain, you'd be ill advised to begin with this odd collection. But then, if you're not a fan of Mark Twain, any kind of advice is probably wasted on you. Don't get this book and read it all at once, and then complain that it's not Twain at his best. Who cares? Put it by your arm chair or on your night table, and read a few pages when you need to be cheered up, when you need to be reminded that "all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds." An accompanying cocktail of hemlock might enhance the reading.

Mark Twain explores the darker side of life in these lesser-known later writings dealing with personal tragedies, nightmarish world events, and a doubtful cosmic order. He views his own situation as that of a ship trapped in a fearsome Bermuda Triangle-like region, the Devil's Race-Track. He sees history as a treadmill of endlessly and monotonously repeated events. And he conceives of a universal food chain, a vast round of devourers who in their turn become victims, humankind and God included. The tone of these writings is lightened considerably by Mark Twain's sagely ironic humor and his warmth, which together balance his tough-mindedness. And even when he shows the human race caught in some vicious circle, he may be seen courageously seeking a way out and at times believing he has found it.

"[The admiral] was eighty years old.... He had very decided opinions upon most matters, and he had architected them himself. Sometimes they were not sound, but what they lacked in soundness they generally made up in originality." From the Back Cover Mark Twain explores the darker side of life in these little-known later writings. A number of stories and fragments dealing with his own misfortunes represent successive stages of work on a story of a disastrous sea voyage that he felt compelled to produce. About the Author John S. Tuckey was Professor of English at Purdue University. He was the author of Mark Twain and Little Satan as well as other studies on the writings of Mark Twain.