A NOTE ON NAMES

Telling a biographical story in an essentially novelistic style—and, even more, writing about the private life of a man who is universally known by his pseudonym but whose intimates would never have called him by it—presents a problem: What form of the “characters’” names should one use? Because the story is a family one, in which many of the actors share the same surname and all would have addressed each other by given names or other family pet names and designations, I have chosen to refer to the women of the Clemens household by their first names, including Katy Leary. Isabel Lyon, who was almost invariably referred to as “Miss Lyon,” is generally designated as “Lyon.” I use “Mark Twain” to refer to the writer and public persona when appropriate, but for the man himself I use “Sam” or “Clemens,” according to the context.
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