

INTIMATE LETTERS OF GREATEST LITERARY MAN OF AMERICA

MARK TWAIN, CERVANTES, LE SAGE, GIANTS OF WORLD LITERATURE

Character and Methods of the American Revealed in His Letters—A Book That Supplements the Earlier Biography

I HAVE been looking over the... in my library lately," said Doctor McFabre as he stood before my book-cases.

"But you don't call 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' literature, do you?" Miss Ames wanted to know.

"People read them and like them, all the same," Owen insisted. "And you know Longfellow is one of the favorite poets of the English."

"What is it?" Miss Ames asked. "Is it Howells or James or Poe or Walt Whitman?"

"There is J. Fenimore Cooper," remarked Owen. "His stories are read in England, France and Russia as well as in America."

"I don't want to call that buffoon 'great,'" said Doctor McFabre.

"You interest me very much, doctor," I said. "You are the second man of intelligence who has made such a remark to me."

"The first one was the editor of a weekly magazine of large circulation. I told him when Mark Twain died that I might have an editorial article about him, but he said that the man was not of enough importance to justify the use of the necessary space."

"Mark Twain was more than a humorist, like Artemus Ward," I went on.

"I would not say this if you did not seem to be unaware of it, doctor. We do not think of Cervantes as primarily a humorist, nor does the fame of Le Sage rest on his ability to make a joke."

"That's nothing but both," said the clergyman.

"I won't argue the point," I continued.

"These are all great names," I admitted, "but I think there is a greater one. We have produced a man who even now takes rank along with Cervantes, the Spaniard, and Le Sage, the Frenchman, and as we get farther from him we are likely to recognize his greatness more and more."

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"I won't argue the point," I continued.

"The letters have things to say about General Grant as well as about Roosevelt."

"I suppose that is so," said Doctor McFabre.

"His wife was troubled about them also," I admitted.

"I am inclined to think that those two men not along so well together because they were so much alike."

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"But how is one to keep free from these mental microbes that worm-eat people's brains—these Theories and Diets and Entailments?"

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Century for December

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